



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

December 8, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Phil Kamlarz, City Manager

Submitted By: Claudette Ford, Director, Public Works

Subject: Proposed Downtown Berkeley Bike Station Expansion Project

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Berkeley BART Bike Station, located on the concourse level of the Downtown Berkeley BART Station has been in operation since 1999. It was constructed to accommodate 77 bicycles and regularly parks 100 bicycles. It is believed that there is a demand to provide secure parking for many more bicycles in the downtown area.

In order to increase the capacity of secure bike parking, the City of Berkeley applied for and was awarded a \$497,000 Safe Routes to Transit Grant (SR2T) in 2005 to expand the Downtown Berkeley BART Bike Station.

BART and City staff have been unable to agree on an acceptable location and operating plan despite good faith efforts over the past three years. For this reason, we have not initiated construction of a project. However, the grant conditions require that the project be *completed* by December 31, 2008, and so the grant funding is at imminent risk of being forfeited.

City staff has developed an alternate location and project design at the City's Center Street Garage. This facility will provide more new secure bicycle parking at a far lower cost. In particular, operating costs will be a fraction of the previously proposed expansion.

In an effort to save the grant funding, the City Manager has submitted a Request for Extension to the grant manager, TransForm (formerly the Transportation and Land Use Coalition), and the funder, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, for the Center Street Garage Bike Station.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The existing Downtown Berkeley BART Bike Station, located on the concourse level of the Downtown Berkeley BART Station has been in operation since 1999, with a design capacity of 77 bicycles and an actual capacity of approximately 100. The Bike Station

as regularly reaches capacity, and it is believed that many more bicycles would use a secure facility if more space were provided.

Expanded secure, attended bike parking would benefit the City of Berkeley by improving the bike-transit connection at Downtown BART and reducing the total number of people driving through the Downtown area. The East Bay Bicycle Coalition, the Sierra Club and the Downtown Berkeley Association have endorsed these project goals, although they have been calling primarily for an attended Bike Station.

BACKGROUND

Between 2003 and today, the City has been active in attempting to expand the amount of secure bicycle parking near BART and other major downtown locations. In 2003, City Council passed Resolution 62,007 – N.S. authorizing an \$86,000 Transportation Fund for Clean Air grant proposal. This grant was awarded but had to be forfeited in 2006 due to inaction. (Funds were 'rolled over' to another priority bicycle project, the 9th Street Bicycle Boulevard Extension in West Berkeley.)

In 2004, BART and the City entered into a contract to develop conceptual designs for a larger facility in the current location or relocation to an above ground facility. An economic feasibility study was conducted for both possibilities. The City spent \$10,000 and BART \$17,000 on this work. In 2005, the City applied for the first cycle of the Safe Routes to Transit grant program, and was awarded a \$497,000 grant.

Since that time, City staff have been in ongoing negotiations with BART regarding location, business plan, and operations for a Bike Station Expansion. In 2008, BART selected a proposed location on Shattuck Avenue, and proposed a 5-year operating budget. This budget proposal required a \$186,000 operating subsidy per year. BART committed to provide \$101,000 annually for 5 years, and proposed that the City provide \$60,000 annually. An additional annual funding gap of \$24,000 was not discussed adequately.

The City carefully considered this proposal, and examined potential City funding sources. This amount would have used 52% of the annual General Funds for Bicycle Capital Infrastructure, or 80% of Measure B county sales tax revenue dedicated for bicycle projects. Clearly, this allocation of funds would have meant that the City would have to forgo other high-priority bicycle and pedestrian projects citywide. This use of funds would have also severely limited our ability to provide matching funds for future grant applications.

In addition, this proposal would have spent \$1.5 million over five years to provide parking for 140 additional bicycles, yet there would have been no committed operating funds or lease agreement beyond that time.

For these reasons and others, the City has identified the Center Street Garage as a preferred site for a Downtown Bike Station. The conceptual design for this facility would be an unattended cage with electronic keycard access and closed-circuit cameras. Bicycle parking would be further secured by the existing parking garage attendants and security guards. Overnight security is ensured because the garage is closed and locked.

This location is only half a block from BART and will also serve Berkeley Community College, City of Berkeley employees and other downtown visitors and employees. UC Berkeley has constructed similar bike parking in secure cages on campus, and BART recently received a grant to construct such a secure, unattended cage at the Ashby BART Station.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

If the grant extension is approved, staff will act swiftly to design, construct and manage the Center Street Garage Bike Station. If the grant extension is not approved, staff will seek to identify other funds to complete the project.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

If the grant extension is not approved, there would be significant capital costs to construct the facility, which would need to be identified. Potential fund sources include the Vista/Berkeley Community College \$3.6 million mitigation funds, bicycle capital funding, and/or parking revenue.

The Center Street Garage would lose approximately 16 parking spaces. However, staff estimate that this will not have any significant financial impact, because there has been considerable unused parking capacity in the garage for many years.

When the Center Street Garage is rebuilt, the Bike Station would be integral to the new design, make the most efficient use of space, and could further reduce the impact on auto parking capacity.

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