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Tuesday, November 17, 2020

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CITY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2020

Berkeley City Council approves Adopt-a-Spot to improve urban environment



MAYA VALLURU/STAFF

Through the Adopt-a-Spot program, students and residents in Berkeley will be able to increase the curb appeal of their neighborhoods by increasing urban biodiversity and creating a healthier environment.

BY [OLIVIA MOORE](#) | STAFF

LAST UPDATED 1 HOUR AGO

Berkeley City Council has approved the implementation of an Adopt-a-Spot program that will allow residents to formally adopt traffic triangles and circles.

By adopting these spaces, students and residents will be able to increase the curb appeal of their neighborhoods by increasing urban biodiversity and creating a healthier environment, according to a Bee City press release. Modeled after Oakland's program and its 30 years of success, the Berkeley counterpart aims to be similarly valuable,

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according to Berkeley Partners for Parks, or BPPF, President John Steere.

“We need to bring this (program) to Berkeley because after all, Berkeley — like Oakland — has a long history of activism and a long history of community involvement,” Steere said.

The program comes four years after Steere co-wrote a letter on behalf of the Berkeley Climate Action Coalition and BPPF urging the city to implement citizen-based climate action initiatives, one of which was Adopt-a-Spot.

In 2019, Steere also combated the city’s attempt to remove trees from traffic circles by co-writing an initiative to establish the city’s Traffic Circle Policy Task Force. The Adopt-a-Spot program was recommended within this initiative, ultimately providing it the “traction” it needed, according to Steere.

“This program has the potential to incorporate and formalize many volunteer programs that the City has,” said Traffic Circle Policy Task Force chair Diane Ross-Leech in an email. “Now community volunteers will have a home and support from the City and a way to formally volunteer for ongoing community stewardship activities.”

CalPIRG’s Save the Bees group has also incorporated this program into its ongoing effort of eliminating pesticide use and planting native flowers, according to campus senior and Save the Bees member Kieran Allen.

After receiving the certification from Bee Campus USA — an organization that recognizes campuses pushing forward green initiatives — UC Berkeley was labeled a “bee campus,” according to Allen.

For Berkeley to become a “bee city,” there must be an adequate amount of public participation in the maintenance of green initiatives, Allen added. This effort is a “huge part” of why the Save the Bees group is supporting the Adopt-a-Spot program, according to Allen.

“The major significance of this program is that it would actually get people more involved with nature itself,” Allen said. “There’s a big disconnect in big cities between nature and where everything comes from.”

Due to the coronavirus, however, efforts to begin work for the program have been delayed, Allen said.

Funding to establish a position dedicated to the implementation of Adopt-a-Spot was cut as a result of COVID-19, according to Ross-Leech. As such, the program will need support from the public works and parks departments to succeed.

“This project is key because it gets people more connected on, hopefully, planting flowers to help these animals and insects, and actually help us in the long term,” Allen said.

Contact Olivia Moore at omooore@dailyca.org and follow her on Twitter at [@olivia_moore18](https://twitter.com/olivia_moore18).

Adopt-a-Spot, Bee Campus USA, Bee City, Berkeley City Council, Berkeley Climate Action Coalition, Berkeley Partners for Parks, CALPIRG, Diane Ross-Leech, John Steere, Kieran Allen, Oakland, Save the Bees, Traffic Circle Policy Task Force



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City Council to talk housing report, sanctuary contracting ordinance, Traffic Circle Task Force

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