



Downtown Berkeley Positive Change

September 22, 2020

DBA Expands “Community Engagement Ambassador” Program



CE Ambassadors from right to left: Rich Mollette, Arthur Cardenas on T3 Patroller, & Streetplus Operations Manager Party Grissett.

In June 2020, in partnership with Visit Berkeley and BART Plaza property owners, the Downtown Berkeley Association initiated a three-month **“Safety Ambassador” pilot program** in BART Plaza with Streetplus, the DBA’s Ambassador services provider, to deal with increasing safety challenges for merchants in BART Plaza and elsewhere in the Downtown. The three-month pilot program was deemed a success, and the DBA Board of Directors decided to expand the program district-wide funded by the DBA to benefit all merchants and property owners. (See attached ***Safety Ambassador Pilot Program 2-Month Report.***)

The DBA and Streetplus also decided to rename the program **“Community Engagement Ambassadors”** since these specialized Ambassadors do so much more than address safety issues: they work with the merchants, property owners, residents, visitors and street population on a myriad of issues to

make for a more welcoming Downtown. Streetplus has hired two highly experienced security professionals to serve as our initial Community Engagement Ambassadors, Richard Mollette and Arthur Cardenas, who both have extensive experience working in the Berkeley and Oakland communities. Moreover, as security professionals they possess guard cards and receive extensive state certified security training that focuses on de-escalation and the safety of all involved, the proper use of pepper spray and/or baton in case of an emergency, and the rare use of handcuffs to detain someone until police arrive. They also receive training and orientation by Streetplus and BPD. Most importantly, their presence in the Downtown has already resulted in a reduction of illegal and anti-social behaviors, which Streetplus has experienced in other markets after introduction of similar programs. The DBA also approved the purchase of a T3 Patroller and bike so Rich and Arthur can quickly respond to problems throughout the district.

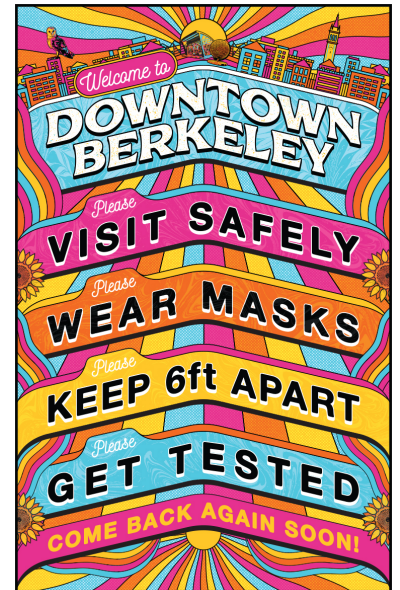
Community Engagement Ambassador program hours are 11:30-8pm 7 days a week. They can be reached via the **Downtown Berkeley Ambassador Hotline 510.550.7550**. Please remember that the Community Engagement Ambassadors supplement, but do not replace BPD! **If a serious emergency or crime in progress, ALWAYS CALL 911** before contacting the DBA hotline.

Dine 3 Times Promotion Extended to October 31



The [Dine 3 Times](#) promotion has been extended to October 31, inviting folks to dine three times in the Downtown and receive a collectible “Welcome to Downtown Berkeley – VISIT SAFELY” historic 18”x24” poster. All your customers need to do is take photo or scan three receipts from Downtown Berkeley restaurants, and email them to dine3times@downtownberkeley.com, with name and address and the DBA

will mail poster—while supplies last! We want East Bay residents to be aware that most of our restaurants are open for takeout, and outdoor sidewalk or patio dining; and we heard “Where can we get your amazing colorful fun VISIT SAFELY poster?” So we thought we would create a win-win for the community and our restaurants that need your support!



DBA Introduces “Music on Wheels” Oct 9

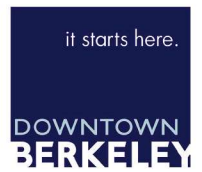


On October 9, the DBA will introduce “Music On Wheels”, featuring music from the Freight and Salvage Coffeehouse. Since our indoor music venues are closed due to the pandemic, and we were worried about folks keeping social distance in BART Plaza, we decided to create a “win-win” and take our wonderful music scene safely on wheels to folks dining outdoors in our sidewalk seating and pop-up parklets. On October 9, programming will run from 6pm to 10pm visiting seven restaurants in the Downtown. Please contact Matthew at mjervis@downtownberkeley.com if you would like your outdoor dining to be added to the next Music on Wheels event. Also join our [email list](#) to find out when and where to dine on October 9th.



DBA Expands “Delightful Doorways” Program

The DBA is expanding its Delightful Doorways program, conceived by Vitality Director Matthew Jervis, as a way to brighten the Downtown, discourage graffiti, and support local artists. With the addition of the two latest doorways on the Walgreen’s Building (see photo of work in progress on Allston Way by artist Sophie Ramos) we now have four Delightful Doorways in the Downtown, and hope to add many more soon. And we will provide a map and QR codes so art lovers can find all the doorways and learn about the artists. Please contact Matthew at mjervis@downtownberkeley.com if you would like to add your doorway to the program. With DBA splitting the cost, your cost is only \$350 per doorway.



SAFETY AMBASSADOR PILOT PROGRAM

**2-MONTH REPORT:
JUNE 2020 & JULY 2020**

CRIMES / OFFENSES

Safety Ambassadors assist daily in preventing crime such as theft and dealing with other offenses such as verbal threats to merchants and open use of illegal drugs. For crimes in progress, Berkeley Police Department is immediately called and Safety Ambassadors' primary goal is the well-being of the public. Safety Ambassadors provide immediate assistance in problematic situations and serve as excellent witnesses for First Responders.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Ensuring a pleasant experience for everyone in the Downtown is a key goal for the Safety Ambassadors, including: making sure sidewalks have a clear path of travel, reducing aggressive panhandling, reigning in general disturbances, and curtailing anti-social behaviors in the public sphere improve quality of life in the downtown. (In the case of Panhandling – Passive, Ambassadors are noting incidents for reporting purposes only, and taking no action because this is legal activity; and occasionally requesting they move to another location.)

CRIMES / OFFENSES		QUALITY OF LIFE	
Aggravated Assaults	1	Blocking Sidewalks	48
Harassment	16	Wellness Checks	8
Hate Crimes	2	Disturbances	96
Theft & Attempts	98	Noise Complaints	56
Verbal Threats	56	Open Containers	32
Automobile Accidents	2	Panhandling - Aggressive	2
Car Jackings	1	Panhandling - Passive	118
Drug Paraphernalia Sightings	6	Public Indecency	48
		Property Found	2
TOTAL 182		TOTAL 410	

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 2020 & JULY 2020

- Continuous patrols of BART Plaza
- Regular patrols every other hour of the 2 blocks north and the 2 blocks south of BART Plaza
- Immediate response to merchant requests and public concerns
- Assisted Berkeley Police Department with 7 arrests
- 3 assaults against Safety Ambassadors handled in safe and professional manner
- Daily de-escalations of antisocial behavior and problematic situations

SAFETY AMBASSADOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT:

The addition of the Safety Ambassadors (SA's) in the Downtown Berkeley District is going very well. There have been several instances where SA's have been called upon to deescalate situations involving Street Population members arguing and/or loitering in front of open businesses. One of the major hotspots is at Angeline's Louisiana Kitchen, where many street pop like to congregate. SA1 and SA2 have shown the ability to create a dialog with them and then proceed to build a rapport. This leads to the ability to request that they move along to a more appropriate site. Another hotspot is at Walgreens, on the corner of Shattuck and Allston Way. This is where the Safety Ambassadors helped to increase loss prevention with their presence. On at least 5 separate occasions, our SA was able to apprehend and retrieve stolen merchandise from the offender. In addition, the amount of people panhandling in or near the BART Plaza has reduced since the introduction of the program.

Both Safety Ambassadors have had to make Citizens Arrests and have exhibited all of the skill to end altercations quickly and peacefully, when possible. For example, in one incident SA1 was verbally berated by a man on Shattuck and Kittridge and then there was an attempted physical assault. The assailant was subdued/handcuffed and later arrested with no harm coming to anyone. On another occasion of note, SA2 was patrolling the BART Plaza, when a call was received regarding a shop lifter at Walgreens. As SA2 was coming up to the business the perpetrator came out of the business and walked past him. SA2 engaged the man by asking him to stop and talk. The perp then became very agitated and aggressive, attempting to assault the Ambassador. SA2, using all his training/experience, was able to subdue, handcuff and arrest the individual until the arrival of BPD.

We believe the Safety Ambassador Pilot Program in two short months has been able to significantly improve the quality of life and sense of safety in the BART Plaza and surrounding area. SA1 and SA2 have been able to establish many relationships with the existing street population, as well as, being able to identify new/different characters that have entered the District. In sum the Safety Ambassador Program appears to be of significant direct benefit to the merchants, property owners, workers, and residents of Downtown Berkeley. Moreover, the program provides additional education, training, and advancement opportunities for the Cleaning and Hospitality Ambassadors also.

