



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR
 April 12, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson (Author) and Councilmember Kate Harrison (Co-Author), Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Lori Droste (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Budget Referral: Downtown Berkeley BART Station Modernization Design

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$250,000 to the June 2022 budget process to contribute to funding Bay Area Rapid Transit's preliminary design engineering work for the Downtown Berkeley BART Station Modernization project.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Berkeley Station Modernization Plan creates a community-based vision for modernizing the station with a high standard of design excellence, functionality and cost effectiveness. It identifies and prioritizes long-term improvements to guide future investment in the station, including fixing and upgrading core existing station and system facilities to keep the station functioning well, and other proposed upgrades to improve station circulation, access and customer experience.

The plan recommends a set of comprehensive improvements developed through a collaborative planning process, including:

- **Placemaking, aesthetics, and customer experience:** Reopening the public restroom, adding new signage and public art, overhauling ceilings/walls/floors
- **ADA access and circulation:** Replacing elevators with accessible elevators, adding an additional escalator, upgrading handrails and guardrails, installing bicycle access channels and storage
- **Safety and security:** Improving lighting and sightlines, replacing fare gates
- **System and facility upgrades:** Repairing and replacing worn or outdated materials, improving the PA system and emergency/life safety systems

The Downtown Berkeley BART station serves not only as a transit hub for BART and AC Transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians, but also as the gateway to the City of Berkeley and UC Berkeley campus. It provides great benefits to the City by decreasing our transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and bringing commuters, customers, and tourists into our downtown.



BART held two public in-station outreach events at the Downtown Berkeley BART Station to acquire riders' opinions on the modernization of the Downtown Berkeley station. They were held on September 30, 2015 during the evening commute (4-7 pm) and on October 1, 2015 during the morning commute (7-10 am). BART riders and members of the public could learn about the modernization study, fill out a survey, talk to BART planning staff and provide comments. In addition, between September 30 and October 19, 2015, BART collected feedback through an online survey. BART received 1,031 responses and 357 comments during this period. Based on the free-response comments, the top suggestions were 1) improving access with more entrances and fare gates, 2) increasing signage, 3) improving station cleanliness and smell, 4) adding more elevators, escalators, and stairs, and 5) increasing safety.¹

The Downtown Berkeley survey results conveyed that the majority of BART riders prioritize function, service, and cleanliness over aesthetics, and would like to see investment in improving these areas before other modernization occurs. Many BART riders who took the survey would like to see improvements in accessibility, which include adding more entrances, elevators, stairs, and escalators. In addition, many would like to see signs added at the ground level indicating train departure times. Many other additional comments were also taken into consideration, including requests for better bike accessibility and wheelchair access, and more public art in the station.

Significant development in the neighborhood and the renovations of the street-level station plaza and adjoining Shattuck Avenue all provide an impetus to modernize the station. Stakeholders provided consistent input that they want improvements that will "refresh" the station, creating a brighter and more functional environment that reflects the Berkeley community while retaining the station's unique architectural elements.

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<https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/DT%20Berkeley%20Station%20Mod%20Survey%20Results%20Final.pdf>

In April 2017, the Final Report of the Downtown Berkeley BART Station Design Concept and Modernization Plan was released.² The plan's strategy for the Downtown Berkeley BART Station establishes a long-term vision for station improvements. Its framework of priorities and improvements can be used as a guide for selection and implementation as BART's scheduling and available funding permit. Preliminary design work should begin on selected Phase 1 improvements in the near future to enable their implementation in a timely manner.

At present, the work is at approximately 15% design. The next step would bring the project to 35% design, which would include an updated total project cost estimate. Current estimates suggest that a complete preliminary design would cost \$2.5M. This budget referral recommends contributing \$250K towards that goal. Ultimately, BART will need to secure additional funding to achieve 100% design.

By providing funding to support preliminary design engineering work, the City of Berkeley can demonstrate to BART and to the Alameda County Transportation Commission our continued interest in seeing the project completed as soon as possible, and our eagerness to work with regional partners on our shared transportation goals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$250,000 from the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Encouraging public transit use is a critical strategy to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. BART trains are 100% electric, with over 97% of that power coming from zero and low-carbon sources including solar and hydro energy. BART is increasing its use of low-carbon, zero-carbon and renewable energy sources, with the goal of transitioning to 100% carbon-free by 2035 and 100% renewable energy by 2045. Just one commuter using BART each weekday instead of driving saves over 360 gallons of gas and 7,000 pounds of CO₂ in a year. The Downtown Berkeley BART Station Modernization project is critical both to renew aging infrastructure in the BART Station and to attract new potential riders who may today be drivers.

CONTACT PERSON

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² https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/BART-DTB_FinalReport_April2017.pdf

