



## Kriss Worthington

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### ACTION CALENDAR

July 20, 2004

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: PLACE A REFERENDUM ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT WHETHER BERKELEY  
SHOULD PLAN FOR A NEW LOCAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council places a referendum on the November ballot whether Berkeley should plan for a new local rail transit system.

#### BACKGROUND:

Sample language: Should Berkeley start planning a new local rail transit system to serve campus, BART, Amtrak, and future extensions? (or "Should Berkeley plan for a transit-based transportation system?")

A nonbinding voter referendum in support of an unspecified new local rail transit system. (a modern replacement for the streetcars that originally served campus & the city) A new system will obviously connect BART, campus, stadiums, Amtrak, the conference center, the marina ferry terminal, and future extensions. Based on my experience "tabling" for rail & streetcars, this will be a very popular referendum. After the vote, outside agencies will be more motivated to suggest an expandable campus-based rail system to make BART commutes so much faster than driving. Reasons to put a "local rail" referendum on the Nov ballot:

1-Motivate higher Berkeley voter turn-out in Nov election, to increase the city's influence in state and national elections. (Traffic is the most important issue to citizens. IMHO, this will increase turn-out 5-10%)

2-Local rail is a very popular issue. As one of the only people to actively promote local rail (tables at campus, markets, bumper stickers, ...), I think this is one of the most popular ideas for Berkeleyites. It will receive a high level of support and get more positive media attention for Berkeley. (i.e. less national publicity will be given to the controversial measures) I want something to get more publicity than prostitution.

3- The real reason for Berkeley voters to speak on this is to capture regional/state attention & funding for a solution to the UC traffic problem. UC directors know that the transportation/parking congestion cannot be solved without replacing local rail, but it is too big an issue for any UC administrator to initiate. But there is more than enough funding available that will rightfully go towards solving UCs transportation problem when UC is less fearful of a Berkeley political battle (Measure 2, UC PTO funds, state mitigation funds...are all waiting for a more efficient legal use)

4- The other real reason is for Berkeley to take the leadership in east bay transportation planning, before some other local city decides on a new transit technology that will not be ideal for Berkeley. (ie, both Oakland International and Stanford are having new local transit proposed now, but the systems being suggested so far will not be easily extended to Berkeley. As the densest city in CA without local rail, Berkeley should be taking the lead.

5- Cutting traffic: The most modern & efficient rail technology available (linking to BART) will cut 20 minutes off the UC BART commute, causing a "mode-shift" of at least several thousand drivers daily. This will relieve parking/traffic congestion more than any other option.

6- We need to start planning ahead. It will take five years (or more) to plan the first routes, choose which technology to support, and build it. But this Nov. is the most ideal time for the city to take the initiative with a non-binding show of support.

7- Support: It's out there but not organized as of today. Most local activists do not remember Berkeley's streetcars, but I am 5th generation. The people support it, but they do not know where to start. Personally, I know that University & downtown merchants will ask you to support this on March 20, in addition to myriad UC employees and local transit activists. Alameda County is now the largest metropolitan area in the CA (or the west coast) without local rail already installed or being expanded. (I think!) The election will motivate local media to highlight the modern transit technologies that could be installed here.

8- The previous referendum for bay-bridge rail was a good start, but the city has to start getting serious that the city continues to expand, but there is not room for more autos. THE solution is rail, and Berkeley is desperate for someone to start planning a practical future now.

My interest: I am a property owner who knows that transportation problems are hurting us and that starting to plan for a rail system will help

After the election: During and after the election, Berkeley will start discussing what transit technology, routes, and funding will be best. (and who will run it: BART, UC PTO, AC transit).

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

#### CONTACT PERSON:

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