



Berkeley City Councilmember
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CONSENT CALENDAR

October 29, 2024

To: Members of the Berkeley City Council

From: Councilmember Igor Tregub

Subject: Budget Referral: One-Time \$30,000 Funding to Install an Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) at the intersection of Sacramento Street and Allston Way

RECOMMENDATION: Refer \$30,000 to the November 2024 AAO#1 budget process for one-time funding to install an Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) at Allston Way and Sacramento Street Intersection.

FISCAL IMPACT: \$30,000 from the General Fund.

BACKGROUND: Councilmember Tregub recently met with a District 4 resident and member of the Berkeley Commission on Disability. Among other challenges that people with disabilities in Berkeley face every day, she shared the challenges that blind people and people with impaired vision are enduring as it relates to heightened risk of being victims of traffic collisions. For example, this resident's son is blind and walks to Longfellow Middle School daily. He uses the Sacramento Street-Allston Way intersection regularly, and there are at least three other blind residents in the area who cross this intersection on a regular basis as well. These residents would benefit from the installation of an Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) at the intersection of Sacramento Street and Allston Way.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS: The absence of an APS makes it especially challenging for blind and low-vision pedestrians to navigate this intersection safely.

The typical way for a blind pedestrian to cross a street without an APS is by listening to near-parallel traffic noise signals to indicate that it is safe to cross. However, at this particular intersection, there is heavy traffic on Sacramento Street, while traffic on Allston Way is much lighter. This results in long waits, sometimes as many as five cycles of green-red lights, before any near-parallel traffic noise occurs on Allston, making it difficult for blind pedestrians to determine when it is safe to cross, often forcing them to cross when it may not be safe.

Additionally, the intersection poses an increased danger due to the significant amount of left-turn traffic, which adds to risk for both blind and sighted pedestrians. Alongside vision-impaired pedestrians, other pedestrians also experience difficulties at this intersection. Pedestrians are

often unsure of how much time they have to cross the street before oncoming traffic commences, requiring them to wait in unsafe conditions on the median until it is safe to finish crossing. The APS will indicate to all pedestrians when they may safely start crossing.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION: The installation of an APS at this intersection would greatly improve safety and accessibility for all blind and low-vision residents and potentially all residents, reducing the risk of motorist-pedestrian collisions.

This request aligned with several existing major strategic plans for the City of Berkeley, all of which recognize the need for better accessibility and traffic safety for all Berkeley residents. It also emphasizes the importance of accommodating children and adults with varying visual abilities.

- [Berkeley's Vision Zero Action Plan](#)¹.
- [Navigable Cities Framework for Ensuring Access and Freedom of-Movement for People with Disabilities in Berkeley](#)².
- [2020 Pedestrian Plan](#)³
- [Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines \(PROWAG\)](#)⁴
- The 2019-2022 updated [ADA/504 Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan](#)⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS: According to the community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory in the Climate Action Plan and Resilience Update⁶ released

¹ Vision Zero Action Plan <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/adopted-plans/vision-zero-action-plan>

² Navigable Cities Framework for Ensuring Access and Freedom of-Movement for People with Disabilities in Berkeley <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2020-10-20%20Special%20Item%2001%20Proposed%20Navigable%20Cities%20Framework.pdf>

³ 2020 Pedestrian Plan <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/2020-Pedestrian-Plan.pdf>

⁴ Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) <https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/>

⁵ The 2019-2022 updated ADA/504 Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/City of Berkeley - ADA Self-Evaluation %26 Transition Plan %282019-2023%29 - WCAG-compliant.pdf>

⁶ Climate Action Plan and Resilience Update <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-11-29%20Item%2016%20Climate%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

on November 29, 2020, the transportation sector accounts for 46% of the City of Berkeley greenhouse gas emissions.

Walking is the most sustainable way of getting around. Every effort to make communities safe for walking and biking contributes to the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled and therefore aids in decarbonization and overtime amounts to substantive environmental, sustainability, and climate impacts.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION: If the allocated amount is not enough to complete this project, the Council could take future action to provide gap funding to complete the project.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION: Cost estimates for future actions will not be known until the traffic safety study and preliminary engineering is conducted.

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