## Murals and Sights of South and West Berkeley

Length: 7.1 miles

Time: Allow three and a half hours so you have time to appreciate the murals and other sights

Difficulty: 2+

Elevation Gain: 180

feet

Starting Point: Ashby

**BART** 

## **Transportation:**

BART, AC Transit 49, 800, F at the start; AC Transit 72, 72R on San Pablo; AC Transit 18 on Shattuck. Parking is available on side streets or at Ashby BART.

## Overview:

This walk explores the vibrant and lovely neighborhoods in South and West Berkeley. The walk passes parks, community gardens, farmers' markets, flea markets, cafes, cultural centers, and myriad murals and quirky houses.



## Directions and pictures:

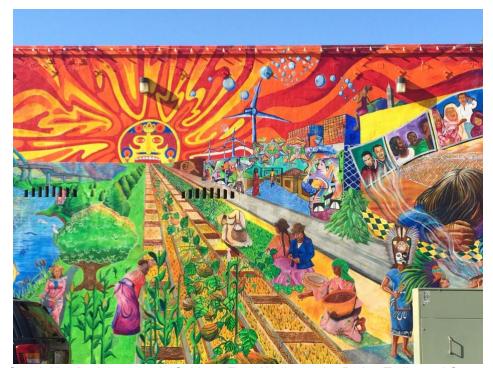
Begin the walk at the Ashby BART station and walk northeast on Adeline. Cross at Ashby and make a right, then turn right onto Shattuck after two blocks. After only .3 miles of walking so far, you reach the first mural of the walk, on the wall facing the parking lot of a marijuana dispensary on the northeast corner of Essex and Shattuck (3033 Shattuck). The dispensary, a former aquarium, hosts this mural of various types of aquatic life exploring the sea floor.

Continue along Shattuck, and you will reach the Starry Plough pub (3101 Shattuck) after one block. The Starry Plough was the name of the banner used by the Irish Republican Army, and is now a popular bar in South Berkeley. The wall that faces Shattuck sports a few murals celebrating music and struggle. La Peña Cultural Center (3105 Shattuck), just to the south, has another amazing, partially-three-dimensional mural, which depicts a muscular man playing guitar above paintings of Salvador Allende and Pablo Neruda.

Continuing south on Shattuck, you will cross the border into Oakland (have your passport?) and arrive at the next stop of the walk, Jumpin' Java Cafe (6606 Shattuck). The inside of the cafe is adorned with murals of various beachside scenes. The owner, Mike Dawoud, also showcases various different types of art. A local artist, Mark Bulwinkle, who specializes in wonderful *papel picado*-esque metal sculptures, has his work here on permanent display. The Dry Garden (6556 Shattuck), across 66th Street, features an amazing collection of cacti and other succulents and is definitely worth checking out as well.

Head east on 66th Street and then turn left onto Deakin to re-enter Berkeley (still have that passport?). A left at Prince and a right onto Wheeler brings you to the extraordinary garden of Marcia Donahue (3017 Wheeler), on the east side of Wheeler across from the end of Emerson. The garden may make you think that you've been transported to a tropical rainforest, albeit one with myriad ceramics hanging from the trees. Every Sunday afternoon, Ms. Donahue opens her garden to the public and you can go in and admire the part of it that you cannot see from the street. If you don't do this walk on Sunday afternoon it is definitely worth coming back to see the garden when it is open. It is truly inspirational.

Continue on Wheeler for four blocks, then turn left onto Russell. Before you reach Martin Luther King Junior Way, the Wat Mongkolratanaram, a beautiful Thai Temple (1911 Russell) is on the north side of the street. This stunning temple is open to the public for brunch every Sunday morning. After crossing Martin Luther King, turn right on Grant Street and cut through



Grove Park. After 3/4 of a mile along the quiet Grant, turn left on Bancroft. Continue 0.6 miles, until you reach the BYA-founded Community Garden (1308 Bancroft). This garden is not open to the public but you can still admire it from the outside. Turn right and cross the street, walking up the paved path through Strawberry Creek Park. Continue down the

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hill toward the creek, passing a small mural of Mount Diablo and the Berkeley Hills on the BYA building (1255 Allston).

Left: the mural on the south side of Mi Tierra

Take the left fork after the creek and cross Addison to proceed on the bike path. Three blocks later, turn left on Hearst and take it to San Pablo, where a beautiful mural of a town adorns an African dance building (1901 San Pablo). Cross San Pablo and turn left to walk south on it, beginning the return to South Berkeley. Before leaving the west, though, you'll pass an expansive mural at Mi Tierra Groceries (slightly to the right on Addison St.), which shows a utopic Berkeley full of gardens, traditional dances, and families (2082 San Pablo). After appreciating the mural, continue south one more block on San Pablo, then turn left up Cowper Street and then right onto Byron St. In quick succession, turn left on Allston, right on Curtis, left on Dwight, and right on Mathews. After a third of a mile, you'll reach a house shaped remarkably like a fish (2747 Mathews). Flippers extend from either side, and the windows well resemble portholes. Turn left on Russell two blocks after the fish house and after a half mile turn right on California. Once you reach Alcatraz Avenue, after another half mile, you'll pass another interesting mural adorning the east side of the street, with a huge painting of Yoda and lettering that reads 'STRIKE BACK AGAINST THE EMPIRE WE MUST' (1601 Alcatraz).



Left: The mural at Ellis and Alcatraz

Turn left on Alcatraz and, two blocks above California St, turn left on Ellis to arrive at the penultimate mural of the walk (1741 Alcatraz), showing several people dancing and playing musical instruments.
Though perhaps

less extraordinary than many passed on the walk so far, it is still worth a stop.

Continue north on Ellis, and after four blocks you will arrive at Malcolm X Elementary School (1731 Prince). If it is a weekend, the school will probably be unlocked and you can enter through the gate and walk into the garden to admire the statues done by Marc Bullwinkle. Afterwards, right turn on Prince, left on Harper, and then right on Ashby. At the corner of Ashby and Martin Luther King Way you'll pass the last mural of the walk (2948 Martin Luther King), which features a portrait of a man named Mr. Charles, waving. Up until his death, Mr. Charles used to stand at his house (a block away) greeting passersby with a wave and a friendly 'Have

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a GOOD day!' Today, in his memory, the mural bears the caption, 'Have a GOOD day, Mr. Charles!'

Turn right on Martin Luther King, then left and you will soon reach Ashby BART, your starting point.