

CONSENT CALENDAR

March 21, 2023

Councilmember Sophie Hahn
City of Berkeley, District 5

TO: Honorable Members of the City Council
FROM: Councilmember Hahn (Author); Councilmember Taplin (Co-Sponsor);
Councilmember Wengraf (Co-Sponsor)
SUBJECT: Budget Referral - Speed Feedback Signs for Arlington Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

In support of the City’s Vision Zero Action Plan and Pedestrian Plan goals, refer to the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Process an allocation of \$40,000 for two Speed Feedback Signs on Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue, to encourage slower speeds on a stretch with numerous hidden and mid-block crosswalks.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimate provided by Transportation Department Staff for purchase and installation of two Speed Feedback Signs is approximately \$40,000.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Arlington Avenue is identified in Berkeley’s Vision Zero Action Plan as a High-Injury Street. Current conditions on Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue create unsafe conditions for pedestrians that will be improved by the implementation of a variety of traffic calming treatments recommended by the City’s Transportation Division, including the installation of two Speed Feedback Signs. The street is a major thoroughfare and is unusually configured, with single-lane upper and lower tiers divided by a steep median that includes concrete curbs and walls of varying heights, with trees and vegetation that can block sight-lines. Paths from the City’s [paths network](#) cross this segment of Arlington mid-block, and the street curves, rises, and dips along contours of the hill, creating additional visibility challenges at crosswalks.

Transportation Division staff have completed a traffic calming study and prescribed a suite of improvements to support safe crossings for pedestrians, including Speed Feedback Signs. To install two Speed Feedback Signs and support the City’s Pedestrian and Vision Zero plans, staff has provided an estimated cost of approximately \$40,000.

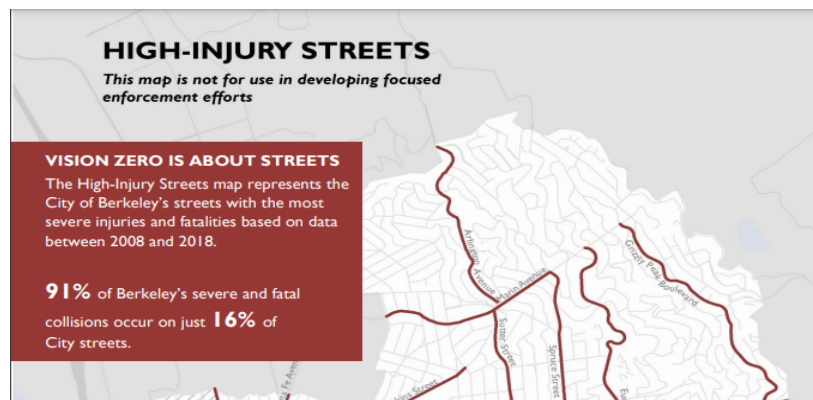
BACKGROUND

The Arlington is a main thoroughfare originating from The Circle in North Berkeley and stretching for six miles through Kensington, El Cerrito, and Richmond. The segment of Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue carries a high volume of traffic, both local and regional. It bisects an area with many families and young children as well as older residents. Over several decades, [Berkeley's network of paths](#) has been significantly improved, and more and more residents, as well as many visitors to Berkeley, use the paths to get to and from work and transit, or for recreation.

Over the years, the Public Works Department and District 5 office have received reports of dangerous conditions from community members living on and around The Arlington. A lack of visibility at pedestrian crossings paired with vehicles regularly driving faster than the speed limit has created an unsafe environment. A formal request for a traffic calming study was submitted in April of 2022.

The Transportation Division recently completed the study and concluded that the average speed of vehicles traveling both north and southbound on this stretch exceed the minimum criteria set by the traffic calming program, indicating that traffic calming is warranted in the area. Transportation Division staff have recommended a variety of immediate safety upgrades including improved signage, repainted crosswalks and other road markings, and reflectors. In addition, staff have recommended installation of two Electronic Speed Feedback signs, which will take longer to achieve due to lack of funds and an existing queue. A companion budget referral is being submitted to obtain funds for the safety upgrades that can be more quickly implemented than feedback signs.

Berkeley's [Vision Zero Action Plan](#) designates Arlington Avenue as a "High-Injury Street," based on data about severe injuries and fatalities.



The Vision Zero Plan includes important goals that are supported by the improvements to Arlington Avenue recommended by Transportation staff including:

- Safety is our highest priority. Human life is more important than speed, convenience, or property. We will evaluate trade-offs and make both proactive and reactive engineering decisions about street design based on this value.
- Traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable and unacceptable. Using holistic, data-driven, systems-level approach to street design, we will treat fatal and severe collisions as preventable and unacceptable incidents that can and must be addressed.
- People make mistakes. We will design our streets so that mistakes do not result in death or severe injury.
- Slower streets are safer streets. We will design, construct, and operate our streets for slower speeds with the goal of eliminating all fatal and severe collisions, and protecting our most vulnerable street users.
- We will create safer transportation options for people who walk, bike, and take transit. Creating safer and more comfortable transportation options for people to walk, bike, and take transit can make these modes more attractive and reduce the number of car trips in Berkeley. Fewer car trips can mean fewer severe and fatal collisions.

[Berkeley's Pedestrian Plan](#) envisions Berkeley as a model walkable city where traveling on foot or with an assistive device is safe, comfortable, and convenient for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, ages and abilities. The Plan's goals provide direction for achieving the vision. These goals are:

- Increase safety and comfort for people walking
- Increase equity and transportation choices for all
- Improve public health and environmental sustainability

The pedestrian safety improvements recommended by the Transportation Division support the vision and goals of these City plans.

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATIONS

Installation of Speed Feedback Signs will support reductions in the speed of traffic, increasing pedestrian and overall safety on Arlington Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Pedestrian safety is paramount to encouraging community members to walk to their destinations, which reduces GHG emissions and supports health.

CONTACT PERSON

Sophie Hahn - Council District 5 - 510-981-7150

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Berkeley Traffic Calming Study Arlington



Transportation Division

September 29, 2022

Subject: Neighborhood Request for Physical Traffic Calming Measures

Dear Arlington Avenue Residents,

This correspondence has been prepared in response to the neighborhood request for a traffic calming study and evaluation for physical traffic calming measures on Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue in accordance with City Council Resolution No. 64-732-N.S.

Traffic Calming Criteria:

We considered the following criteria to determine the feasibility of installation of traffic calming devices:

Minimum Criteria to Qualify for Traffic Calming	
SHALL meet the following two conditions:	AND at least <u>one</u> of these conditions:
<p>1) Any residential street area; AND</p> <p>2) 50% + 1 of households within the petition area defined by City staff support the proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where the 85th percentile speed profile is greater than 5 mph over the speed limit; OR - Proximity to school or park (within two blocks), or senior center (within one block) combined with 85th percentile speed profile greater than 3 mph over the speed limit; OR - Mitigate a documented collision pattern (bike, pedestrian, motor vehicle); OR - Where there is a documented problem of a significant or inappropriate number of “through” motor vehicles on the street or in the neighborhood, per ITE volume guidelines for neighborhood streets (2500 vpd average)

Reported Concerns:

The residents of Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue have the following concerns:

- Speeding
- Pedestrian Safety
- Bicycle Safety

Existing Conditions:

- According to the City of Berkeley General Plan, Arlington Avenue within the study area is classified:
 - A north-south collector roadway,
 - A secondary transit route.
- Curbside parking is available on both sides of the street (starting from the first crosswalk which is located 140' north of The Circle);
- There are four ladder crosswalks between Mendocino Avenue and The Circle;
- There is a landscaped middle island along Arlington Avenue between Mendocino Avenue and The Circle;
- Indian Rock Park is 300' away from Arlington Avenue;
- Arlington Avenue contains white traffic edge lines in both directions (NB/SB) that outline and separate the travel lane from the shoulder. The traffic edge lines narrows the travel lane, which is used as a traffic calming measure on this stretch;
- Arlington Avenue contains yellow traffic edge lines in both directions (NB/SB) that outline and separate the existing landscaped middle island from the travel lane;
- There are three W11-2 (crosswalk signs) on Arlington Avenue (NB) within the study area. There are two W11-2 (crosswalk signs) on Arlington Avenue (SB) within the study area;
- There are four AC Transit bus stops within the study area:
 - Two bus stops (NB/SB) located at the intersection of Arlington Avenue and Indian Rock Path.
 - Two bus stops (NB/SB) located at the intersection of Arlington Avenue and Mendocino Avenue.
- To the south of the study area, Arlington Avenue (NB/SB) intersects with The Circle. The following traffic control devices have been installed at the intersection:
 - STOP sign and STOP pavement (right side of the median) on Arlington Avenue (SB) and The Circle;
 - YIELD sign and YIELD pavement (left side of the median) on Arlington Avenue (SB) and The Circle;
 - Triple - 4 crosswalks at the intersection of Arlington Avenue and The Circle;
 - 50' red curb on Arlington Avenue (NB) before Indian Rock Avenue;

- There is a southbound travel lane on Arlington Avenue (right side of the median) for vehicles exiting Indian Rock Avenue (SB);
- Two 50' double yellow centerlines are provided along Arlington Avenue (NB) before Indian Rock Avenue (north of The Circle).
- To the north of the study area, Arlington Avenue forms a three-way intersection with Mendocino Avenue. The following traffic control devices have been installed at the intersection:
 - Ladder crosswalk on Arlington Avenue (left and right side of the median) at the intersection of Mendocino Avenue;
 - Standard crosswalk on Mendocino Avenue at the intersection of Arlington Avenue;
 - W11-2 crosswalk sign at the median (on Arlington Avenue);
 - Red curb markings for pedestrian visibility on Arlington Avenue (south/north of Mendocino Avenue);
 - Landscaped middle island along Arlington Avenue (north/south of Mendocino Avenue);
 - A 30' buffer area across from the red curb marking (south of Mendocino Avenue).
- The speed limit is 25 mph within the study area.

Data Collection Summary:

- Vehicular volume and speed data were collected for a duration of one week from Monday, April 11, 2022 through Sunday, April 17, 2022. Following is a summary of vehicular volume and speed data:

Location	Direction	Average Daily Traffic (vehicles)	85 th ile Speed* (mph)
Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue	North	4300	33
	South	4558	29

*The 85th percentile is the speed that 85% of the traffic is traveling at or below. It is a very common tool for monitoring and comparing traffic operations, and for setting speed limits.

- The midblock and intersection reported collision records over the 5-year period (collision data available from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021) show that seven (7) collisions were recorded in the study area. Following is the summary of reported collisions:

Location	Total # of Collisions	Vehicle Involved with	Primary Collision Factor
Arlington Ave/The Circle	1	Other motor vehicle	Improper Passing
Arlington Ave/Mendocino Ave	3	Fixed Object Fixed Object Other motor vehicle	Unsafe Speed Driving Under Influence Unsafe Starting/Backing
Arlington Ave Between Mendocino Ave and The Circle	3	Parked motor vehicle Other motor vehicle Fixed Object	Driving Under Influence Unsafe Speed Wrong Side of Road

Summary of Evaluations:

- Speeding – The speed limit within the study area is 25 mph. The 85th percentile speed data collected in the field (31 mph) exceeds the minimum criteria set by the traffic calming program, indicating that traffic calming is warranted in the study area.
- Pedestrian and bicyclist safety – The reported collision records over the 5-year period shows zero (0) collision involving a pedestrian. The reported collision records over the 5-year period shows zero (0) collision involving a bicycle. The collision criterion is not met for the study area.

Conclusion:

Arlington Avenue between The Circle and Mendocino Avenue qualifies for physical traffic calming measures based on the speed criteria established in City Council Resolution No. 64-732-N.S. Staff has determined the following traffic calming option to consider:

- Install radar speed feedback signs in each direction on Arlington Avenue.

The next step is to hold a virtual neighborhood meeting to present the results of this study and select the most suitable option for the neighborhood. You will be hearing from me within the next few months with proposed dates/times for the meeting. Please take into consideration that I'm currently working on a large queue of traffic calming virtual neighborhood meetings before I get to the one on Arlington Avenue. Once a time is agreed upon, all affected residents will be invited by mail. The traffic calming option that is selected during the meeting will then be included in the Traffic Calming Capital Improvement Projects list during the annual budget process.

We appreciate your time and interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

J. Guillermo Jaramillo
Assistant Transportation Engineer
City of Berkeley, Transportation Division
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Berkeley, CA 94704

