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To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Author)
Councilmember Wengraf (Co-Sponsor)
Subject: Co-Sponsorship and Budget Referral for the Solano Avenue Stroll

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Resolution for the City of Berkeley to Co-Sponsor the Solano Avenue Association's September 2024 and September 2025 Solano Avenue Stroll events and to provide in-kind services previously provided at no cost to the Solano Stroll, including but not limited to police, fire, zero waste, and public works, at no cost to the September 2024 and 2025 Solano Stroll events.
2. Refer \$10,000 per year to the FY 2025-2026 Budget Process (\$20,000 total) to support the September 2024 and 2025 Solano Stroll events.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Solano Avenue Stroll (the "Stroll" or the "Solano Stroll"), is an annual, multicultural event that draws visitors of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities from Berkeley and neighboring communities. The event is an inclusive, no-barrier, family-friendly, outdoor celebration that is and always has been free to the public.

The Solano Stroll is the largest street fair in the East Bay, drawing crowds of up to 250,000 people and spans both Berkeley and Albany. The scale and importance of this free public event is unique in Berkeley and the region and requires a singular level of support and partnership from the cities of Berkeley and Albany. For these reasons, the Stroll has for decades received in-kind and direct monetary support from both cities.

Producing the Stroll is a uniquely complex and time-consuming undertaking. The Solano Avenue Association, with a board of 15 volunteers – who also own and run their own local businesses – works diligently to produce the Stroll on an exceptionally frugal "shoestring" budget.

Following a two-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City, as it always has, provided in-kind City services such as police and public works to support the 2022 and 2023 events. In addition, the City provided annual grants of \$20,000 per year to support the North Berkeley BART shuttle, marketing, and other out-of-pocket expenses. This higher-than-usual level of grant was provided to help the Stroll regain participation of both vendors and members of the public after a two-year hiatus and drop-off in participation related to the pandemic.

With enhanced funds provided by the City of Berkeley for the September 2022 and 2023 events, and a surge of interest in outdoor social events that materialized after several years of caution, the 2023 Solano Stroll drew the highest attendance for any Stroll to date.

The Solano Avenue Association has repeatedly expressed its gratitude to Berkeley and Albany for providing additional funds to continue producing this event in the face of pandemic-related losses. Because of the Stroll's renewed success, the Solano Avenue Association has determined that in-kind services plus \$10,000 per year from the City of Berkeley (reduced from \$20,000 per year that were provided in FY 2023 and 2024) will be sufficient to support the event's success over the next two years.

To facilitate continuity of planning and support for this important annual event, this item seeks to commit City sponsorship, in-kind services, and a reduced grant of \$10,000 per year for each of the September 2024 and September 2025 events.

BACKGROUND

The Solano Avenue Association was formed in 1974 and achieved nonprofit status in 1983. The Association's signature annual event, the Solano Avenue Stroll, draws approximately 250,000 people over the course of a free, outdoor, closed-street, family-friendly, smoke- and alcohol-free one-day event which spans 26 blocks and more than a full mile of Solano Avenue, from The Alameda to San Pablo Avenue, in both Berkeley and Albany. In 2000, the Solano Avenue Stroll became an official "Local Legacy," installed into the United States Library of Congress with the help of Congresswoman Barbara Lee and was recognized as celebrating "America's rich diverse culture."

Now in its 48th year, the Solano Avenue Stroll has been sponsored with both services and funds by the Cities of Berkeley and Albany for longer than the Solano Avenue Association has records; meaning at least 20 years.

The Stroll draws both locals and visitors. In 2013, a zip code survey was taken from 453 event goers and recorded 139 different zip codes from across the Bay Area. On the east end, the Stroll is referred to as “Berkeley’s Reunion,” and on the west end much of Albany turns out. Both ends are united by the festive Parade that kicks-off the event, starting at the top of the street with dancers, bands, floats and youth and families from many schools and organizations.

The Solano Avenue Association works actively to minimize the environmental impact of the Stroll. In addition to regular AC Transit service, free event-day shuttles provide rides from 10AM to 7PM to and from the North Berkeley BART Station and up and down the length of Marin Avenue, making stops at intersections with stop lights on Marin. Free valet bicycle parking, provided by the Albany High School Cougars mountain biking team and the Albany Strollers & Rollers, will be available at 1275 Solano Ave.

Recycling and composting are part of the zero waste ethos of the event. In 2022, the Solano Avenue Association began requiring all vendors to provide only compostable bags and foodware, unless items are not available due to supply chain challenges, or for health and safety reasons (to avoid spilling of hot liquids, for example). Recycling and composting bins have and will continue to be provided along the entire route of the event.

The Solano Stroll typically features over 500 vendors, including 50 entertainers representing a wide variety of cultures, food from 50 booths and local restaurants representing cuisines from all the continents, 150 government and non-profit agencies, 150 juried handcrafters, a 75- participant parade with local bands, performers, schools, and organizations, safe mechanical rides for children, and more.

The Stroll gives people from near and far a rare opportunity to see, experience and learn about everything our unique community has to offer. The event is family friendly and supported by diverse not-for-profit and government organizations. Approximately 75% of participating nonprofits use Berkeley booth locations to broadcast their mission to the public. The event allows for meaningful outreach and direct contact with the populations that these vital community organizations serve, including low-income clients who may have few other free and public opportunities to learn of available programs and services, and offers a unique opportunity to recruit volunteers and donors.

There is a “green zone” for environmental organizations, an area for health and wellness organizations, affordable housing and homeless services providers, libraries, police, fire and other city and county departments, schools, sports teams, transit

providers, student and neighborhood associations, faith institutions, and political parties and associations, among others. Many elected officials from the State, County, region and local cities and school districts also participate, to connect in person with the hundreds of thousands of constituents who attend the Stroll. All of these groups and individuals rely on the unique exposure the Solano Stroll provides and consider participation a key annual activity to connect with stakeholders and potential clients. 92% of participating organizations and vendors return each year.

A list of recent Stroll business, arts, and organizational participants is attached hereto.

Due to the popularity and reputation of the Solano Avenue Stroll, both the cities of Berkeley and Albany, as well as the community at large, have benefitted from the exposure the event has garnered. Many local businesses and organizations have gained a loyal following by first participating as a vendor at the event, and some have found permanent store-front homes along Solano Avenue and now contribute to the local economy with community-oriented goods and services. The Stroll draws significant traffic to local restaurants, retail businesses, and arts and culture venues who participate in the event. Most recently, a number of businesses have made Solano Avenue home during the pandemic, risking an investment in our local economy at a very challenging time, and the Stroll will provide a great opportunity for the community to discover and welcome them to the neighborhood.

Solano Avenue merchants, both longstanding and newly arrived, benefit from the exposure to approximately 250,000 potential customers who see Solano's products and services. While not every business registers a boost in sales the day of the Stroll, positive economic activity generated by the event continues for months.¹

The Stroll also raises revenues and enhances the City's reputation locally and regionally, engendering significant goodwill. The event is well-known and beloved by the community and an opportunity for people beyond Berkeley and Albany to discover these communities and has been a source of pride for both Berkeley and Albany for five decades.

It takes about 600 staff-hours to produce the Solano Stroll, plus thousands of additional volunteer hours, and the event is one of only four in the United States and Canada that operates in two municipalities simultaneously. The scale and complexity of the Solano

¹"A Brief History of the Solano Avenue Stroll," Solano Avenue Association.
<https://www.solanoavenueassn.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/solanoavenuestrollhistory.pdf>

Stroll is unique and requires coordination among municipalities and with the Solano Avenue Association to ensure security, zero waste, toilet facilities, parade staging, set-up and take-down of performance, commerce, and event spaces, electricity, barricades, and other services and elements. Despite the magnitude of the Stroll, Solano Avenue is virtually spotless and fully restored to normal operations within 24 hours of the close of the event.

This item asks the City of Berkeley to register its official sponsorship of the September 2024 and 2025 Stroll events (taking place in FY 2025 and 2026), commit to continue providing services traditionally offered to the Stroll at no cost, and refer \$10,000 in sponsorship for each of the two years (for a total of \$20,000 from the FY 2025/2026 Budget).

In sponsoring the Stroll in all these ways, Berkeley joins the City of Albany and businesses like Albany Subaru, Mechanics Bank, Belmont Village, East Bay Community Energy, Andronico's, L.J. Kruse, Sun Light & Power, Northeastern University, WM, and Total Health Dental Care, and acknowledges the thousands of volunteer hours donated by the Solano Avenue Association Board of Directors and other volunteers.

The Solano Avenue Association looks forward to working more closely than ever with the City of Berkeley, its Councilmembers, Visit Berkeley, and the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, among others, to ensure everyone in Berkeley knows they are cordially invited to upcoming Stroll events.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Stroll minimizes climate impacts by operating on a street easily accessed by numerous AC Transit bus routes and offering a popular no-cost shuttle to and from the North Berkeley BART Station, plus free valet bike parking. Ample additional bike parking is available throughout the area of the Stroll, and many participants simply walk from home to participate. In addition, the Solano Stroll provides compost and recycling facilities throughout the event and will prohibit the use of non-compostable bags and throw-away foodware items by all vendors, except where necessary for health and safety or due to supply chain constraints.

FISCAL IMPACTS

As noted above, the Solano Avenue Stroll provides day-of and residual income to local businesses, and generates significant regional exposure and goodwill, contributing to the local tax base and economy. The item refers \$20,000 in sponsorships over two

years (\$10,000 per year) and donation of in-kind services associated with the Solano Stroll event, as has been the practice for the City of Berkeley for decades.

CONTACT

Councilmember Sophie Hahn, (510) 981-7166

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Photos
3. Recent Booth and Parade Participants List

RESOLUTION #####-N.S.
CITY OF BERKELEY CO-SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR THE 2024 AND 2025
SOLANO AVENUE STROLL EVENTS

WHEREAS, The annual Solano Avenue Stroll is a public event which brings together the expression, enjoyment, and diversity of our community in an inclusive, no-barrier, family friendly, outdoor celebration that is and always has been free to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Solano Avenue Stroll is the largest street fair in the East Bay, drawing crowds of up to 250,000 people over the course of a single day and spanning two cities: Berkeley and Albany; and

WHEREAS, The scale and importance of this free public celebration is unique in Berkeley and the region, and requires a singular level of support and partnership from both the cities of Berkeley and Albany; and

WHEREAS, The Solano Avenue Stroll, now in its 48th year, has been sponsored with both in-kind services and funds by the cities of Berkeley and Albany for longer than the Solano Avenue Association has records; at least 20 years; and

WHEREAS, The Solano Stroll typically features over 500 vendors, including 50 entertainers representing a wide variety of cultures, food from 50 booths and local restaurants representing cuisines from all the continents, 150 government and non-profit agencies, 150 handcrafters, a 75-participant parade with local bands, performers, schools, and organizations, safe mechanical rides for children, and more; and

WHEREAS, The Solano Stroll is well-known and beloved by the community and has been a source of pride for both Berkeley and Albany for almost five decades; and

WHEREAS, The Solano Stroll raises revenues and enhances the City's reputation locally and regionally, engendering significant goodwill; and

WHEREAS, The Solano Avenue Association, producer of the Stroll event, works actively to minimize the environmental impact of the Stroll, providing a free Shuttle to and from North Berkeley BART station, free valet bike parking, and will require vendors to offer only compostable bags and foodware; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the diversity and reach of the event, the Solano Avenue Stroll has had the honor of being selected by Congresswoman Barbara Lee for inclusion at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. as a “National Local Legacy”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has a longstanding practice of providing annual support for the Solano Avenue Stroll through cash grants to the Solano Avenue Association and the provision of in-kind services at no cost; and

WHEREAS, Berkeley’s increased grants over the two years immediately following the pandemic, which allowed for extended marketing, BART shuttles, and other enhancements, have resulted in rebuilding the success of pre-pandemic Strolls;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City of Berkeley shall be an official Co-Sponsor of the Solano Avenue Association’s 2024 and 2025 Solano Avenue Stroll events, currently scheduled for Sunday, September 8, 2024 and Sunday, September 14, 2025, taking place on Solano Avenue in both Berkeley and Albany; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Berkeley shall provide in-kind City services to the Solano Stroll, including but not limited to police, fire, zero waste, and public works services, at no cost to the September 2024 and 2025 Solano Avenue Stroll events.

Solano Stroll Booth and Parade Participants 2023

19 Hands Jewelry
A Walk With Phil
Aaron Eminger Watercolors
ADES
AFS-USA
After the Gold Rush
Alameda County Auditor-Controller/Clerk-Recorder Agency
Alameda County Behavioral Health Director's Executive Team
Alameda County Democratic Party
Alameda County District Attorney
Alameda County Law Library
Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District
Alameda County Probation
Alameda County Public Health Department
Alameda County Social Services Agency
Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson's Office
Alameda County Transportation Commission
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District
Albany Berkeley Soccer Club
Albany CERT Inc
Albany Democratic Club
Albany Fire Department
Albany High School Dance Department
Albany High School Jazz
Albany High School Mountain Biking Team
Albany Jazz Big Band
Albany Police Department
Albany Property Rights Advocates
Albany Sauna, Massage Therapy & Hot Tubs
Albany Strollers & Rollers
Albany Subaru
Albany Thrives Together
Albany Unified School District
Aloha Pediatric Dentistry
Alpineer Club
Altar Ceramics
Aly Maky

Alzheimer's Association
Amy's Face Painting
Andronico's Community Markets
Anime Island
Antiques on Solano
Art Corner Academy
As You Wish Frozen Yogurt
Ashby Lumber
Ashby Village
Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center
Asian Art Foundation
Aunt Betty's Gourmet Corn Dogs
Aurora Theatre Company
Back Pages
Barberella Beauty Lounge
Bay Area Alternative Press
Bay Area Brain Spa
Bay Area Experience – Mark Otis
BAYCO
Belmont Village
Berkeley Albany Girl Scouts
Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association
Berkeley Buddhist Priory
Berkeley Camera Club
Berkeley City Auditor
Berkeley Democratic Club
Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network
Berkeley Fire Department – Office of Emergency Services
Berkeley Fire Department – Wildland Urban Interface Division
Berkeley Folk Dancers
Berkeley Food Network
Berkeley High Robotics Team 5419 Berkelium
Berkeley High School Jazz
Berkeley Historical Society & Museum
Berkeley Lab
Berkeley Lacrosse Club
Berkeley Morris
Berkeley Path Wanderers Association
Berkeley Playhouse

Berkeley Police Department
Berkeley Public Schools Fund
Berkeley School
Berkeley Unified School District
Berkeley YMCA U-Jam
Berkeleyside
Best Gay Ever Tattoo
Beyond the Spell
Big Bubble People
Black Pine Circle School
Black Pine Circle School Band
Blade & Arrow
Bottle of Clouds
Boy Scouts of America GGAC
Breedloves & Friends
Brenda's Ceramics and Jewelry
By Three Bears
Cactus Taqueria
California Council of the Blind
California Section of the American Chemical Society
California Tarot
Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services
Cazadero Music Camp
Center for Early Childhood Connections
Chabad of El Cerrito
Chain Two Collective
Charlie Frank Pies
Child Therapy Institute of Marin
Chris Kindness Award
Church of Divine Man dba Berkeley Psychic Institute
Church on the Corner
Citizens Climate Lobby, Alameda County
Citizens for East Shore Parks
City of Albany
City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development
City of Berkeley Public Works
City of Berkeley Recreation Division
City of Berkeley Rent Board
CJ's Barbeque & Fish

Classroom Matters
ClimateChangeEducation.org
Congregation Beth El
Consilience
Corn Bread Willie
Craftup
Crowden Music Center
Cruising Cones 6
Cumbia Paradiso
Cutie Pop Nail Shop
Dan Kalb for State Senate 2024
Del Mars
Delicious Kettle Corn
Delightful Foods
Demby Co
Derek's co (Crazy Copy Hats)
Diana Yoshida
Didi Jewelry Project
District Homes
DJ boyof\$summer
DoctorofBeauty, Christine Brozowski
Domino's
Don Velez Woodturner
DOWNTOWNRHYTHM Band
Dreaming in Paradise
Dusty Rose Designs
EarthCapades
East Bay Center for the Blind
East Bay Community Energy
East Bay German International School
East Bay Heritage Quilters
East Bay Municipal Utility District
East Bay PEMA Specialists
East Bay Rose Society
East Bay School for Boys
East Bay Youth Rugby
Eastshore Alliance Futbol Club
Easy Does it Emergency Services
Eckankar of the East Bay

Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley
El Cerrito Trail Trekkers
Emeryville Taiko
Enjoyus
Epworth UMC Berkeley
Escuela Bilingue Internacional
Evolution Hot Sauce
Fern's Garden
Fillgood
FIT4MOM 510
Folke
Fraternal Order of Eagles – Bayview Aerie
Freight & Salvage
Friends of Albany Library
Friends of the Albany Twin
Game On
Gamelan Sekar Jaya
Gangchen Gifts
Gaucho Dance Company/ECHS Dance
GenX Fitness LLC
God's Creations
Golden Gate Sotheby's International Realty
Golden Lion Martial Arts Academy
Golestan School
Good Research
Good Trubble
Gourmet Faire
Grape Craft Leather
Gray Panthers of Berkeley and the East Bay
Great Diamond Press, LLC
Green Party of Alameda County
Griffin Performance Judo
Grizzly Peak Fly Fishers
Groove Portal
Half Price Books
Hanabi Judo
Handmade by Renee
Happy Day Montessori School
Harvest Land

Hazel's California Confections
Himalayan Tandoori Curry House
Himalayan Tribes
Holistic Life Skills
Honey Drop Gems
House of Hara
I Flip Gymnastics LLC
IBX Fitness
Idlewild West
lyoba
Jack Justice and the Peace
Jamba Juice
Jane's Homemade
Jay Scott Insurance & Financial Services, Inc.
Jewish Voices for Peace-Bay Area
Jimmy Becker
John Muir Trout Unlimited
Jovanka Beckles for State Senate 2024
JoyousJoyfulJoyness
K&J Eats LLC dba Dippin Dots
Kai Real Estate
Kalimba King (Carl Winters)
Karaoke, Hosted by Mel-o-dee Cocktails
Kathmandu
Kathmandu Gift School
Kathryn for State Senate
Katie's Dance Studio & Company
Kennedy24.com
Kenny the Clown
Kensington Symphony Orchestra
Kirk McCarthy Designs
Kolo's Finds
L.J. Kruse Company
Le Jazu
League of Women Voters Berkeley Albany Emeryville
Leopold Chiropractic
LifeLong Medical Care
Light and Breezy Paper
Linked & Co Permanent Jewelry

Lions Club of Albany
Little Shed Crafts
Little Tibet Gift Shop
Liz Patton Design
Los Nadies
Love the Bulb
Low Keys
Luna Bags
Ma's Trading Company
MacLean Custom Screen Printing
Magical Face Paint by Gina
Main Street Food Concessions
Malaya Botanicals
Maoli Shave Ice
Marxo Lazo
Maru Hair Salon
Matsu Japanese Gifts
Mayor of Berkeley – Jesse Arreguin
Mechanics Bank
Medical Center of Marin – Albany
Mehfil Enterprise
The Menagerie Oddities Market
Mercy Kit
Metalsouls LLC
Mickaboo Companion Bird Rescue
Midnight Kitchen
Mills College / Northeastern University
Moonsprouts
MoritaArts
Mountain Music
NALCO Northern Alameda County Emergency Amateur Radio
Nanas Bracelets
NARI San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
New York Life
Nomad Tibetan Restaurant
Norcal Sabeel
North Berkeley Wealth Management
Nourish Osteo & Wellness
Oakland Ski Club

Oaktown Spice Shop
Oasis Pro
Office of Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee
One Generation Camp
Orca Water Polo Club
Orchid Florist
Organic Attire
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UC Berkeley
Oz+Otz
Pacific Boychoir
Palomacy Pigeon & Dove Adoptions
Pamana Plantas
Papa Seahorse
Paper for Keeps
Paper Sweetly
Pegasus Books
Peki Peki
Pet Adoptions and Street Boutique
Petite Jewel Box
Photopia
Pineapple Express
Pizza Twist
Pop Nation
Rad Power Bikes Berkeley
Raised on TV
RandomTechnology Design
Read-Aloud Volunteer Program
Renner Screen Printing
Ring Around the Toezees
Rock-It-Man Stoneworks
Rolling Hills Memorial Park
Ross Luna's Sculptures
Rotation Community Services
Royal Scottish Country Dancers
Salvage Flows
Sam's Toys
Sandre Swanson for State Senate
Saraba African Arts

Sari-Sari Shop
Save the Historic UA Theater
Schmidt's Tobacco and Trading Co
School of the Madeleine
Seacology
Shoes on Solano
Shumei San Francisco
Signal Coffee Roasters
Silverado Memory Care
Simply Salma's Treasures
Sisters of the Holy Names
Sites Show
Solano Ave Barber Shop
Solano Avenue B.I.D.
Solano Center for Psychological Services
Solano Cleaning Center
Solano COmmunity Church
Soneha
Sophie Hahn for Mayor 2024
StandWithUs
State Farm Insurance – Sonny Randhawa
STBY
Stone Room
Stratospheres
Strawberry Creek Quilts
Style by Illana
Sue Johnson: Custom Lamps & Shades
Suitcase Ron's Kettle-korn
Sun Light and Power
Sundhari Spa
Sweet Basil Thai Cuisine
Tante's LLC
Temple Beth Hillel
Tenzing Collections
Tha Siam Thai Bistro
Tibetan Golden Lotus
Tilden Preparatory School
Total Health Dental Care
Treats by the Bay

Treve Johnson Photography
Troupe Tangiers and Sharifa's Habibis
Umani Home and Gift
Uncommon Poppy Shop
United Nations Association – East Bay Chapter
United State Coast Guard
Unlimited Fashions
USDA FSIS Western Laboratory
Vagabond Empire
Waste Management
Wilson Glass Co
Wind & Brass
Winkler Real Estate Group
Wilfe, Inc
Women's Daytime Drop-In Center
Xocolate Bar
YMCA Youth and Government
Yosemite Flower Farm
Young People's Symphony Orchestra
Youth Musical Theater Company