



Downtown Berkeley Positive Change

December 1, 2021



December 13 Unveiling of 1st IKE Smart City Kiosk

Join us for the unveiling of the [IKE Smart City Kiosk](#) at 3pm, on Monday, December 13, on Center Street at Oxford, the gateway to Downtown from UC Berkeley. The Downtown Berkeley Association introduced the IKE team (Interactive Kiosk Experience) to the City in 2017, and have gratefully supported the Mayor, Council, Office of Economic Development, and Visit Berkeley as they took charge and implemented a vision for a city-wide program. Kiosks are planned to be installed throughout the city starting in the Downtown, Telegraph, and Lorin districts. Within Downtown specifically, additional kiosk locations include Shattuck at Kittredge near the Main Library, and Shattuck at Durant near the Pegasus Books. All merchants will be listed free of charge on kiosks, in order of proximity to the kiosk based on category of interest, with users able to readily push information out to their smartphones. The kiosks will also feature other information, including nearby events, transit, and social services. The program is funded by advertising, but also includes community service announcements. Merchants can also buy discounted ad space on the kiosks. For more information on advertising on IKE kiosks please contact Jeffrey Church, at jchurch@visitberkeley.com.

Residence Inn Berkeley Slated to Open December 17



Years in development, Downtown Berkeley is getting another beautiful hotel! On December 17, the [Residence Inn By Marriott Berkeley](#) officially opens its doors to guests. An official ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for January 12 at 3pm, led by the Mayor and other dignitaries. Since the turn of this past century there have been several attempts to develop a hotel at this key site (at what use to be suburban style one-story BofA branch building), kitty-corner from BART Plaza in the heart of Downtown Berkeley. A major recession and several developers later, the Pyramid Group has brought this project to completion. This magnificent 17-story hotel features 331 suites, plus 9 meeting rooms with over 15,311 square feet of meeting/event space. In February, a rooftop bar/restaurant will open including outdoor terrace space; and a restaurant on the ground floor is slated to open also. Combined with Hotel Shattuck Plaza, and other event venues and the University, Downtown Berkeley is now in the position to host mid-size conferences that will bring economic and cultural vitality to the entire community.

Visit Berkeley launches BERKELEY BUCKS gift card program



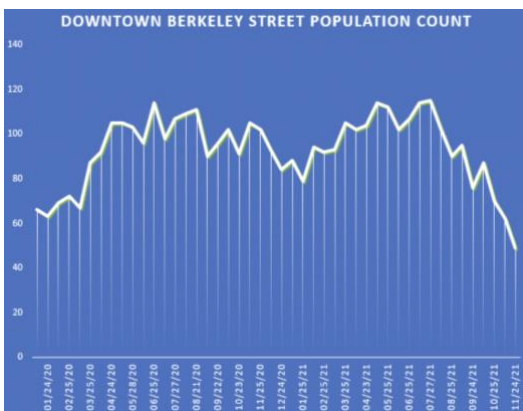
In May of this year, the DBA introduced the [BERKELEY BUCKS](#) concept based on [Yiftee gift card platform](#) to Visit Berkeley, Berkeley Chamber and Office of Economic Development. And we have gratefully supported Visit Berkeley taking the lead on this city-wide program. Join over 80 retail outlets now accepting BERKELEY BUCKS--with the list growing daily! Once you sign up, your staff enters BERKELEY BUCKS card information through your point-of-sale system just as they would with any manual Mastercard payment. **Contact Jeffrey Church at jchurch@visitberkeley.com to sign up, free of charge, and become a BERKELEY BUCKS merchant.** And do so TODAY to take advantage of our BERKELEY BUCKS holiday **"Give the Gift of Berkeley!"** campaign, as well as the BONUS BERKELEY BUCKS \$25 card, when someone purchases \$100 or more gift card, while supplies last!

DBA & Volunteers Plant 3,000 Daffodil Bulbs & Succulents



On Saturday November 6, over 70 volunteers from the UCB Berkeley Project, Rebuilding Together, and other community members, joined DBA Ambassadors and staff to plant 3,000 daffodil bulbs in the Downtown. For years we have wanted to this to brighten the Downtown. Finally, this year we put aside some funding, and were able to execute the planting under the leadership of Operations Manager Perty Grissett. On the same workday, volunteers and staff also replanted four circular planters in the Downtown core with approximately 56 new succulents, and laid rock covering to retain moisture. This succulent replanting project was generously funded by the Berkeley Department of Parks Recreation & Waterfront, in support of ongoing maintenance of landscaping in the Downtown and throughout the City. The timing was perfect, allowing plants and bulbs to get established during winter, and ready to burst forth this coming spring!

Positive Trend in Downtown Berkeley Homeless Count



Starting in January 2020 (pre-pandemic), the DBA initiated a bi-weekly 6-7am street population count of unhoused persons living on our streets, plazas, parks and doorway in the Downtown. After years of discussion and anecdotal reports, we felt it was important to have a quantitative measure of this challenging issue, as well as the impact of our social service outreach efforts, as well as tremendous leadership and support by the City of Berkeley. We are pleased to inform our stakeholders that our November 24 count shows a 2-year record low of 49 homeless persons in Downtown. As you will see from our graph, we experienced a dramatic increase with the COVID shelter in-place order in March 2020. Recent progress is due to extraordinary efforts of the City's Neighborhood Services team, in directing folks to resources such as the new Horizon Transitional Village, and reminding them to comply with City sidewalk ordinances also.