

Date:

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Dona Spring and Tom Bates

Subject: Resolution on Strawberry Creek

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council pass the attached resolution on Strawberry Creek.

BACKGROUND: the City Council previously passed a policy supporting the day lighting of Strawberry Creek in Berkeley's downtown. The General plan policy also calls for opening Strawberry Creek. Recently, the City Council unanimously passed the UC Hotel task force recommendations that supports opening Strawberry Creek. The General plan calls for an ecological demonstration project, which would include a convention center and hotel. In return for including ecological features such as day lighting Strawberry Creek, additional height variances could be granted for feasibility. Advocates for Creek restoration request Council support for the attached resolution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: NONE

CONTACT PERSON: Councilmember Dona Spring 644-6266

Whereas, Strawberry Creek is an urban stream currently underground in downtown in a deteriorating cement culvert, posing a serious threat to buildings and infrastructure in the event of collapse; and,

Whereas, the City of Berkeley could potentially realize long-term infrastructure cost benefits by day lighting at least some of the underground storm water/creek system in downtown; and,

Whereas, well designed public spaces with access to elements of nature improve the social and environmental health of the entire community, and, when centrally located near excellent public transportation, provide easy access and benefits to all citizens, including low income, seniors, children and disabled.

Whereas, the General Plan calls for: 1) the day lighting of creeks, whenever feasible, by removing culverts,

underground pipes, and obstructions to fish and animal migrations; 2) to seek funding sources to acquire and preserve land within creek corridors for restoration or day lighting; and,

Whereas, the General Plan specifically supports exploring costs and plans for the day lighting of Strawberry Creek (LU-20); and,

Whereas, the General Plan calls for the coordination of creek restoration projects with storm sewer improvements (EM-24); and,

Whereas, the City of Berkeley's 1999 data collection study conducted by Wolfe/Mason Landscape Architects concluded that next steps towards downtown day lighting goals should include a detailed technical analysis and design, an environmental assessment and site specific cost estimates; and,

Whereas, the UC Hotel/Conference Center/Museum Complex Task Force recommendations (which includes the exploration of day lighting Strawberry Creek in conjunction with the UC development project in recommendation 1.5) were unanimously accepted by the City Council on June 22, 2004;

Therefore, let it be resolved that the City of Berkeley affirms support for day lighting Strawberry Creek in downtown, if feasibility is demonstrated.