



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 27, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board
 Submitted by: Kate King, Chair, Solano Avenue BID Advisory Board
 Subject: Renewal of the Solano Avenue BID for Calendar Year 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board's (hereafter "Solano BID Advisory Board" or "the Advisory Board") recommendation that Council: 1) approve the 2020 Annual Report and preliminary budget on proposed improvements in the District for calendar year 2021; 2) declare its intent to levy an assessment to finance improvements in the District for calendar year 2021; and 3) direct the City Clerk to schedule a public hearing on the renewal of the assessment for November 17, 2020.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Projected BID revenue of approximately \$25,000 will be deposited into the Solano Avenue BID Fund, revenue budget code 783-21-208-251-0000-000-000-412110- and expensed from budget code 783-21-208-251-0000-000-446-636110-. The BID constitutes an independent funding source that must be targeted to commercial revitalization efforts that are recommended by the Solano BID Advisory Board. To the extent that the work of the Solano BID enhances the economic development of Solano Avenue and its business climate over the long term, the BID contributes towards improving City revenues through increased sales and property taxes.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Renewal of the Solano BID is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to foster a dynamic, sustainable, and locally-based economy. Under the State of California Parking and Business Improvement Area law of 1989 (California Streets and Highways Code section 36500 et.seq.) the City Council must approve an Annual Report prepared by the Solano BID Advisory Board with a proposed budget for the next year as a requirement to levy new assessments. Accordingly, at its meeting of September 15, 2020, the Solano BID Advisory Board voted to recommend that the City Council approve the Report for the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District for 2020-21 and adopt a Resolution of Intention to renew the assessment for that year (Ayes: Campbell, Smith; Nays: Andrews). The Resolution of Intention also sets a public hearing date for November 17, 2020 where affected Solano businesses can express support or opposition to renewal of the BID for calendar year 2021. If written and/or oral

protests are received from businesses proposed to pay a majority of the assessment, Council cannot vote to levy assessments for 2021. If no majority protest is received the Council may renew the assessment.

BACKGROUND

Since its revival in May 2012, the Solano BID Advisory Board has used Solano BID revenues to finance three programs: 1) a tree watering contract to ensure the health of 48 young street trees on Solano; 2) installing a program of 40 hanging planter baskets on light poles; and 3) sponsorship of events that attract customers to the district and improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience. In 2020, the BID program has focused on sponsoring activities and improvements intended to market and promote the Solano Avenue business district. In the wintertime, the BID in conjunction with the Solano Avenue Association (which represents both Albany and Berkeley businesses along Solano Avenue) pays a contractor to erect holiday lights and decorations on City street light poles. This will continue for the 2020-21 season. Although the BID will spend a good portion of its funds on the holiday décor program, in 2020 it also plans to establish an expanded landscaping program for merchants to clean and level tree wells. Also, the BID will support local marketing and local merchants impacted by COVID-19 with support of group outdoor commerce installations. BID expenditures are to be made through an established fiscal agency contract with Telegraph Property and Business Management Corporation (Telegraph PBMC).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

By maintaining and enhancing the district, the Solano BID creates shopping opportunities for residents and visitors alike while encouraging alternative forms of transportation. The environmental enhancements such as the added street trees, hanging planters, parklet, and holiday decorations contribute to making Solano a more pleasant walking destination. Because the District is well served by public transportation and biking infrastructure, these services indirectly support environmental sustainability goals of encouraging alternative transportation choices and decreasing vehicle miles traveled.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

State law requires that the City Council annually renew the Solano BID by first passing a resolution stating Council's intention to levy an annual assessment and scheduling a public hearing on the proposed renewed assessment for the coming year.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Eleanor Hollander, Secretary to the Solano BID Advisory Board, (510) 981-7536.

Attachments:

1: Resolution

Exhibit A: Report for the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District 2020-21

Exhibit A1: Map of the Solano BID

Exhibit A2: Assessment Rate

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

APPROVING THE ANNUAL REPORT AND PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE SOLANO AVENUE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR 2020-21; DECLARING COUNCIL'S INTENTION TO LEVY AN ASSESSMENT IN THE DISTRICT FOR 2021; AND DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR NOVEMBER 17, 2020 TO CONSIDER LEVYING A RENEWED ASSESSMENT FOR 2021.

WHEREAS, the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 (California Streets and Highway Code section 36500 et seq.) authorizes cities to establish parking and business improvement areas for the purpose of imposing assessments on businesses for certain purposes; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2003 the Berkeley City Council established such an area known as the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District (the "District"); and

WHEREAS, the City Council established a Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board (Advisory Board) to act in compliance with State law to oversee the activities of the District; and

WHEREAS, the City Council established a Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board (Advisory Board) to act in compliance with State law to oversee the activities of the District; and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board has submitted an Annual Report to the Berkeley City Council that outlines the activities of the District proposed for 2021 as required by the California Streets and Highways Code Section 36533; and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report is clear and complete and found to comply with the interests of Solano Avenue assessees; and

WHEREAS, the annual process for levying assessments in Business Improvement Districts requires that cities adopt a Resolution of Intent that declares their intent to levy such an assessment and then set a date for a public hearing where interested parties may be heard on the issue.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1. The City Council hereby approves the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Annual Report 2020 and Budget for the year 2021 (Exhibit A) as submitted to the City Clerk by the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Advisory Board.

Section 2. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 36500 et seq. of the California Streets and Highways Code (the "Act"), the City Council declares its intent to levy an annual

assessment for the parking and business improvement area known as the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District.

Section 3. The boundaries of the District are set forth in Exhibit A1 to the 2020-21 Annual Report which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 4. The improvements and activities proposed for the District are as described in the Report and budget (Exhibit A) and appended hereto.

Council intends that these funds be used for designated activities and improvements in the Solano Avenue commercial area. Council explicitly intends that funds generated through this BID shall not be used to pay for activities routinely paid for by the City.

Section 5. The City Council intends to levy assessments on businesses located within the boundaries of the District shown Exhibit A1 and according to the business classifications and rates set forth in Exhibit A2 which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 6. A public hearing shall be held before the City Council on November 17, 2020 virtually on a publicly accessible Zoom conference call. Once posted, the agenda for this meeting will include a link for public participation using Zoom video technology. Following the hearing the Council will consider adoption of a resolution levying an assessment as recommended by the Solano Avenue Business Improvement Advisory Board. At this hearing the Council will hear all interested persons for or against the levying of such an assessment.

Formal protests against the levying of the District assessment must be made in writing. All written and oral protests should contain the following certification: "I certify that I am the owner of the business listed below, and that the business is located or operates within the boundaries of the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District." Protests should also contain the following information: business name (printed), business address (printed), City Business License Tax Registration number, name of protester (printed), signature of protester, date of protest and the reason(s) the protester is against the levying of the District assessment. Protests will not be considered valid unless signed and submitted by the owner of a business located within the boundaries of the proposed District. Written protests shall be filed with the City Clerk, First Floor, City Hall, at 2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, California, 94704, prior to the close of the public hearing on November 17, 2020 and shall contain a description of the business sufficient to identify the business, and if the person so protesting is not listed on City records as the owner of the business, the protest shall be accompanied by written evidence that the person subscribing the protest is the owner of the business. Any protest pertaining to the regularity or sufficiency of the proceedings shall be in writing and shall clearly set forth the irregularity or defect to which the objection is made. If written protests are received from the owners of businesses in the District which will pay fifty percent (50%) or more of the assessment proposed to be levied, no further proceedings to levy the assessment shall be taken for a period of one year from the date of the finding of a majority protest by the City Council. If the majority protest is only against the furnishing of a specified type or

types of improvements or activities within the District, those types of improvements or activities shall be eliminated.

Section 7. The City Clerk is directed to give notice of said public hearing by publishing the Resolution of Intention in a newspaper of general circulation seven days prior to the public hearing.

Exhibits

A: Report for the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District 2020-21

A1: Map of the Solano BID

A2: Assessment Rates

Report for the Solano Avenue Business Improvement District for 2020 and Budget for 2021**Background**

The first version of the Solano Business Improvement District (BID) operated from 2002-2007 with administration of the BID headed by the Solano Avenue Association. In January, 2012, the Council appointed the Solano BID Advisory Board to administer the Solano Avenue BID, to fund physical improvements to the street and dedicate marketing and promotion efforts towards the businesses on the portion of Solano Avenue that lies in Berkeley. This Annual report and budget updates the 8th full year of operational programs and progress on the revived Solano BID.

Landscape program

In 2013, the Solano BID financed a tree watering program for young street trees along upper Solano Avenue. In 2016, per the City of Berkeley arborist, the trees were mature enough to not require additional water services. In early 2016, the board voted to enhance Solano's landscape by installing a program of 41 hanging planter baskets on light poles distributed throughout the district; utilizing the Downtown Berkeley Association's (DBA) services. The DBA watered and maintained the baskets through the end of calendar year 2018, but has declined to continue this contract. In 2019 and 2020, rainwater alone supported the baskets, and the Solano BID started a conversation with The Downtown Streets Team (DST) to supplement other efforts to clean, weed, and level the tree wells through the district, and to develop an ongoing watering and maintenance system for the hanging flower baskets. This work was challenging to get started because of the need to identify a storage place for DST's tools, and the impacts of COVID-19 since March 2020, but now a storage location has been identified and this program should provide support for 2021 and beyond.

In late 2019, early 2020 funds were approved and RFP and selection process was conducted for a public realm plan study on Solano. The BID was supportive of the process and was deeply committed to involving both local merchants and local residents in the effort to re-imagine Solano Avenue in a way that brings more vitality to the Avenue in concert with the efforts of the City of Albany with the intention of strengthening the Solano Avenue 'brand' overall. Sadly, the funding for this project was repurposed for the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The future of this project still remains unclear and the project is "on hold" for now.

Marketing and promotion of Solano

Marketing and promotion of Solano Avenue constitutes the second priority of the Solano BID. To promote the avenue during the holiday season, a holiday light display program was established by the Solano BID. In 2016 and 2017 the BID contracted with a vendor, the Christmas Light Pros of SF, to deploy decorative unlit multi-colored garlands. In 2018 and 2019, the board approved funding for a new vendor which, under direction of the Solano Avenue Association (SAA), covered more poles and provided greater decoration coordination opportunities with neighboring Albany, all at a lower cost than previous seasons. The intention for the holiday season in 2020-21 is to use the same vendor and reimburse the SAA after the lights are installed. This partnership underscores the leverage that the SAA organization has been able to provide to support BID efforts for the Berkeley portion of Solano Avenue.

In June of 2020, the Solano BID Advisory Board voted to support to merchants on Solano during the global pandemic. The BID Advisory Board considered whether a group application for a limited engagement of street closure dedicated to outdoor commerce would be helpful to Solano Avenue Merchants. Provided that the outdoor commerce installation provided for adequate access for delivery/food pick up and safe outdoor dining, personal service, fitness and retail installations. Consequently the group voted to allocate up to \$35,000 total to support efforts related to outdoor commerce/street closure in the public ROW. The \$35,000 is to be roughly allocated as such: \$25,000 for program start up and design, \$10,000 for operations through the end of calendar year 2020. The effort is currently in the initial planning and design phases.

In the remainder of 2020, the Advisory Board may again decide to participate in the development of virtual or otherwise safe holiday campaigns and activities (i.e. supporting the Solano Avenue Association in socially distant gatherings or events 'Online Santa on Solano' event or similar). The details of the overall 2020 (and the future 2021) event and marketing program will be developed over the remainder of the year, with a possible coordinated launch party for the new Touchstone Oaks bouldering gym at the top of the Avenue once it is safe to gather again and construction is complete.

Expanded landscaping improvements (including porous pavement in tree wells) have yet to be determined by the board. It is presumed that provided a successful demonstration of landscaping maintenance this fall/winter season (2020-21), a multi-year contract could be extended accordingly.

Solano BID Administration

The Solano BID has one existing contract; a fiscal agent contract with the Telegraph Property and Business Management Corporation (Telegraph PBMC), who charges a 5% fee on their total contract size annually.

FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE SOLANO BID, SEPTEMBER 2020

Solano BID Revenue, as of 9/13/2020	\$54,881.76
Less fiscal agent fee to Telegraph PBMC (5%)	(\$1,250.00)
Less funds allocated for Solano Ave Assn 2019-20 Holiday Events (Sept 2019 allocation)	(\$2,000.00)
Less funds allocated for Outdoor Commerce Installations/Business Support (June 2020 allocation)	
Outdoor Commerce operations through 12/ 2020	(\$10,000.00)
Outdoor Commerce program start up and design	(\$25,000.00)
Less funds allocated for decorative holiday garlands (anticipated Sept 2020 allocation) + Installation + Removal + Storage Nov '20 to Jan '21	(\$5,710.00)
<i>Unallocated as of 9/13/2020</i>	<i>\$9,881.00</i>

Renewal of the Solano Avenue BID for Calendar Year 2021

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BUDGET FOR THE SOLANO BID FOR 2021 (Calendar Year)

Estimated new revenue	=	\$22,000.00
<u>Carryover from 2020 (estimated)</u>	=	<u>\$9,881.00</u>
Total available for expenditure in 2021	=	\$31,881.00

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES FOR 2021 (Calendar Year)

Landscaping installation/tree well porous pavement	=	\$12,000.00
Watering and Maintenance for hanging flower baskets	=	\$5,000.00
Installation, removal and storage of holiday decor 2021-22 season	=	\$5,000.00
<u>Other marketing expenditure (branding/business support etc.)</u>	=	<u>\$9,000.00</u>
Total projected expenditure	=	\$31,000.00

Recommendations

The Advisory Board recommends that the Council approve the Annual Report and Budget for 2021.

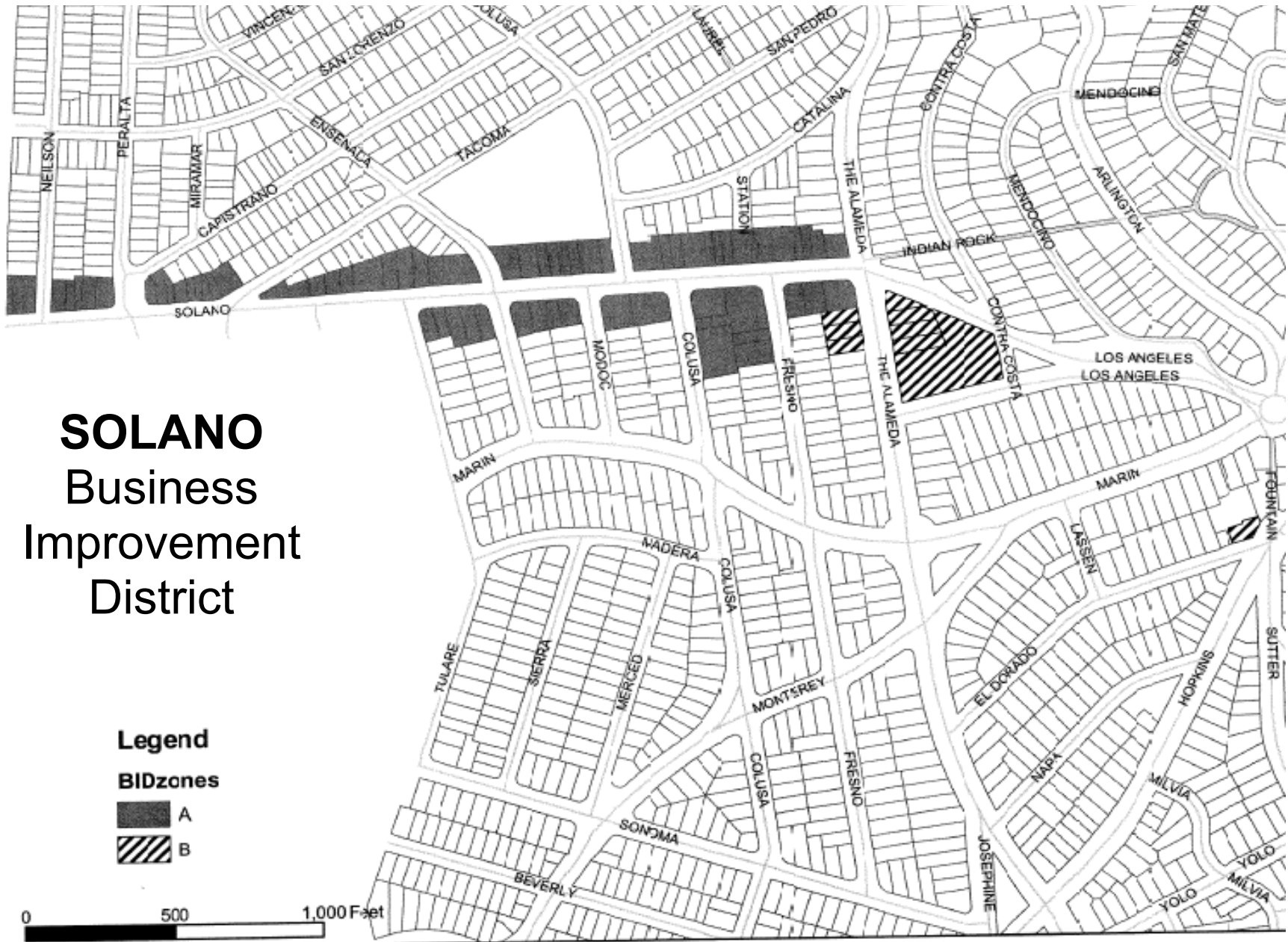
The Advisory Board recommends that the Council make no changes in the boundaries of the Solano Business Improvement District or in the two Benefit Zones, A & B.

The recommended improvements and activities for 2021 are those stated in the Report. The cost for providing them is stated in the Budget for 2021.

The method and basis for the assessment is as stated in Exhibit A2.

The estimate for surplus revenues to be carried over from 2020 is as stated in the Budget for 2021

Exhibit A1



October 27, 2020

Exhibit A2

Berkeley Solano Avenue Business Improvement District Annual Assessment Formula

Type of Business		Annual Assessments	
		Zone A	Zone B
a. <i>Retailers and Restaurants</i>	1-5 employees	\$200	\$125
	6-9 employees	\$300	\$175
	10+ employees	\$400	\$225
b. <i>Service Businesses</i>		\$175	\$100
c. <i>Professional Services</i>		\$100	\$65
d. <i>Financial Institutions</i>		\$500	\$500

