

Planning and Development Department
Land Use Planning Division

NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED ASHBY BART STATION AND NORTH BERKELEY BART STATION TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ZONING STANDARDS

The City of Berkeley is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Ashby BART Station and North Berkeley BART Station Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning Standards Project (“the Project”) and is requesting comments on the scope and content of the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will address the potential physical and environmental effects of the Project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The City of Berkeley is the Lead Agency for the Project. This notice is being sent to the California State Clearinghouse, Alameda County Clerk, adjacent cities, and other interested parties. When the Draft EIR is published, a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR will be sent to Responsible Agencies, other public agencies, and interested parties and individuals who have indicated that they would like to review the Draft EIR.

Responses to this Notice of Preparation (NOP) and any questions or comments should be directed in writing to: *Alisa Shen, Principal Planner, Planning and Development Department, 1947 Center Street, 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704; or ashen@cityofberkeley.info*. Comments on the NOP must be received **on or before December 21, 2020**. In addition, comments may be provided at the EIR Scoping Meeting (see below). Comments should focus on: possible impacts on the physical environment; ways in which potential adverse effects might be minimized, mitigated or avoided; and alternatives to the proposed project.

EIR PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City of Berkeley will conduct a public scoping session on **December 2, 2020** as part of a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting. The meeting will start at **7:00 PM** and be held via video and teleconference only. Interested parties should check the Planning Commission website for information on how to join the meeting and to confirm the meeting date, time, and agenda: https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/Commissions/Commissions_Planning_Commission_Homepage.aspx

PROJECT TITLE: Ashby BART Station and North Berkeley BART Station Transit-Oriented Development Zoning Standards Project

PROJECT LOCATION: The project location consists of the Ashby BART Station site and the North Berkeley BART Station site.

The Ashby BART station site consists of two parcels: a 4.4-acre parcel that makes up

the block surrounded by Adeline Street, Ashby Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr Way, which includes the station building and surface parking; and a 1.9-acre surface parking lot located on the north side of Tremont Street on the block surrounded by Woolsey Street, Tremont Street, Adeline Street and Essex Street in south Berkeley (see Figure 1). The Ed Roberts Campus is located between the two parcels.

The North Berkeley BART Station site includes an 8.1-acre property currently occupied by the station entrance building, surface parking, and a BART operations building, on the block surrounded by Sacramento Street, Delaware Street, Acton Street and Virginia Street in north Berkeley. The Station site also includes three auxiliary lots, located north and west of the 8.1-acre property along the Ohlone Greenway: a 0.75 acre surface parking lot at the northwest corner of the intersection of Acton and Virginia Streets; an 0.44 acre surface parking lot located on the west side of Franklin Street between Virginia and Cedar Streets; and an 0.64 acre parcel currently occupied by the Peralta and Northside Community Gardens located between Peralta and Northside Avenues (see Figure 2).

PROJECT SPONSOR: City of Berkeley

EXISTING CONDITIONS: The project sites consist of two regional transit stations (the Ashby BART Station and North Berkeley BART Station). Both BART stations are located in urbanized areas and are generally surrounded by residential and mixed-use development.

The Ashby BART station west parking lot is currently zoned South Area Commercial (C-SA). The 1.9-acre east parking lot located east of the Ed Roberts campus is zoned Multiple Family Residential (R-3).

The North Berkeley BART station is current zoned Unclassified (U) and the three auxiliary parking lots are zoned Single Family Residential (R-1) and Restricted Two-family Residential (R-2A).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION and BACKGROUND: California Assembly Bill (AB) 2923, passed in 2018, requires the adoption of TOD zoning standards for BART-owned properties within ½-mile of station entrances in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco counties that establish specific local zoning requirements for height, density, parking, and floor area ratio. The Project includes development of standards that comply with AB 2923 and are guided by additional City policy priorities related to affordable housing, an overall emphasis on social equity, and development without displacement. In 2020, the City of Berkeley began a community planning process to develop zoning/site planning scenarios for the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations to refine into final zoning standards that comply with AB 2923.

According to AB 2923, zoning standards developed for the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations must allow the following:

- Development at a density of 75 units per acre (or higher)
- Development at a height of 7 stories (or higher)
- Development with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 4.2 (or higher)

In addition, the following parking standards are required:

- No minimum required vehicle parking
- No more than one vehicle parking space per unit is permitted
- A minimum of one bicycle parking space per unit

The proposed Project involves updating the City's zoning standards at the station sites to comply with AB 2923. The zoning at the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations will primarily permit housing, but will also likely permit other non-residential uses such as retail, community-serving uses and civic spaces. The proposed Project would also constitute an update to the General Plan and potentially require changes to the Adeline Corridor Specific Plan (if adopted prior to the adoption of the BART TOD zoning). The proposed Project does not involve any specific development projects, but rather consists of land use and policy changes that could encourage new development.

The AB 2923 assumptions outlined above will be used to analyze potential environmental impacts of development that could be encouraged by the land use regulation changes in the proposed Project. At the Ashby BART station, the EIR will evaluate the impact of up to 1,200 dwelling units and 50,000 square feet of non-residential space that would be constructed, distributed between the 4.4-acre station site and the 1.9 acre surface parking lot east of the Ed Roberts campus. At the North Berkeley BART station, the EIR will evaluate the impact of up to 1,200 dwelling units, as well as 25,000 square feet of non-residential space, located on the main 8.1-acre station site. The three auxiliary lots located northwest of the station along the Ohlone Greenway are not anticipated to include any new development. Per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BART and the City of Berkeley, and due to their location directly above the underground BART right of way, it is anticipated that these lots would include only surface infrastructure enhancements.

These buildout assumptions are based on a reasonable maximum building envelope, taking into account the AB 2923 requirements, state and local land use regulations and other constraints of the sites. Any future development project proposed pursuant to these land use changes would be subject to its own project-level environmental analysis under CEQA.

More information about the project can be found on the City's website:

<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning/>

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The proposed project may result in potentially significant environmental effects to the following: Air Quality, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing, Public Services and Recreation, Transportation, and Utilities and Service Systems. All of these environmental factors will be analyzed in depth in the Draft EIR. Other issue areas, including Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Biological Resources, Geology and Soils, Mineral Resources, and Wildfire, are anticipated to have no impacts or less than significant impacts.

The Draft EIR will also examine a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, including the CEQA-mandated No Project Alternative and other potential

alternatives that may be capable of reducing or avoiding potential environmental effects while generally meeting the Plan objectives.



Alisa Shen, Principal Planner

Date of Distribution: November 20, 2020

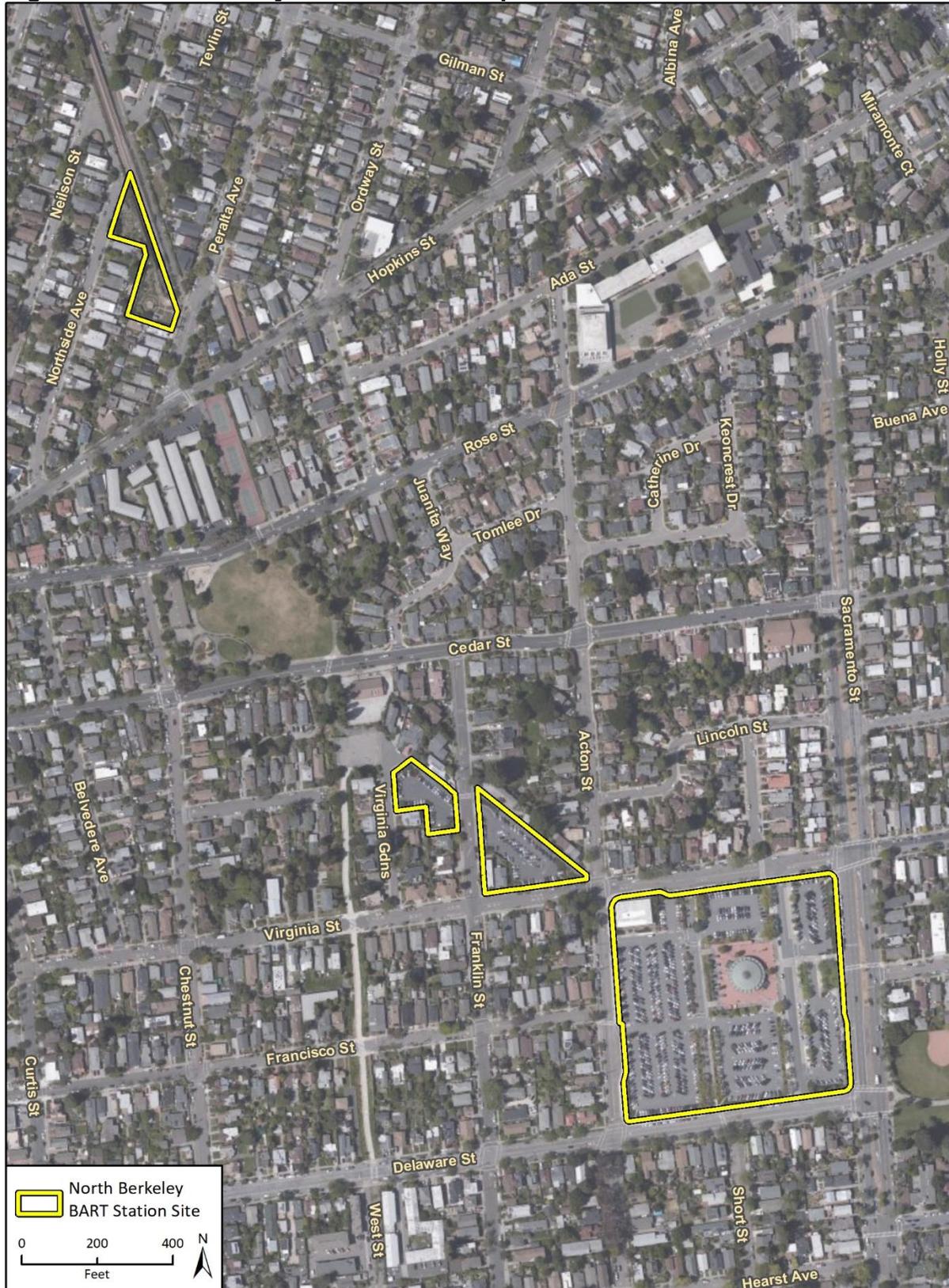
Attachments: Figure 1: Ashby BART Station Map
Figure 2: North Berkeley BART Map

Figure 1 Ashby BART Station Map



Fig 2 Project Location_Ashby

Figure 2 North Berkeley BART Station Map



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Fig 2 Project Location_N Berkeley