



Kate Harrison
Councilmember, District 4

23

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 11, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Harrison

Subject: Referral to the June 2023 Budget Process for Funding Harold Way Placemaking Project Schematic Design

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$100,000 to the June 2023 Budget Process to fund Harold Way Placemaking Project Schematic Design.

CURRENT SITUATION, EFFECTS, AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The one-block long Harold Way connects Allston Way and Kittredge Street, linking the Berkeley Central Branch Library and the Downtown Berkeley YMCA. Over the years Harold Way has been the site of a variety of community events and cultural celebrations including the Asian Cultural Festival, Día de los Muertos celebration, the Harold Way Pumpkin Patch, the Lunar New Year Celebration, and Berkeley Bliss: the Silent Disco Experience. The streetscape is quite plain at present, discouraging its use outside of events but is ideal for creating an urban oasis in our busy Downtown with the addition of design features, trees, seating areas, and a public restroom.

BACKGROUND

On March 19, 2022 Berkeley Design Advocates (BDA) and Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) co-sponsored a Harold Way Placemaking Workshop in anticipation of two housing projects bringing new life to this quiet one-block street in the heart of Downtown Berkeley. Input was received from the Berkeley design community, neighbors, nearby property owner, and other community members. BDA volunteer architect Ryan Call developed a Workshop Report and Three Initial Options.¹ Subsequently, BDA and DBA have met with City staff, City elected officials, and other community members to review the report and options. The response has been generally favorable for all three options. (See “Blended Options” below.)

This request seeks funding of up to \$100,000 for a consultant to develop a Preferred Design Option/Schematic Design for a pedestrianized Harold Way between Kittredge Street and Allston Way. BDA and DBA have received a proposal of approximately

¹<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f868525cd65db169e0e9bf7/t/6307cde3d1394f428fbc2b6b/1661455861813/2022+0704+Harold+Way+Workshop+Results-sm.pdf>

\$60,000 plus expenses from a respected urban landscape design firm but are open to other design firms that might be selected by the City. It would be prudent to allocate up to \$100,000 due to additional expenses, inflation, and possible additional scope or tasks required by the City. It is anticipated that funding would come from the Street and Open Space Plan (SOSIP) fund, which had a balance of \$1,755,944 as of February 27, 2023. Construction of several large housing projects in the Downtown over the next few years is expected to grow the SOSIP fund significantly. Final Design and Construction Documents are estimated to be in the range in the \$200,000-\$300,000, with the cost of construction dependent on design selected, inflation, materials, and other factors.

The development of the Schematic Design would not be limited to the three initial “blended options,” but may borrow elements for any of these options as deemed appropriate. The scope of the consultant Schematic Design project would include:

- Extensive community outreach (at least three meetings)
- Pre-design meetings with key stakeholders
- Review of existing conditions, climate, building plans, trees, utilities, drainage
- Understanding of City requirements and operating/maintenance constraints
- Three programming designs with up to three revisions based on community input
- Presentation of final preferred schematic design
- Preliminary opinion of probable construction costs

This Schematic Design project is estimated to take six to nine months to complete, with final presentation to Berkeley City Council for approval.

Design Options

blended option 1

- Food! Invite local vendors / Food Trucks
- Keep it simple! Let the community "set the stage".
- Ramp up at both ends for the full width of the street right of way. Pave the entire elevated "stage" with a nice material, and set the stage for events with whatever is needed for the party (event)!
- Consider a diversity of plaza experiences such as an open plaza towards the Library on Kittredge Street with food trucks, and a more serene tree plaza towards Allston.
- Replace / relocate existing trees (which are spaced rather far apart) with trees spaced 32' on center with offset rows.
- Extend a simple but elegant paving material from building to building to provide programing flexibility and a sense of space that feels larger and less cluttered.
- Convert south façade of parking structure on Allston to art wall installation, possibly including media screens for outdoor movies.
- Activate ground floor of new east side Harold Way building with live/work workshops and storefronts and organize entries to complement street activities. Locate amenity uses at north and south ends of new building.
- Encourage café at new westside building to spill out into Harold Way
- Eliminate vehicular traffic on Harold Way
- Bollards at Kittredge Street and Allston Way



blended option 2

- Food! Invite local vendors / Food Trucks
- Keep it simple! Let the community "set the stage".
- Ramp up at both ends for the full width of the street right of way. Pave the entire elevated "stage" with a nice material, and set the stage for events with whatever is needed for the party (event)!
- Treat Harold Way as an urban garden with gathering areas to spill out into street, building off gardens/ activities at garden/plaza between library and housing at Kittredge terminus of Harold Way.
- Retain existing trees along Harold Way. Keep roadway clear of trees and open for gatherings.
- Pitch raised roadways to a series of rain gardens at entries and along western side of Harold Way. Use gardens to frame building and plaza entries.
- Convert south façade of parking structure on Allston to art wall installation, possibly including media screens for outdoor movies.
- Activate ground floor of new east side Harold Way building with live/work workshops and storefronts and organize entries to complement street activities. Locate amenity uses at north and south ends of new building.
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blended option 3

- Children's reading area
- Possible play sculpture(s) for kids (Women and children are key elements to creating a welcoming environment for everyone!)
- Flexible seating - chess and games
- Keep it simple! Let the community 'set the stage'
- Ramp up at both ends for the full width of the street right of way. Pave the entire elevated 'stage' with a nice material, and set the stage for events with whatever is needed for the party (event!)
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FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

\$100,000 toward the Harold Way Placemaking Project Schematic Design.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Creating a livable, walkable Downtown adds to Berkeley's environmental sustainability. The Harold Way block is very close to transit (both BART and AC Transit), Downtown amenities and the U.C. Berkeley campus.

CONTACT PERSON

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