

Breakdown and analysis of Results of Measure KK vote, Berkeley, November 2008

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Context

The November 2008 presidential election was a very high turnout election in Berkeley, higher than in any election in the last three decades. Voter registration soared, with more than 7000 voters on the rolls than in the previous presidential election in 2004. More significantly, the number of ballots cast rose by 9.7% compared to 2004, which was also a high turnout election. The voter rolls in Berkeley tend to include a lot of people who no longer live here because of the large transient student population, so votes cast is generally a better measure than percent of registered voters who vote. Berkeley's population grew somewhat between 2004 and 2008, but not by anything like the magnitude necessary to account for the 5885 more voters.

Turnout in Berkeley

Year	Registration	Ballots Cast	Turnout
2008	86,020	66,703	77.5%
2006	69,780	46,166	66.2%
2004	78,638	60,818	77.3%
2002	70,184	41,388	59.0%
2000	72,299	54,684	75.6%
1998	73,848	44,343	60.0%
1996	87,355	52,248	59.8%

The increase in voting was most pronounced in student areas. In the part of Telegraph Area District 7 that is north of Dwight way and close to campus, turnout was up 36% compared to 2004. The increase was also substantial compared to the 2004 presidential election in South and Southwest Berkeley, areas of the city with the largest percentage of African-American residents.

Ballots Cast by District 2004 and 2008

Council District	Number of ballots cast		Percent change in number of ballots cast
	2004	2008	
1 Northwest Berkeley	7581	8272	+9.1
2 Southwest Berkeley	6157	7080	+15.0
3 South Berkeley	6436	7363	+14.4
4 Central Berkeley	7372	8280	+12.3
5 North Berkeley	9209	9492	+3.1
6 Northeast Berkeley	8638	9044	+4.7
7 Telegraph area	7498	8862	+18.2
7N student area	2865	3893	+35.9
8 Southeast Berkeley	7927	8310	+4.8
Citywide	60818	66703	+9.7

Absentee Voting

The percentage of votes cast absentee continued to increase in Berkeley, though fewer votes were cast absentee this year than in the lower turnout gubernatorial election in 2006. A majority of votes (53.6%) were still cast at the polls, but this is a far lower percentage than in the 2000 presidential election, when over 80% voted at the polls. In the hills, both the Claremont hills and the hills in Northeast Berkeley, a majority of votes were cast absentee in November's election. A majority of District 1 residents also voted absentee. By contrast, over 80% of the votes cast in the student-rich northern part of District 7 were cast at the polls. Absentee voting was also less popular in downtown Berkeley, which also has a substantial student population, and in the student neighborhoods in the northern part of District 8.

Absentee Voting in Berkeley November elections

Year	Percent absentee
2008	46.4%
2006	49.5%
2004	37.2%
2002	*
2000	17.8%
1998	18.9%

*absentee voting for 2002 is no doubt available from the county not in the Statement of Vote.

Absentee Voting by Council District, November 2008

District 1	51.6%
District 2	45.9%
District 3	45.7%
District 4	41.1%
District 4 dtown	31.9%
District 5	57.3%
District 6	57.1%
District 7	30.0%
District 7 north	16.8%
District 7 south	40.5%
District 8	40.7%
District 8 north	23.9%
District 8 south	51.5%

A liberal/progressive/green electorate:

Voters in Berkeley had a clear liberal/progressive/green tilt this year. They voted overwhelmingly for Barack Obama, who received 92.5% of the votes cast for president in Berkeley. They voted NO on Proposition 8 by 87.4% to 13.6%. Proposition 4, the abortion parental notification measure was rejected by 85.9% of Berkeley voters. They favored liberal/progressive incumbent mayor Tom Bates over more "moderate" former Mayor Shirley Dean by a 60.9% to 35.9% margin, with

write-in Green Party-backed candidate Kahlil Jacobs-Fantauzi getting 1.4%. Voters supported Prop. 1A, the high-speed rail measure, with 76.4% voting Yes, while 77.1% voted for Measure VV, the tax measure for AC Transit, while East Bay Regional Parks District Measure WW got 82.6% support. In his race for re-election to the AC Transit board, Chris Peeples got 68.8% support from Berkeley voters over AC critic and BRT opponent Joyce Roy. (Peeples got 64.5% districtwide.) Sierra Club-backed candidates Arreguin and Capitelli prevailed in hotly contested Council races in Districts 4 and 5. Mayor Bates also had Sierra Club backing as did no on KK.

Measure KK

Measure KK was crushed citywide, losing in every precinct. No on KK got at least two-thirds of the vote in every Council District, and won more than three-quarters of the vote (76.7%) citywide. In three Council districts, Districts 1, 5 and 6, No on KK got a little over 80%. NO on KK did worst in District 7, the Telegraph Area District, but it still got over two-thirds (67.9%). Since opposition is most visible and vocal in areas near the proposed route it's not surprising that districts farthest from Telegraph tended to vote NO by bigger margins. No on KK also ran strongly in District 4, which consists of downtown, central Berkeley immediately west of Downtown and North Shattuck, with 77.5% voting NO. 3 precincts west of Downtown recorded NO on KK percentages above 80%.

At the precinct level, the most anti-KK precinct was precinct 710 in District 1, a precinct whose boundaries are roughly Cedar to Rose, Edith to Sacramento. In 710, 87.6% voted NO. The lowest percentage for NO on KK was in consolidated Willard neighborhood precinct 400-424, where 62.6% voted NO. 62.6% to 37.4% is still a very a large margin to lose by. This precinct is the area east of Telegraph to Hillegass (Benvenue at the northern end) from Parker to Ashby.

BRT Route Precincts: 68.4% NO.

Voters living in precincts that immediately border the route or that the route passes through voted no by a 68.4% to 31.6% margin, better than 2 to 1. They voted this way despite opposition from some Telegraph Ave. merchants who put Yes on KK signs in store windows and opposition from two neighborhood associations, Willard and LeConte, which are active in the neighborhoods on either side of Telegraph between Ashby and Dwight.

The Yes on KK campaign had no support from elected officials, though it had the support of a few candidates. It was backed by Shirley Dean and by District 5 Council candidate Sophie Hahn and by some fringe candidates, including LA Wood in District 4. But the Yes on KK campaign listed exclusively merchant and neighborhood Association opposition in their ballot statements and in their last-weekend doorhanger.

Clearly, the four neighborhood groups have limited influence in their neighborhoods. In the Claremont Elmwood neighborhood in the southeastern part of Berkeley south of Dwight and east of College, No on KK triumphed with 76.2% of the vote. Interestingly, the southern, neighborhood end of District 8, where CENA is active, opposed KK by a bigger margin than the northern, more student-populated part of District 8. Overall, precincts where students make up the overwhelming majority of voters were less likely to vote NO on KK, falling short of the citywide 76.7%, though they opposed it by better than 2-1. The Willard neighborhood is the only Telegraph-area neighborhood where fewer than two-thirds voted NO; the percentage in Willard was 65.8% NO.

The weaker student opposition to KK helps explain why voters who cast votes at the polls were modestly less likely to vote no on KK. KK lost 78.4% -21.6% among absentee voters, while voters at the polls were 75.1% NO. Rates of blank voting (not voting either yes or no) were also higher in student areas. More than a third of the ballots cast in the student areas of Districts 7 and 8 did not include a vote on KK. Citywide, 21.1% did not vote on KK. More people (56,170) voted for someone for mayor than voted yes or no on KK (53,341). More people also voted for or against Measure FF, the branch library bond measure (55,834) and Measure GG, the new fire safety tax (56,477), while fewer voted on Measure LL, the preservation measure (50,280)

Measure KK, November 2008 Election, Results by Council Districts, selected areas

Council District or Area	Ballots Cast	Total KK votes	Number of NO votes	Percent of NO votes	Percent blank votes*
District 1	8272	6949	5581	80.3	16.0
District 2	7080	5856	4422	75.5	17.3
District 3	7363	5987	4497	75.1	18.7
District 4	8280	6384	4945	77.5	22.9
District 5	9492	8118	6551	80.7	14.5
District 6	9044	7534	6024	80.0	16.7
District 7	8862	6375	1431	67.9	28.1
District 7 north	3893	2498	1744	69.8	35.8
District 7 south	4969	3877	2587	66.7	22.0
District 8	8310	6138	4563	74.3	31.0
District 8 north	3246	2087	1503	72.0	38.8
District 8 south	5064	4051	3065	75.7	21.8
Citywide	66703	53341	40914	76.7	21.1
BRT Route	7976	5731	3918	68.4	28.1
CENA	4509	3666	2792	76.2	18.7
LeConte	3841	3027	2047	67.6	21.2
NEBA	18563	15652	12575	80.3	15.7
Willard	2198	1628	1071	65.8	25.9

*blank votes are overwhelming ballots where no vote was cast for or against KK, but also may include a small number of over-votes, where people voted both yes and no, though that is extremely rare. Percent blank votes is the percentage of ballots cast that did not include a vote for or against Measure KK.

For a map showing Council districts and precincts, look here:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/uploadedfiles/clerk/elections/webbooklet-2006%5B1%5D.pdf>

or here for individual districts:

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/contentdisplay.aspx?id=4322>

Areas defined

District 7 north is the area of District 7 north of Dwight Way in & including a piece of the northside. It is overwhelmingly made up of student voters.

District 8 north is the portion of District 8 north of Dwight Way plus precinct 270, immediately south of Dwight, which is mostly the Clark Kerr Campus. District 8 also includes the Foothill dorm on the northside. Like the northern part of District 7, it is overwhelmingly a student area, with a non-student residential pocket on Panoramic Hill.

District 7 south is the area of District 7 south of Dwight and consists of the Bateman and Halcyon Commons neighborhoods and most of the Willard neighborhood and about half of the LeConte neighborhood

District 8 south is the area of District 8 south of Dwight Way, except for the Clark Kerr Campus precinct. It consists of CENA and part of Willard.

BRT Route: all the precincts that the BRT route passes through or that border part of the route (Telegraph/Dana, Bancroft/Durant, Shattuck/Oxford). These precincts are: 380 (south of Ashby); 430 and 460 (in LeConte); 400, 424, 422 (Willard), 490, 491, 492, 260, 263 (north of Dwight student precincts with dorms, coops and apartments), 760 and 770 (downtown)

Note: Four Neighborhood Associations took positions in favor of Measure KK and their opposition was stated on Yes on KK campaign literature. The four were: Claremont Elmwood Neighborhood Association (CENA), LeConte Neighborhood Association, Northeast Berkeley Association (NEBA) and the Willard Neighborhood Association. CENA, LeConte and NEBA leaders signed the ballot statement in favor of KK.

Claremont Elmwood (CENA): all of District 8 south except precinct 421, which is in the Willard neighborhood.

LeConte (Telegraph to Shattuck, south of Dwight): precincts 430, 451, 460 and 860 in District 7; precincts 431, 850 and 862 in District 3)

Northeast Berkeley Neighborhood Association (NEBA) (they claim districts 5 and 6 as their territory): Districts 5 and 6 combined.

Willard (Telegraph to College, south of Dwight to Ashby): precinct 421 in District 8; precincts, 400, 422, and 424 in District 7; precinct 423 in Willard not included because it was consolidated with larger precinct 290 in CENA