02

Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 28, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: David White, Deputy City Manager

Subject: Affirm Staff Preference for the Virginia Street Bikeway (between Sacramento Street and Acton Street next to the North Berkeley BART Station)

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution implementing Option A for the approximately 200-foot segment of Virginia Street east of Acton Street next to the North Berkeley BART Station and directing the City Manager to work with BART to proceed with the Virginia Street Bikeway.

SUMMARY

In June 2025, BART's progress developing the North Berkeley Transit Oriented Development (Project) site prompted the City, BART and Project developer (North Berkeley Housing Partners, NBHP) to review three design alternatives for Virginia Street east of Acton Street. City staff seek direction from the Council on its preferred design alternative for this street segment – Option A, B or C:

- Option A keeps the existing curb to curb right of way, leaves the existing 10-foot sidewalk in place, removes approximately 110 linear feet of unmarked on-street parking along the north side of Virginia Street (enough to accommodate 4 to 7 vehicles), and provides a buffered 12-foot cycle-track and two vehicular travel lanes.

- Option B moves approximately 150 feet of curb line on the south side of Virginia, narrowing the sidewalk to a width of 8.5-feet to create additional curb to curb width in the public right of way to retain the parking, travel lanes, and a minimum sized 9-foot buffered cycle-track.

- Option C widens the approximately 200 feet of Virginia Street allowing existing parking, travel lanes, a 12-foot cycle track, and 10-foot-wide sidewalk to be maintained all the way to Acton Street. This is accomplished by removing up to 4.5 feet of landscaping on the BART frontage and shifting the sidewalk south. Removal of the landscaping could reduce permeable surface area possibly triggering additional biofiltration areas which have been identified around the corner on Acton Street. During detailed design, permeable pavement options can be explored that could avoid this impact, mitigation, and cost.

BART and NBHP have identified a retaining wall adjacent to the landscape strip along Virginia Street and note that per BART Facility Standards, this retaining wall must be reconstructed if the landscape strip is reduced, as in Option C. Based on initial cost estimates, the wall requirements, sidewalk rebuild, lot line adjustments and revisions to stormwater treatment plans would add approximately $1,000,000 to the project's cost. As shown in the evaluation matrix below, Options A or B are funded, meaning that these options fit within the $3.36 million budget that NBHP has obtained. Additional costs for Option C are unfunded and a funding source has not been identified.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The City is engaged in discussions with BART and the Project's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) partners about the costs and other considerations of three alternatives for a Virginia Street bikeway. The street segment in question is an approximately 200-foot length of Virginia Street where the roadway is constrained. The TOD developer was awarded $3.36M from public funding programs for the streetscape and bikeway improvements on Virginia Street between Sacramento and Acton streets, which is approximately 600 feet long. The Virginia Street right-of-way (ROW) narrows for approximately 200 feet at the west end of Virginia Street closest to Acton Street, where the sidewalk jogs north around the BART electrical traction power substation (TPSS). Providing parking, travel lanes, and bike and pedestrian facilities requires trade-offs, so Public Works and BART evaluated various options.

The available budget for improvements to the public ROW in the North Berkeley BART Station TOD project will fully cover the costs of Options A or B. Option C requires additional resources due to the additional width of roadway paving and sidewalk construction, and removal of up to 4.5 feet of landscaping on BART property. The removal of landscaping buffer would trigger construction of a 10-foot wall or fence to address BART Facility Standards security requirements for the TPSS, and the reduced permeable surface area may also require the installation of additional biofiltration areas. BART and the Developer estimate the additional costs associated with Option C are about $1,000,000. BART and the Developer have indicated that they cannot make adjustments to the project budget to accommodate Option C and do not have the resources to cover the additional expenses. Therefore, if Option C is selected, BART, the Developer, and the City would have to evaluate funding options.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Virginia Streetscape between Sacramento and Acton – Design Alternatives:
The North Berkeley BART Station is located between Sacramento, Delaware, Acton, and Virginia Streets. Virginia Street is a designated Bike Boulevard in the City's Bike Plan. In the TOD's entitled design, the Ohlone Greenway connects to the project site at the corner of Acton and Virginia, continues approximately 200 feet along Virginia Street, then enters the TOD site to run diagonally across the site, exiting at the corner of Sacramento and Delaware to connect with the rest of the Ohlone Greenway.

This Ohlone Greenway Connector was a key community benefit that the City and BART asked interested developers to address in their RFQ responses.
Virginia Street is not a consistent width between Sacramento and Acton Streets. On the east end close to Sacramento Street, Virginia is wide and accommodates four traffic lanes and a street parking lane serving the neighborhood on the north side of Virginia Street. The west end of Virginia Street approaching Acton Street narrows due to the BART TPSS reducing the available curb to curb width. In this narrower section the ROW is 48 feet wide. Within this available 48-foot width, the City and BART assessed the potential to locate one lane of street parking, two vehicular travel lanes, a sidewalk and cycle track to extend and connect the Ohlone Greenway.

BART and City staff initially identified only two options to provide for the Ohlone Greenway and bike boulevard along this section of Virginia. The North Berkeley BART TOD Station Access Plan prepared by BART, with feedback from City stakeholders, identified a design option for the Virginia Street pinch point with a 12-foot wide two-way cycle track and 2-foot wide buffer. This design maintains the existing 10-foot sidewalk width and removes parking on the north side of the street in the pinch point, which is referred to as Option A. The City requested another option to preserve existing neighborhood parking by narrowing the sidewalk to 8.5 feet and reducing the 2-way bikeway to 9 feet with a 2-foot buffer. This design is referred to as Option B.

Option A
Option A keeps the existing curb to curb right of way, leaves the existing 10-foot sidewalk in place, removes approximately 110 linear feet of unmarked on-street parking along the north side of Virginia Street (enough to accommodate 4 to 7 vehicles) and provides a buffered 12-foot cycle-track and two vehicular travel lanes.

Option B
Option B moves approximately 150 feet of curbline on the south side of Virginia, narrowing the sidewalk to 8.5 feet wide to create additional curb to curb width in the public right of way to retain the parking, travel lanes, and a minimum sized 9-foot buffered cycle-track.

Options A and B were presented to the Transportation & Infrastructure Commission (TIC) in June 2024 as the available options, and the TIC endorsed Option A.

Option C
At the June 2024 TIC meeting, a resident who lives on this constrained section of Virginia Street asked during public comment, whether BART or the City had considered repurposing a section of neglected landscaping on BART property to achieve the designed pedestrian and bike widths without removing parking. This proposal was further vetted by BART and City staff and is referenced as Option C.

Option C widens the approximately 200 feet of Virginia Street at the pinch point so that parking, travel lanes, a 12-foot cycle track, and 10-foot-wide sidewalk are maintained. This would be accomplished up to Acton Street through the removal of up to 4.5 feet of landscaping on the BART frontage and shifting the sidewalk south. Removal of the landscaping could reduce permeable surface area, which may require the installation of additional biofiltration areas. A potential location for the installation of this biofiltration infrastructure has been identified on Acton Street. During detailed design, permeable pavement options can be explored that could avoid this impact, mitigation, and cost.

BART and NBHP have identified a retaining wall adjacent to the landscape strip along Virginia and note that per BART Facility Standards, this retaining wall must be reconstructed if the landscape strip is reduced. Based on initial cost estimates, the wall requirements, sidewalk rebuild, lot line adjustments, and revisions to stormwater treatment plans would add approximately $1,000,000 to the Project's cost. Of the total additional costs, the costs attributed to the wall account for the vast majority of the additional costs. A funding source for these additional costs has yet to be identified. As shown in the evaluation below, Options A or B are funded, meaning that these options fit within the $3.36 million budget that NBHP has obtained.

<u>Virginia Streetscape between Sacramento and Acton – Alternatives Evaluation and Recommendations</u>

Public Works evaluated the alternatives based on cost, engineering feasibility, parking impacts, and stormwater impacts. All proposed options meet Fire Department minimum clear width and minimum traffic engineering and street design standards.

The following detailed matrix provides a summary as well as pros and cons for each alternative.

Options Evaluations Matrix

Detailed Matrix	Option A	Option B	Option C
	12-foot Bikeway, Full 10-foot sidewalk – Removal of 4-7 Parking Spaces	**Narrower bikeway (9 feet) and sidewalk (8.5 feet), and retains parking**	**12-foot Bikeway, Full 10-foot sidewalk, and parking – BART Traction Power Sub Station Wall Upgrades**
Summary	12-foot continuous bikeway along Virginia Readily implementable by developer with financing 100% committed leveraging State funding sources Removes 4-7 parking spaces Recommended by TIC (June 2024)	9-foot bikeway segment along Virginia Readily implementable by developer with financing 100% committed leveraging State funding sources Removes 0 parking spaces Not recommended by TIC (June 2024)	12-foot continuous bikeway along Virginia Requires redesign and upgrades to BART substation perimeter wall and stormwater system that results in an estimated $1M funding gap / unclear implementation timeline Removes 0 parking spaces Not reviewed by TIC
Advantages	Bike infrastructure which meets national/local standards that connects to the regionally-significant Ohlone Greenway Retains full 10-foot Sidewalk	Provides for all transportation options meeting minimum standards Retains 4–7 parking spaces	Bike infrastructure meets national/local standards that connects to the regionally significant Ohlone Greenway Retains 4–7 parking spaces

	Committed financing from the TOD project TOD project can deliver in phase 1 of construction	Committed financing from the TOD project TOD project can deliver in phase 1 of construction	Provides for retaining full 10-foot sidewalk
Disadvantages	Removes 4-7 parking spaces in public ROW Some community opposition was documented by some of the adjacent residents concerned about street parking loss	Provides narrower bike and pedestrian infrastructure at BART (regional transit hub) and Ohlone Greenway significant bike/ped corridor	Estimated up to $1M that would need to be funded; funding source has not been identified Potential additional stormwater treatment area needs Longer implementation timeline (design + BART reviews / approvals + possible community outreach) Requires changes to the TOD's Tentative Map, adding unforeseen costs to the TOD

These three alternatives all meet staff's recommended minimum standards and provide the range of alternatives for council consideration in terms of transportation improvement flexibility and cost. Option A provides wide bikeway and sidewalk but eliminates some parking. Option B presents the flexibility to shift the southern curbline, preserve on-street parking, and provides needed bike and pedestrian facilities at no cost to the City. Option C maximizes the width available to provide for all public transportation improvements, but would require additional investment.

The provision of a cycle-track that retains the full 10-foot wide sidewalk supports the high expected rates of walking and biking, which are two of the primary modes used to access the North Berkeley BART Station. The cycle-track and sidewalk also support the high volume of users along the Ohlone Greenway and Virginia Street bike boulevard. Providing bike and pedestrian facilities sized to meet cycling and walking demands is an issue for the Council to consider in this action.

The Virginia Street Bikeway is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities; create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city; and, be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

BACKGROUND

North Berkeley BART Station Redevelopment History:

In March 2020 the City and BART entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a framework for the development of the Ashby and North Berkeley BART Stations including establishing a community advisory group (CAG) process. The Council followed up this commitment by reserving $53 million of City affordable housing funding for the affordable units at both BART sites on April 27, 2021, unanimously adopted Resolution 69,833- N.S.

The City and BART executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) effective June 30, 2022, to cooperatively pursue BART's Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) at the North Berkeley and Ashby BART Stations. In accordance with the MOA, BART issued an RFQ for developer partners and BART's Board selected North Berkeley Housing Partners (NBHP) for the North Berkeley BART site in December 2022, subsequently entering an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with NBHP in June 2023.

BART, NBHP, and the City have met and reviewed plans for the redevelopment of the North Berkeley BART site over the ensuing period of time and on December 11, 2024, the City's Department of Planning & Development approved the Master Plan's entitlements and issued a Letter of Compliance with Assembly Bill 2011 for all of the private redevelopment, phasing, and public improvements including provision of bike and pedestrian facilities in the streets adjacent to NBB, including Virginia Street. The City's letter included conditions of approval providing for design review of Street Improvements, damage to the public right of way during construction, and acceptance of street improvements prior to issuance of building occupancy.

On June 5, 2025, BART notified the City that it was following the ENA to ground lease properties at the North Berkeley BART site to NBHP. NBHP will submit for City building permits for the private developments to be constructed at the site this November and asked the City to provide final direction on open questions pertaining to the TOD's public right of way improvements prior to this. This request for clarity resulted in City, BART, and NBHP revisiting the three options under consideration for the Virginia streetscape within the constrained 200-foot roadway section closest to the Acton Street intersection.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

This action is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code section 21080.25(b)(1) because it involves the construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve safety, access, or mobility within the public right-of-way. Pursuant to

Public Resources Code section 21080.25(c)(2), the project does not induce single-occupancy vehicle trips, add additional highway lanes, widen highways, or add physical infrastructure or striping to highways except for minor modifications needed for the efficient and safe movement of transit vehicles, bicycles, or high-occupancy vehicles. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.25(f), the project will be completed by a skilled and trained workforce.

This action seeks to approve an option that provides transportation infrastructure that adequately supports the continuation of a cycle track and pedestrian access along the south side of Virginia and connects to the Ohlone Greenway. At regional transit facilities such as BART Stations, provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to directly serve the site supports cycling and walking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, helping the City achieve the Berkeley Climate Action Plan greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of 80% below year 2000 levels by 2050. The Climate Action Plan states that, to meet these targets, “Transportation modes such as public transit, walking and bicycling must become the primary means of fulfilling our mobility needs.”

Should the removal of landscape area result in reduced permeable surface, mitigation efforts have been identified that would consist of new bio filtration areas located near the Project on Acton Street. An area for these biofiltration facilities has been identified and would be sized based upon impacts associated with final design of the site. Public Works will seek to minimize any increase in impervious surfaces using permeable pavements for the expanded sidewalk.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

To support Staff’s ongoing work to negotiate and finalize plans for the North Berkeley BART Station Transit Oriented Development Project Staff seek Council’s direction on a preferred design alternative.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

There is always a ‘no-build’ alternative whereby BART would leave this 200-foot section of Virginia unchanged through their project and the City could decide how to address the cycling connection later.

CONTACT PERSON

Mark Helmbrecht, Transportation Manager, Public Works, 510-981-6403

Attachments:

1: Resolution

Exhibit A: Virginia Street cross-section layout options and existing condition photos

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

VIRGINIA STREET BIKEWAY: COUNCIL ALTERNATIVE SELECTION TO SERVE THE NORTH BERKELEY BART STATION AND OHLONE GREENWAY

WHEREAS, In March 2020 the City and the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a framework for the development of the Ashby and North Berkeley BART Stations including establishing a community advisory group (CAG) process; and

WHEREAS, The Council reserved $53 million of City affordable housing funding for the affordable units at both BART sites in April 2021 (Resolution 69,833- N.S); and

WHEREAS, The City and BART executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) effective June 30, 2022 to cooperatively pursue BART's Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) at the North Berkeley and Ashby BART Stations; and

WHEREAS, BART issued an RFQ for developer partners and BART's Board selected North Berkeley Housing Partners (NBHP) for the North Berkeley BART (NBB) site in December 2022, subsequently entering an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) with NBHP in June 2023; and

WHEREAS, BART, NBHP, and the City have met and reviewed plans for the redevelopment of the NB BART site over the ensuing period of time and on December 11, 2024 the City's Department of Planning & Development approved the Master Plan's entitlements and issued a Letter of Compliance with Assembly Bill 2011 for all of the private redevelopment, phasing, and public improvements including provision of bike and pedestrian facilities in the streets adjacent to NBB, including Virginia Street; and

WHEREAS, BART notified the City that it was following the ENA to ground lease properties at the North Berkeley BART site to NBHP and that NBHP will submit for City building permits for the private developments to be constructed at the site this November 2025 and asked the City to provide final direction on open questions pertaining to the TOD's public right of way improvements; and

WHEREAS, BART along with City stakeholders developed the North Berkeley BART TOD Station Access Plan which examined and worked through most design issues for the public ROW on the local streets surrounding the BART Station. This planning process identified an approximately 200-foot pinch point in Virginia Street which constrained being able to provide consistent bike, pedestrian, travel lanes, and parking facilities; and

WHEREAS, BART and the City initially identified two options (A and B) for providing cycling and pedestrian options in this approximately 200-foot segment of Virginia Street and presented those options at the City's Transportation and Infrastructure Commission (TIC) in June 2024 and the Commission recommended Option A; and

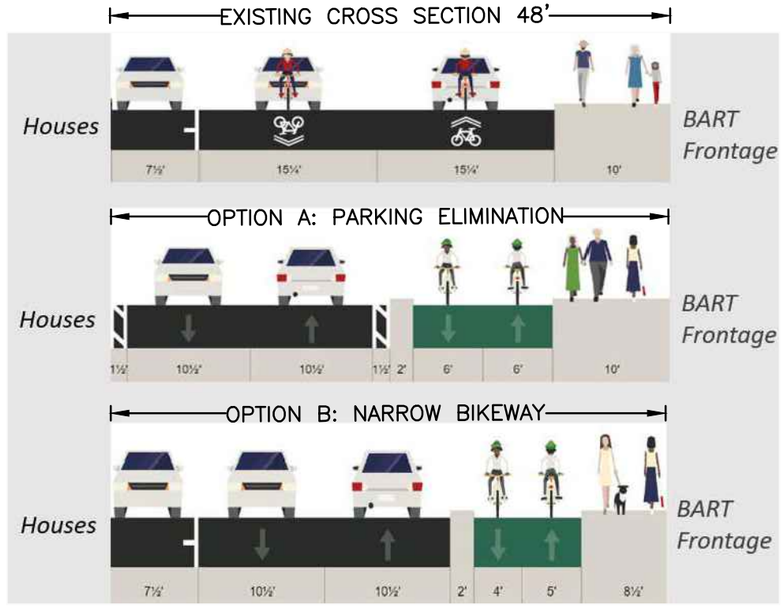
WHEREAS, Options A, B, and C as presented in the staff report presented to Council represent the full range of reasonable options available for delivering public transportation improvements within the approximately 200-foot segment of Virginia Street directly east of Acton Street; and

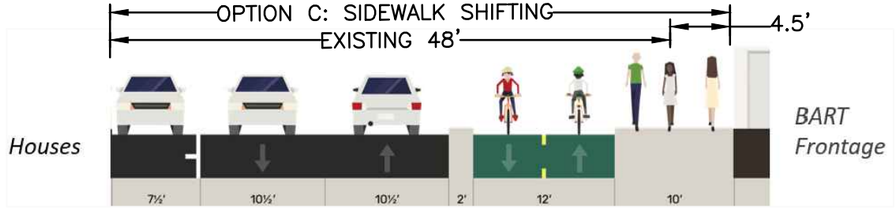
WHEREAS, staff recommend the implementation of Option A.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that Option A is the City's preferred option for the approximately 200-foot section of Virginia Street just east of Acton Street.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The City Manager is directed to work with BART and their TOD to deliver the preferred options improvements during upcoming redevelopment of the North Berkeley BART Station.

Exhibits
A: Virginia Street cross-section layout options and existing condition photos





EXISTING CONDITIONS PHOTOS

BIKEWAY IMPROVEMENTS

OHLONE GREENWAY & VIRGINIA STREET BIKEWAY

NOT TO SCALE

SUBMITTED: SUPERVISING TRAFFIC ENGINEER — DATE ____ R.C.E. ____ EXP. ____
APPROVED: MANAGER OF ENGINEERING — DATE ____ R.C.E. ____ EXP. ____
DESIGN ____ DRAWN ZT CHECK ____ REC.DWG ____
HORIZ. ____ VERT. ____ BOOK ____ DATE 9/23/2025

CITY OF BERKELEY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

NORTH BERKELEY BART BIKE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

PLAN ____ FILE ____ SHEET ___ OF ___

APPROVAL | DESCRIPTION | DATE | MARK | REVISION

Exhibit A