



September 12, 2023

Subject: 51B BRT + University/Shattuck Corridor Mobility Improvements

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

As members of the Berkeley Neighbors for Housing and Climate Action (BNHCA) Steering Committee, we write in strong support of Councilmember Terry Taplin's proposal, "51B BRT + University/Shattuck Corridor Mobility Improvements", which is tentatively scheduled to be on the agenda for the Berkeley City Council meeting on September 12.

BNHCA is committed to addressing the housing and climate crises by advocating for transit-rich, diverse, and walkable neighborhoods that reduce transportation emissions and provide affordable housing options for all income levels. We believe that speedy, reliable public transit is critical to these goals, both to directly reduce the carbon cost of transportation, and also to enable denser, lower-carbon, more affordable housing.

We believe Councilmember Taplin's proposal is a critical step towards advancing the City of Berkeley's goals for emissions reduction, mobility justice, and environmental justice by increasing public transit reliability and safety for all users.

AC Transit's 51B bus line serves several of Berkeley's core arterials, namely University, Shattuck, Telegraph, and College Avenues. It is an essential connection between the Berkeley Marina, Downtown Berkeley, the UC Berkeley Campus, the Elmwood District, and the City of Oakland. With Berkeley's increasing population and density, the inner East Bay's robust transit-accessible

communities have a geographic advantage and moral obligation to grow prosperously while eliminating their carbon footprints. In order to effectively maximize Berkeley's potential as an environmental leader, we must increase public transit service frequency and reliability to make it more cost-competitive against personal automobile trips.

Moreover, pedestrians and cyclists must feel safe from potential collisions with speeding vehicles in order to replace shorter vehicle trips themselves. With the 51B line having 9000 riders every day and upcoming plans for an all-electric ferry at the Berkeley Marina, improving public transit and pedestrian safety, including ADA accessibility, is one of the most important investments Berkeley can make for a more sustainable and equitable future.

Funding a feasibility analysis and community engagement plan is an important step to advance a sound, data-driven corridor planning process with robust community-building opportunities along the way. We are happy to celebrate Berkeley's progress and urge you to vote in the affirmative on this item. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ben Gould, District 4

Jeff Baker, District 5

Oren Cheyette, District 5

Alden Mudge, District 5

Theo Posselt, District 6

Steering Committee, Berkeley Neighbors for Housing and Climate Action