



CONSENT CALENDAR
September 28, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author), Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Taplin (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Kate Harrison (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Accessible Recreation Center for Ashby BART East Parking Lot

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to explore the feasibility of incorporating an accessible recreation center as part of the development of the Ashby BART East Parking Lot.

BACKGROUND

South Berkeley could benefit from a possible joint non-profit housing and recreation proposal to be processed for the BART parking lot East of the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC).

There is potential for this site that to be dedicated to Berkeley residents who can live proudly with disabilities, and that provides a fully adaptive recreation center, all while remaining open to all members of the public. Paired with truly affordable housing units, this center will be accessible for residents who struggle with mental illness, physical impairments, and unhoused individuals or who are at-risk of homelessness. The center could also be well-equipped with on-site services as necessary. We hope that this development could also provide, as feasible, a right of return to previously displaced South Berkeley residents.

RECREATIONAL COMPONENT: The recreational side of this prospective facility should be created, developed, and led by a local recreation organization with great experience integrating adaptive sports programs for people who have physical disabilities. The City should be committed to leading a partnership of individuals and organizations to develop a facility that will provide community to persons with disabilities, along with reliable and permanent opportunities for fitness and recreational activities. Situated next to BART and the Ed Roberts Campus and built using universal design and green building principles, the facility will leverage public transit and existing services to provide broad access to the community of disabled Berkeley Residents.

The envisioned complex will be more than an athletic facility or recreation center; it will be a community hub, providing an inspirational environment for individuals with disabilities, offering regular opportunities for fitness, wellness, recreation, enjoyment and competition. The opportunity to merge with affordable housing only strengthens our vision. Recognizing the tremendous need for increased recreational programming for people with disabilities, this will give philanthropic organizations an opportunity to invest in South Berkeley to help cover the costs of the construction, management, and

maintenance of such a facility, due largely in part that there are few--if any--comparable facilities like the one we envision..

HOUSING COMPONENT: The recreational structure will be surrounded by considerably more affordable and accessible housing; the need for which has never been greater. Aside from our general housing crisis, there is a critical shortage of homes for those with disabilities and mental illnesses. Board and Care homes that have historically provided housing for the mentally ill are closing at an alarming rate. It should be noted that a proportion of all units on this campus should provide housing to serve this population. Staff and services for the special needs residents should also be included into the prospective bids submitted to the City Manager.

The number of housing units, their configuration, height and bulk, is yet to be determined, however it will evolve as the zoning and agreements between the City and BART are finalized. Funds from a variety of sources will be needed: Conventional financing, Section 8, and every available government and private source should be pursued--as is often the case with non-profit endeavors.

CURRENT SITUATION

The push for affordable housing has been growing in the past few years. In September 2018, California authorized BART to construct housing on its property in order to address the housing crisis. Since then, there have been ongoing discussions between community members and city officials to clarify the planning process and provide a unified vision for how to best use the land. In December 2020, the City passed the Adeline Corridor plan, which aims to transform South Berkeley's housing landscape through the creation of affordable housing. To build off of this momentum, the City should explore incorporating an accessible recreation center into the development plan for the Ashby BART East Parking Lot.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The South Berkeley District is in dire need of development opportunities that bring together housing and recreation to build a stronger sense of community in our City. Ultimately, its goals align with the City's plans to expand access to affordable housing and, therefore, should be explored.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

To be determined by staff upon further analysis after consideration of all bids submitted to the City Manager.

CONTACT PERSON

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BEN BARTLETT

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

ACTION CALENDAR

September 28, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author), Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsor)
and Councilmember Terry Taplin (Co-Sponsor)
Subject: Predevelopment Allocation, Ashby Recreation and Community Housing
(ARCH) Consortium

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to staff to work with the Ashby Recreation and Community Housing (ARCH) Consortium to develop a planning grant for the Ashby BART East Parking Lot.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

No final action was taken by the Budget & Finance Committee. The item is automatically returning to the Council agenda pursuant to the 120-day time limit for items referred to policy committees.

BACKGROUND

A joint non-profit housing and recreation proposal is being proposed for the BART lot east of the Ed Robert's Campus (ERC). The proposal, ARCH (Ashby Recreation and Community Housing) envisions a state-of-the-art recreation facility coupled with deeply affordable housing. The partners are BORP (Bay Area Outreach & Recreation), EBSHC (East Bay Supportive Housing Collaborative) and the ERC. ARCH has a managing developer for the entire site and is contacting non-profit housing developers.

ARCH will be a destination for the Bay Area's disabled community providing a fully adaptive recreation center, including a warm pool, all also available to the public. This will be combined with a deeply affordable housing complex for those living with mental illness, those with physical disabilities, and persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness." On-site services will be included as needed. The housing complex will provide, as feasible, a right of return for displaced South Berkeley residents.

RECREATIONAL COMPONENT: Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) has 45 years of providing adaptive sports and recreation for people with physical disabilities in the East Bay. We are committed to leading a partnership of individuals and organizations to develop a facility that will provide the disability community with reliable and permanent opportunities for fitness and recreational activities. Situated next to BART and the Ed Roberts Campus, and built using universal design and green building principles, the facility will leverage public transit and existing services to provide broad access to the disability community.

The envisioned complex will be more than an athletic facility or recreation center; it will be a community hub, providing an inspirational environment for individuals with disabilities, offering regular opportunities for fitness, wellness, recreation, enjoyment and competition. The opportunity to merge with affordable housing only strengthens our vision. Recognizing the tremendous need for increased recreational programming for

people with disabilities, the Wayne & Gladys Valley Foundation has generously made a \$5 million-dollar matching grant commitment to the BORP project.

HOUSING COMPONENT: The recreational structure will be surrounded by deeply affordable housing, the need for which has never been greater. Aside from our general housing crisis there is a critical shortage of homes for those with disabilities and mental illness. Board and Care homes have historically provided housing for the mentally ill and are closing at an alarming rate. A “slice” of the ARCH housing will serve this population and provide staff and services for the special needs residents.

The number of housing units, their configuration, height and bulk, is to be determined and will evolve as the zoning and agreements between the City and BART are finalized. The EBSHC envisions between 50 to 100 units of completely universal design. It is too early in the BART/City process to predict further. Funds from a variety of sources will be needed: Conventional financing, Section 8, and every government and private source will be pursued--as is often the case with non-profit endeavors.

ACTIVITIES

ARCH members have been actively engaged in efforts to prevent homelessness and influencing critical policy decisions. In 2020 EBSHC worked successfully with Assemblyman David Chiu and State Senator Nancy Skinner to pass AB 2377, which requires Board and Care facilities to give the counties and cities in which they are located 6-month notice before closure, and local government the first opportunity to offer to purchase. Having stable and affordable living places, with supportive services when needed, is key to solving the problems of homelessness in our community.” A City of Berkeley predevelopment allocation will enable ARCH to create feasibility and architectural scenarios, assemble research and background materials, all necessary to apply for various funding from County, State and Federal sources and to respond to calls for proposals.

CURRENT SITUATION

The push for affordable housing has been growing in the past few years. In September 2018, California authorized BART to construct housing on its property in order to address the housing crisis. Since then, there have been ongoing discussions between community members and city officials to clarify the planning process and provide a unified vision for how to best use the land. In December 2020, the City passed the Adeline Corridor plan, which aims to transform South Berkeley’s housing landscape through the creation of affordable housing. To build off of this momentum, the City should explore the feasibility of ARCH.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

ARCH provides an opportunity to infuse recreational activities with housing. Ultimately, its goals align with the City’s plans to expand access to affordable housing and, therefore, should be explored.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

To be determined by staff.

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