



Sophie Hahn  
District 5 Councilmember

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Author), Councilmember Susan Wengraf (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Rigel Robinson (Co-Sponsor)

**Subject:** Budget Referral: Hopkins Corridor Bike, Pedestrian, and Placemaking Improvements

#### RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$300,000 to the FY 2023-2024 budget process, with \$150,000 in FY 2023 and \$150,000 in FY 2024, for bike, pedestrian, and streetscape improvements to be implemented in coordination with protected bike lanes, pedestrian safety features, and re-paving of the Hopkins Corridor.

#### CURRENT SITUATION

City staff and their on-call consultants are currently working on a study of the Hopkins Corridor area, in response to the [Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking study referral](#) unanimously passed by the City Council in 2017, and the 2017 Berkeley Bike Plan recommending Hopkins Street for a complete streets corridor and cycle track study.

[Plans for pedestrian and bike improvements, as well as a first phase of landscaping, seating, bollards, bike parking, and related amenities for the area are in the final stages of development.](#) Work related to these plans, including repaving, raising crosswalks, and pouring of new curbs, bulb-outs, islands, and other features, is scheduled to take place in 2023. The imminent build-out of these hardscape elements provides a unique opportunity to refresh and expand bike parking, benches, bollards, and trash receptacles, plant trees, install drought tolerant landscaping in medians and bulb-outs,

and provide other amenities for safety, utility, and community gathering – to accomplish the letter and spirit of the Hopkins Corridor referral.

While some funds already exist for these purposes, it is anticipated that additional funds will be needed to support installation of features across the corridor that harmonize with the existing neighborhood.

The purpose of this budget referral is to provide complimentary funding to allow for simultaneous implementation of streetscape improvements not otherwise funded, including but not limited to benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, street trees, drought tolerant landscaping, bollards, and protected pedestrian crossing features, and related community and placemaking elements.

## BACKGROUND



The Hopkins Corridor, defined in a 2017 referral for the Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study, encompasses Hopkins from Gilman Street to Sutter Street, Sacramento Street from the southern approach of Rose Street to Hopkins Street, and the Monterey Avenue approach to Hopkins, plus all major and minor intersections. In addition, the City’s 2017 Bike Plan recommended Hopkins Street for a “complete street corridor and cycle track study.” The studies are currently being conducted by the Public Works department and on-call consultants, to coincide with the planned repavement of Hopkins Street in 2023.

In addition to being the site of several tragic pedestrian and bike injuries and fatalities, the Hopkins Corridor encompasses a variety of impactful conditions including:

- The busy neighborhood commercial area centered around the intersection of Hopkins Street and Monterey Ave, which attracts significant car, bicycle and pedestrian traffic on a daily basis, constant ingress and egress from parking lots and spaces, and associated delivery and other trucks;

- Treasured local businesses that draw a neighborhood and regional clientele and benefit from pedestrian activity and lively café-seating and street-life.
- Numerous educational and recreational facilities in the area that involve drop-off and pick-up of youth, and/or youth pedestrians and bike riders, including at least four preschools (Mustard Seed at 1640 Hopkins St, Hopkins Pre-school at 1810 Hopkins, Sprouts at 1910 Hopkins, and Berkeley Little School at 1611 Hopkins), King Middle School; King's playing fields and the adjacent park, pool, and tennis courts, St. Mary's High School and the North Branch Library;
- Two active churches;
- A high concentration of families and Senior Citizens living in the area, regularly crossing streets to access shops, recreational and ecumenical facilities and the North Branch public library;
- Hopkins and Monterey serving as major East/West access corridors with significant vehicular traffic to and from freeways and cross-town destinations (via Sacramento, San Pablo, The Alameda/MLK and Sutter/Henry/Shattuck);
- Hopkins and Sacramento serving as designated Emergency Access and Evacuation Routes;
- California Street serving as a bicycle boulevard and AC Transit bus lines traveling through the corridor; and
- One of only two gas stations in North Berkeley at Hopkins and MLK/Alameda, with vehicles regularly stacked in the street and intersection awaiting ingress.

The Hopkins Corridor Traffic and Placemaking Study articulated the following Complete Streets/Traffic elements to be considered in the course of the study:

- Pedestrian safety at all intersections along the corridor, in particular at Monterey and Hopkins, the site of a fatality in April of 2017;
- Bicycle lanes, parking and infrastructure, including elements anticipated as part of the 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan;
- Traffic flow into and out of the corridor, with special attention to the Gilman/Hopkins, Sacramento/Hopkins, Hopkins/Monterey and

Hopkins/MLK/Alameda intersections;

- Ingress and egress from the Monterey Market and the Hopkins/MLK/Alameda gas station;
- Parking, pick-up and drop-off for schools, the public library, churches and recreational facilities, including consideration of traffic management at peak times;
- AC Transit and school busses, both public and private;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Addition of signalized intersections and/or adjustment of timing, turning and other features of signalized intersections; and
- Parking for employees and customers and loading for commercial vehicles.

In addition, the Study is required to address the following Community Building/Placemaking elements:

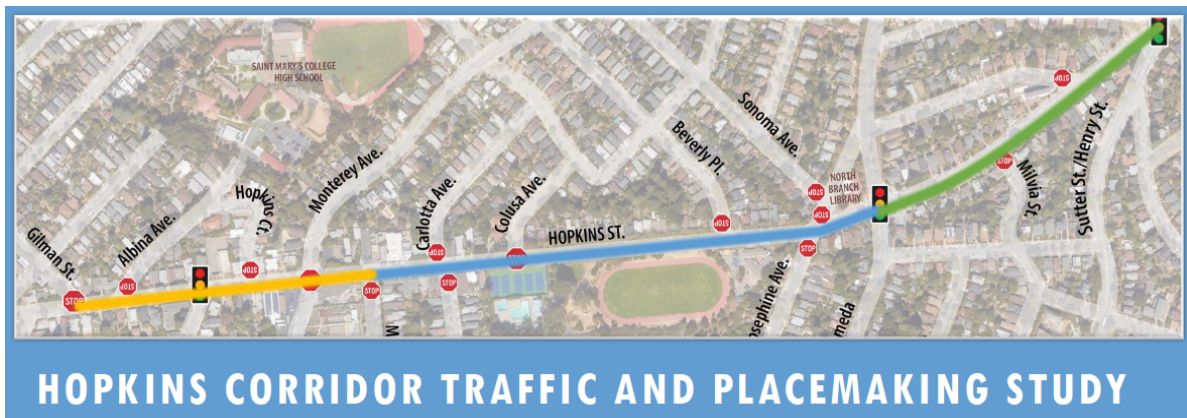
- Exploration of means to create additional spaces for community gathering and to increase greenery and other placemaking amenities that harmonize with existing features in the corridor, with full access for all ages and abilities;
- Ensure design and style of improvements add to the charm and character of this highly valued and historic neighborhood commercial district; and
- Any other considerations that may further enhance placemaking and the safe and vibrant use of public spaces, including improvements to hardscape and greenery and enhancement of community-building and placemaking.

In response to the 2017 Referral and the Bike Plan study requirements, the Public Works department is in the final stages of conducting the first phase of the required studies.

As reformatted by staff, key project study goals are:

- Improve the safety of walking along and crossing Hopkins Street, achieving zero pedestrian severe injuries by 2028;

- Improve bicycle and vehicular transportation safety and flow along and crossing Hopkins Street, achieving zero severe injuries by 2028;
- Transform Hopkins Street between Sacramento Street and McGee Avenue into a community gathering place with an attractive visual identity and inviting public spaces;
- Manage parking in order to meet the needs of residents and local businesses;
- Support local businesses by creating a streetscape that attracts customers:
- Install green infrastructure to protect the Bay while providing visual enjoyment wherever opportunities arise;
- Improve aesthetics along Hopkins Street, employing a design palette consistent with its historic character.



Plans for pedestrian and bike improvements, as well as a first phase of landscaping, seating, bollards, bike parking, and related amenities for the area are in the final stages of development. Work related to these plans, including repaving, raising crosswalks, and pouring of new curbs, bulb-outs, islands, and other features, is scheduled to take place in 2023. The imminent build-out of these hardscape elements provides a unique opportunity to refresh and expand bike parking, benches, bollards, and trash receptacles, plant trees, install drought tolerant landscaping in medians and bulb-outs, and provide other amenities for safety, utility, and community gathering – to accomplish the letter and spirit of the Hopkins Corridor referral.

While some funds already exist for streetscape features that support the community/placemaking elements of the Hopkins Corridor referral and staff's project study goals relating to community gathering, attractive visual identity, inviting public

spaces, customer-friendly streetscape, green infrastructure and improved aesthetics consistent with historical character, it is anticipated that additional funds will be needed to support installation of features across the corridor that harmonize with the existing neighborhood.

The purpose of this budget referral is to provide complimentary funding to allow for simultaneous implementation of streetscape improvements not otherwise funded, including but not limited to benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, street trees, drought tolerant landscaping, bollards, and protected pedestrian crossing features, and related community and placemaking elements.

In addition to funds sought directly from the City of Berkeley to more fully accomplish Hopkins Corridor project goals, several community-based efforts are either underway or anticipated to support and maintain new community and place-making elements.

- Merchants have approached the City about the possibility of creating a merchant's association, either via a formal Business Improvement District or another form of association, that could generate funds for supplemental upkeep of street furniture, sidewalks, and landscaping in the commercial areas of the Hopkins Corridor.
- Local volunteers have long maintained the triangular island behind the North Branch Library. Additional landscaping at the Hopkins/Alameda intersection and throughout the Corridor may be able to be maintained through a broader community effort such as an "adopt a spot" or other neighborhood group. Councilmember Hahn's office will be organizing outreach to existing community volunteers and associations - including the Friends of the Fountain and Walk, who help maintain the nearby Marin/Arlington Circle area, and Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association - to discuss potential partnerships. Alternatively, a new, single-purpose organization may be established to supplement City maintenance of Hopkins Corridor streetscape and landscaping elements.
- Grant opportunities and other community fundraising could be another means to supplement City of Berkeley Funds, and will be explored in full once this phase of planning for the Hopkins Corridor has been completed.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget request for \$300,000 total, \$150,000 in FY2023 and \$150,000 in FY2024, to realize the first phase of community/placemaking elements of the Hopkins Corridor goals relating to community gathering, attractive visual identity, inviting public spaces,

customer-friendly streetscape, green infrastructure, and improved aesthetics consistent with historical character.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

A major impetus for the Hopkins Corridor study and improvements is to significantly improve pedestrian and bike safety and create a more lively and inviting streetscape for community gathering. With these improvements, it is anticipated that many more people will choose to bike or walk to and from the Corridor's many destinations - schools, churches, a library, a track, pool and other sports facilities, popular shops and service providers, and more.

One of the main features of the proposed plan, in its final stages of development, is a two-way cycletrack on the South side of Hopkins, designed to provide safe bike access for King Middle School students and other users of King school and park recreation facilities, including seniors and families with young children. AC Transit stops are also being reconfigured for greater access and visibility. All of the bike, pedestrian, and transit features are designed to invite a broader segment of the community to bike, walk, and take public transit on the Hopkins Corridor, significantly advancing the City's climate action and GHG reduction goals.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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