



Rigel Robinson  
Councilmember District 7

## **REVISED AGENDA MATERIAL**

**Meeting Date:**           **October 26**

**Item Number:**           **30**

**Item Description:**   **Budget Referral: Durant Parklet and Telegraph Plaza  
Improvements**

**Submitted by:**         **Councilmember Rigel Robinson**

Amendments to recommendation language to reflect conversations with AC Transit and clarify the author's intent to improve pedestrian safety, economic vitality, and placemaking in the Telegraph District without disruption to critical bus service.



CITY COUNCILMEMBER  
**RIGEL ROBINSON**  
DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR  
October 26, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Robinson (Author) and Mayor Arreguin (Co-Sponsor)  
Subject: Budget Referral: Durant Parklet and Telegraph Plaza Improvements

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$60,000 to the November 2021 AAO process for placemaking improvements in the Telegraph District, consisting of the installation of a public parklet on Durant Avenue and ~~the closure of a demonstration project closing~~ the right-turn slip lane at the Dwight Triangle to create a public plaza, contingent upon additional study of the potential operational impacts and evaluation of the necessary safeguards to mitigate any negative impacts to AC Transit's Line 6 bus operations.

BACKGROUND

***Durant Parklet***

Durant Avenue on Southside is a hotspot for UC Berkeley students, home to many restaurants, take-out spots, and bars, including those in Durant Food Court. On weekend nights, students can be seen eating while standing on the sidewalk, as there is not enough seating in the food court or the parklet in front of Artichoke's to accommodate demand. This budget referral proposes the installation of a second public parklet in front of Durant Food Court, which would not only be highly utilized, but also revitalize the business district and assist in traffic calming. The parklet could house additional lighting and be designed to facilitate activities such as live music and small retail opportunities.

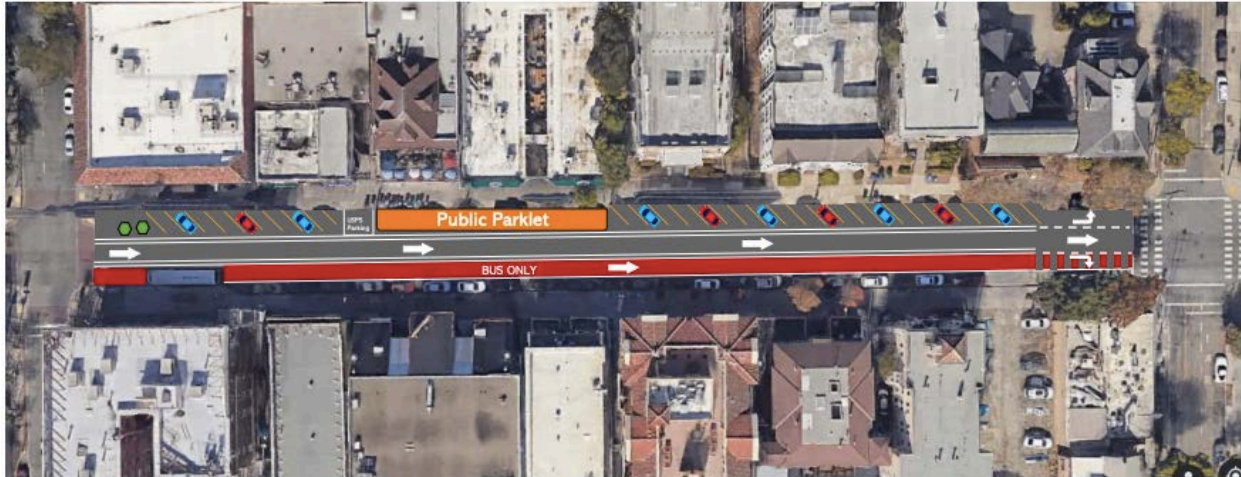
Durant is a one-way street with two travel lanes and two lanes of street parking. With the current street configuration, gig drivers working for Doordash or UberEats often decide to park in a travel lane to run inside and pick up orders. The congestion has been exacerbated by the pandemic because of the increase in take-out orders. Durant is a major bus corridor servicing many lines including the 51B, 79, 36, and 6, and the car traffic and illegal parking can cause serious delays in bus service.

In May 2021, AC Transit accepted an ACTC grant to install a quick-build bus lane on Durant Avenue and address the above concerns.<sup>1</sup> As that project begins to take shape,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://actransit.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9380793&GUID=0D09DB3F-6B48-427D-9627-E5F2460FC7A8>

the timing is right for the City to consider revitalization projects such as a public parklet, so that the AC Transit planning process can take the improvements into consideration.



### ***Dwight Triangle/Telegraph Plaza***

The traffic median on the intersection of Telegraph and Dwight, known as the Dwight Triangle, has long been a target for much-needed improvements. The 2016 Telegraph Public Realm Plan<sup>2</sup> lays out a vision for the Triangle that includes landscaping, improved lighting, and public art. In the November 2020 AAO, the City allocated \$100,000 to begin rehabilitating the Triangle, adding planter areas in partnership with the Telegraph Business Improvement District.

Currently, the pedestrian crossing is unsafe as the slip lane creates opportunities for conflict with drivers turning right onto Telegraph without slowing down. Slip lanes exist to allow drivers to take faster turns, often at the expense of pedestrian safety. In recognition of the impact of street design on road safety and collision rates, cities across the country are moving to replace dangerous slip lanes with pedestrian and bike infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

The crosswalks around the Triangle can also be uninviting and confusing, which contributes to a tangible disconnect between the first four blocks of Telegraph and the southern part of the district. This proposal, supported by the TBID, would reactivate the space by using planters or bollards to close off the slip lane, creating a public plaza with seating and other amenities where people can eat, interact, and enjoy a day on Telegraph. Furthermore, the TBID and City staff can implement best practices, including those learned from the newly-renovated BART plaza in Downtown Berkeley, to create an inviting space with new programming and entertainment options for visitors of the Telegraph area and members of the Telegraph community.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.berkeleyside.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Telegraph-Public-Realm-Plan-Final-Low-Res.pdf> (page 26)

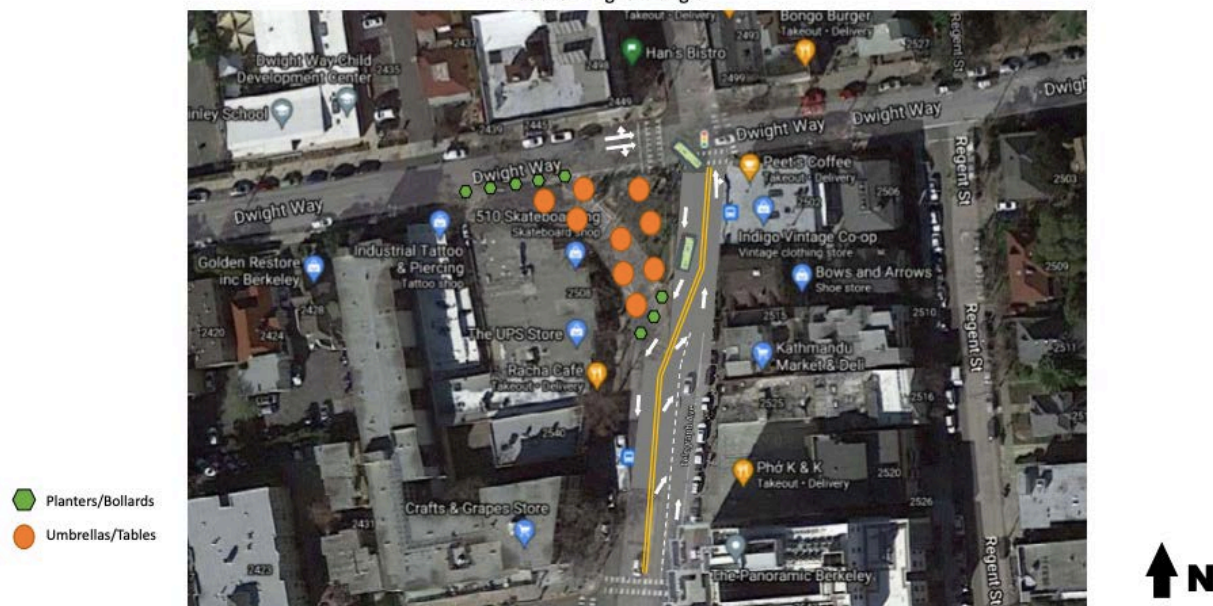
<sup>3</sup> <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2018/07/13/cities-are-replacing-dangerous-slip-lanes-with-space-for-people/>

As this demonstration project moves forward, collaboration will continue between the TBID, the City of Berkeley, and AC Transit to determine the best way to accommodate the 6 bus route, which uses the slip lane to turn right from Durant onto Telegraph. One potential solution being explored is to restripe a portion of Telegraph south of Dwight to allow larger vehicles, such as fire trucks and buses, to make sufficiently wide turns.

“Telegraph Plaza” at Dwight Triangle concept

### “Telegraph Plaza” concept v2

at the Dwight Triangle



#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approximately \$40,000 for a parklet and \$20,000 for enlarging and paint stripes around the Triangle, for a total of \$60,000.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

None.

#### CONTACT PERSON

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Angie Chen, Legislative Aide

Attachments:

1: TBID Support Letter