

Correspondence

From: Gabriel Wheaton <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 1:07 PM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: Support for Berkeley taking bold action to allow more housing along its commercial corridors

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Planning Commissioners,

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Zoning for North Shattuck, College, and Solano Avenues needs to match the urgency of our housing crisis. We commend the Council for taking a clear stand on housing and urge you to carry this vision through in full. Set the base zoning at a minimum of seven stories and keep the standards simple so projects can actually get built. Avoid layering on setbacks, stepdowns, and other constraints that shrink capacity. Many parcels along these corridors are irregular or constrained, so flexibility is essential if we want real housing outcomes.

Seven-story zoning will deliver a meaningful number of homes, improve affordability, and support mixed-income neighborhoods where teachers, service workers, young families, and long-time residents can all find a place. This level of density fits these corridors. They are served by frequent AC Transit routes and mirror successful transit-oriented areas across the Bay Area.

A seven-story baseline will also strengthen local businesses through increased foot traffic, cut car dependence, and advance our climate goals. It will open Berkeley's opportunity-rich neighborhoods to a broader range of residents. We have both a legal and moral responsibility to affirmatively further fair housing.

Please adopt the Council's direction without dilution. The vitality of our commercial districts and the ability of our community to thrive depend on it.

Respectfully,
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Correspondence

From: Dawn Thomas <dawnthomasinsights@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 1:07 PM
To: Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council
Cc: Planning Commission
Subject: Remove Elmwood Historic District From the Upzoning Proposal. Focus on Telegraph or Opportunity Sites.

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I am writing to encourage the **approval of Mark Humbert's suggestion to focus the Elmwood Upzoning proposal on Telegraph Avenue OR Opportunity Sites.**

Our Planning Commission, with the guidance of your Consultant, have acknowledged that there would be irreparable harm to these business districts if developers were allowed in. Your own Planning Commission are confused to its inclusion in the first place. In fact, in a burst of pragmatic enquiry, one asked that we stop calling the Elmwood a "corridor". We are talking about a 2-lane (already backed up) street with 2 blocks of businesses. Destroying it is senseless and a direct contradiction of the City's claimed effort to provide access to the amenities in this neighborhood. ***The Elmwood historic district is the "amenity"***. It's the reason that citizens from across Berkeley and beyond — come to the neighborhood to shop and eat. It just doesn't make sense to destroy what's working today. And yes - your consultants have told us all quite clearly even if in a roundabout way — it won't survive. Developer business models do not prioritize businesses — and the types of spaces that would be built, would not serve the needs of small, local businesses. You would be destroying what makes Berkeley a wonderful place in which to live - for existing and future citizens.. These historic districts and a sense of a shared communal gathering space are a critical reason that people want to live here. Beyond the damage to your current constituents — it will also lower attractiveness for any developers contemplating whether they want to invest and the new residents who might consider paying the, inevitably, outlandish rents that will be attached to those units.

Please **advocate for the minimum number of stories** — as the Developers WILL leverage the density bonus. These neighborhoods are attractive because they embody the low-rise building that makes them communal and livable. The "small town feel" and the sunshine that brightens sidewalk cafe tables — is the draw. There is an entire city that is currently bursting with approved plans for high rises. Developing these two blocks will achieve very little in terms of the city's plan to increase affordable housing — but the destruction of these two blocks will negatively impact everyone who lives in Berkeley today.

Better yet, please shift the focus of development to places where it makes more sense for it to be focused. As Mark has said — Telegraph Avenue, also in the Elmwood, might actually benefit from development and it has the type of sites that can actually accommodate it. It has better access to the public transportation that might encourage lower car ownership, schools, the hospital, et al. If you are truly looking to achieve the goals you have laid out — that is a superior option.

Best Regards
Dawn Thomas