



Friends of Five Creeks

*Volunteers preserving and restoring watersheds of
North Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, south El Cerrito and Richmond since 1996
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Feb. 23, 2023

City of Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin, Council Members
City Manager, Public Works Director Liam Garland, Transportation Manager Farid Javandel
Transportation and Infrastructure Commission, Environment and Climate Commission
2180 Milvia St., Berkeley, CA 94704 (by email)

Mayor, Council, Manager, Public Works Director, Transportation Manager, and Commissioners:

Friends of Five Creeks takes no position on parking or bicycles on a re-paved Hopkins Street. However, our volunteer organization, which has worked for local creeks and watersheds for 27 years, feels strongly that the City of Berkeley should be ashamed to having planned this project with no effort to reduce the street's polluting impact on Codornices Creek, our area's only trout stream, running just a half block north.

This is a particular disgrace to a city that claims environmental credentials. The Monterey Market area is the exact spot where foam from a city fire truck ran in a short, straight storm drain to the creek in 2019, wiping out nearly the entire population of threatened steelhead trout. Here is a summary of how the city has repeatedly failed to consider the creek:

- Shortly before the Hopkins planning began, the city repaved Monterey Avenue, providing for bicycles – but not for reducing polluted runoff, even where Monterey crosses the creek.
- The city promised that green infrastructure would be integral to the Hopkins Street paving project. Its consultants, however, did not include this in public-meeting agendas or discussion. Our letters calling for truly complete streets (available [here](#) and [here](#)) have been ignored.
- No plan we have seen has any indication of so-called green infrastructure to reduce pollution. As far as we can tell, staff, elected officials, and consultants talk only about aesthetic details, not reducing the petroleum residues, heavy metals, and other toxics that wash to creeks and the Bay, making life even harder for struggling wild creatures.
- Transportation Director Farid Javandel has admitted, in writing, that the city is rushing this project to contract in order to dodge stiffened pollution-reduction requirements that go into effect on June 30.

If Berkeley pushes this project through under today's weaker environmental rules, the least elected officials and staff should do is make sure that final plans include meaningful infrastructure that keeps pollution out of our only trout stream. There are many ways to do this other than space-devouring swales and rain gardens. We would be happy to discuss possibilities.

We look forward to a project that recognizes that "complete streets" also reduce the pollution they cause.

Sincerely,

Susan Schwartz, President, Friends of Five Creeks