

CONSENT CALENDAR

May 25, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Terry Taplin (Author)

Subject: Budget Referral: Sixth Street Traffic Calming Improvements for the Improvement of Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council refers to the budget process the funding of traffic calming improvements as follows:

- Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFB) and a median refuge island at Sixth and Channing Way
- A median refuge island at Sixth and Addison Street

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At the March 9th, 2021 Regular Session of the Berkeley City Council, Councilmember Taplin's budget referral for the funding of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at the intersection of Sixth & Addison Street was approved and forwarded for funding consideration under the FY 21-22 budget process.¹ The funding and eventual construction of RRFB at this intersection would be an important improvement for pedestrian and cyclist safety along Sixth Street, but would fall short of creating a Sixth Street that is welcome to pedestrians and cyclists along this heavily trafficked street in West Berkeley. The traffic calming improvements proposed by this referral should be funded in tandem with Sixth & Addison's RRFB in order to support the City of Berkeley's vision for accessible, safe, and low-carbon transportation options.

Sixth Street should be prioritized in such pursuits in light of its status as a "High-Injury Street" as well as an "Equity Priority Area" under the City's Vision Zero Action Plan.² The fact that Sixth Street falls under both of these categories indicates that not only is Sixth among the most dangerous streets in Berkeley where traffic injuries are a regular occurrence, it is also in a historically undervalued and underfunded part of Berkeley, not least of all because of the discrimination against the historically African-American

¹https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2021/03_Mar/Documents/2021-03-09_Item_15_Budget_Referral_Funding_Rectangular.aspx

²https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley_Vision_Zero_Action_Plan_Approved_03102020.pdf

community that calls West Berkeley home. The two intersections highlighted by this referral were not chosen at random, as Sixth & Addison and Sixth & Channing have both seen severe pedestrian injuries in recent years.³ RRFB and medians at both Sixth & Addison and Sixth & Channing are also specifically called for under the City's Bicycle Plan due to the street having "one lane in each direction and high traffic volumes" which indicate a need for pedestrian warning improvements and physical pedestrian refuge infrastructure.⁴

FISCAL IMPACTS

Staff time, an estimated \$50,000 for installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons and an estimated \$50,000 for 10 years of maintenance, and an estimated \$7,000-\$80,000 for two median refuge islands.⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Establishing a network of safe streets for pedestrians and bicycles, promoting bicycle literacy, and distributing bicycles to those in need incentivize nonautomobile travel, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The City estimates that transportation-related emissions accounts for approximately 60% of our community's total annual greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ By encouraging alternatives to car transportation by making pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure safer and more accessible, these improvements stand to lower the emissions from our community's dominant source of carbon emissions.

CONTACT

Terry Taplin, Councilmember, District 2, (510) 981-7120

³https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley_Vision_Zero_Action_Plan_Approved_03102020.pdf

⁴https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_Ch5_ProposedBikewayNetwork.pdf

⁵[https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_AppendixF_Facility%20Design%20Toolbox\(1\).pdf](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Public_Works/Level_3_-_Transportation/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_AppendixF_Facility%20Design%20Toolbox(1).pdf)

⁶https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2018/12_Dec/Documents/2018-12-06_WS_Item_01_Climate_Action_Plan_Update_pdf.aspx