

Correspondence
Received before Noon
Tuesday, September 8, 2026

From: [Kayla Jimenez](#)
To: [Kesarwani, Rashi](#); [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: San Pablo Plan step-backs
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2026 3:55:17 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Rashi Kesarwani and Berkeley Planning,

I am a Berkeley resident and homeowner at 1626 Kains Avenue, a duplex immediately adjacent to the San Pablo Avenue corridor and the Cedar node. I am writing to ask that the City restore the residential-edge upper-story stepback that was included in the earlier draft of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan but removed from the June 2026 Final Draft.

I support the City's goals of increasing housing production and creating a more active and walkable San Pablo Avenue. My concern is specifically about the transition between substantially taller San Pablo Avenue development and the existing low-rise residential neighborhoods immediately behind it.

The earlier draft contemplated a 10-foot stepback above the fifth story for buildings adjacent to residentially zoned parcels. I understand that this provision was subsequently removed. I respectfully ask the City Council to restore that residential-edge stepback before adopting the Specific Plan.

This is particularly important at the Cedar node. The City is contemplating substantial increases in development intensity along San Pablo Avenue, while existing homes immediately behind the corridor remain at a much smaller scale. A six-story building approaching 65–70 feet in height can create a very abrupt transition when its upper floors are placed directly against existing residential properties. I'm particularly worried about my tenant and I (both women) and our privacy if several floors of windows are facing directly into our homes.

A 10-foot stepback above the fifth story would not prevent substantial housing production. Instead, it would create a modest transition at precisely the point where the building becomes most impactful to adjacent homes. It would reduce the apparent mass of the upper floors, preserve more sky exposure, reduce overlooking, and provide some mitigation for the loss of light experienced by immediately adjacent residential properties.

I am not asking the City to prevent housing development or to preserve existing low-density zoning along San Pablo Avenue. I am asking the City to retain a basic objective design standard that recognizes the very different scale of the properties on the two sides of the corridor.

I would respectfully ask the City to:

1. Restore the previously contemplated minimum 10-foot stepback for portions of buildings above the fifth story when the development parcel directly abuts an R-zoned residential parcel.
2. Include appropriate privacy protections for upper-story windows, balconies, and rooftop amenities facing adjacent residential properties.

3. If the City does not intend to restore the 10-foot standard, direct Planning staff to explain publicly what analysis supported its removal, including the consideration given to shadow, daylight, privacy, and building-massing impacts on existing residential properties.

I believe this would be a reasonable compromise between the City's housing-production goals and its stated goal of creating a San Pablo Avenue district that is integrated with the residential neighborhoods surrounding it. Because the Planning Commission has already completed its recommendation on the Final Draft and the plan is now headed to City Council for adoption, I would appreciate confirmation that this request will be considered before the Council adopts the plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kayla Jimenez

Homeowner of 1626 Kains Ave.

From: [Diana Hembree](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: No bike lane on Hopkins! It will result in death, injury and neighborhood fury
Date: Monday, August 24, 2026 7:35:02 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and Planning Commission,

I go to Hopkins Street in the Berkeley flats almost daily to run or walk around the track at King School Park in the early evening, to shop at one of the great small stores or take my grand daughter to the toddler park there. It is one of Berkeley's most beautiful and beloved streets, featuring lovely 100-year-old sycamore trees that provide shade under a gorgeous green canopy during our increasingly sweltering days.

The huge green field at the park, encircled by the popular walking track, receives shade on the right from the iconic tree-lined street and is a wildly popular place for King students, soccer leagues, walkers runners, picnickers, baseball and other sports enthusiasts supported by city youth sports teams. Parents often bring their children to cheer them on or for King School graduations and other popular events are held on the green. It is a safe, relaxing, lively space for everyone in the city.

Imagine my shock and anger, then, at hearing the City of Berkeley is planning to cut down the beautiful sycamores shading the street to enlarge it for a bike lane! Noooooooo! Although I am a lifelong bicycle rider and enthusiast, I fervently oppose this move: This is terrible planning on the city's part: People with toddlers, infants and small children cross the bike lane and sidewalk to enter the green space and toddler park; students in graduation gowns will have to dodge bikes, electric bikes and scooters in the bike lane, and elders and would-be swimmers going to the rec center could be knocked over and killed, as is already happening in other parts of the city. We have already had a number of deaths from people hit by people whizzing by on bikes and electric scooters. This would be inviting far more injuries and fatalities.

Plus, people will have _ nowhere _ to park for soccer, walking, running, graduations, and other events in the track and field except in the neighborhoods around the park, which is bound to anger the residents. I live near a religious entity that has frequent large events with little to no parking, and residents are often angered to come home and find they have to park on a street far away from their homes. This lack of proper planning sets the stage for unnecessary animosity.

You will destroy the safety, fun, beauty and love for this incredible green space in the city by cutting down the trees and turning this street into a bike freeway. Consequently, you will see children, elders and others badly injured or even killed in the bike lane they must cross to reach the park. In addition to tragedy, pain and suffering, the lawsuits alone could drain Berkeley's coffers..

Why not be like other cities and use the city's greenway to create a bike path, perhaps building an elevated platform to connect it if necessary? Or move this plan to a street that doesn't connect to a major park used by thousands of residents. Just don't decimate this beautiful neighborhood's center and its safety, shops and badly needed shade for the bike lobby. This is one of the closest things we have to a beloved historic and thriving neighborhood in Berkeley,

and you are planning to raze it for no good reason.

Again, I am a biker and I support biking and bike lanes. But not by destroying a street that is not meant to be a bike thoroughfare and by endangering public safety, which is already in tatters due to heedless bikers and youth (sorry, kids) who don't understand how close they come to killing pedestrians every day. Again, this is an area frequented by toddlers, small children, students, and parents carrying babies. It should not be a bike freeway.
.Thank you, and I feel so strongly about this that I will escalate thsi issue to the Mayor's office, the County and the City Council.

Best,

Diana Hembree
Berkeley resident

From: [Diana Hembree](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Re: No bike lane on Hopkins! It will result in death, injury and neighborhood fury
Date: Monday, August 31, 2026 12:03:41 AM
Attachments: [Outlook_color_logo.png](#)

Ah, thank you so much for your kindness in response to my misdirected letter., especially since it wrongly directed all my worries at your department! Per your clarification I will direct it to the Department of Public Works and the Mayor's Office. Thanks again for your rapid and courteous response!

All best,

Diana Hembree

On Tue, Aug 25, 2026 at 2:35 PM Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov> wrote:

Ms Hembree,

Thank you for your email and for sharing your thoughts with the Planning Commission. I wanted to add, however, that the Planning Commission does not, and has not, had a role in the Hopkins bike lanes proposal(s). The Planning and Development Department regulates developments on *private* property; changes in *public* property (like roads and sidewalks) are the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works.

Thank you again.



Justin Horner

Principal Planner

Planning and Development, Land Use Division

1947 Center St., 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704

Phone: [\(510\) 981-7476](tel:(510)981-7476)

Email: jhorner@berkeleyca.gov

In Office Days: Monday – Thursday

Remote Day: Friday

The Permit Service Center (PSC), including the zoning counter, is open between 8:30 am – 2:30 pm (final check in at 2:00 pm) Monday through Thursday.

All permit-related and Zoning services are available online. Please visit us [online](#) for more information.

From: Diana Hembree <dkhembree@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2026 7:34 PM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: No bike lane on Hopkins! It will result in death, injury and neighborhood fury

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

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Plus, people will have nowhere to park for soccer, walking, running, graduations, and other events in the track and field except in the neighborhoods around the park, which is bound to anger the residents. I live near a religious entity that has frequent large events with little to no parking, and residents are often angered to come home and find they have to park on a street far away from their homes. This lack of proper planning sets the stage for unnecessary animosity.

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Why not be like other cities and use the city's greenway to create a bike path, perhaps building an elevated platform to connect it if necessary? Or move this plan to a street that doesn't connect to a major park used by thousands of residents. Just don't decimate this beautiful neighborhood's center and its safety, shops and badly needed shade for the bike

lobby. This is one of the closest things we have to a beloved historic and thriving neighborhood in Berkeley, and you are planning to raze it for no good reason.

Again, I am a biker and I support biking and bike lanes. But not by destroying a street that is not meant to be a bike thoroughfare and by endangering public safety, which is already in tatters due to heedless bikers and youth (sorry, kids) who don't understand how close they come to killing pedestrians every day. Again, this is an area frequented by toddlers, small children, students, and parents carrying babies. It should not be a bike freeway.

.Thank you, and I feel so strongly about this that I will escalate thsi issue to the Mayor's office, the County and the City Council.

Best,

Diana Hembree
Berkeley resident

From: [Eunice Lee](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); jhomer@berkeley.ca.gov; [Klein, Jordan](#); [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16 Meeting
Date: Saturday, September 5, 2026 1:27:19 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners, I am a South Berkeley resident/community member writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS). My immediate neighborhood has very limited substantial open green space. While there are small neighborhood parks nearby, there is a lack of significant open green space within the immediate area. Adding a high-density housing development of this scale will substantially increase the number of residents relying on the limited open space that already exists. I believe the development should therefore include meaningful, accessible green and open space to support both existing and future residents and preserve the livability of the neighborhood. I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to continue consideration of the ODS for 30–60 days to allow sufficient time for meaningful community review and for outstanding concerns to be addressed before a recommendation is made to the City Council. I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for meaningful unpaved ground-level green space, mature trees, protected community/civic space, and careful consideration of building height and neighborhood impacts. I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate open space in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.42 (Measure L) and Berkeley's broader open-space goals as this process moves forward. If the Commission decides not to continue the matter, I ask that you not approve the ODS as currently written. Please first incorporate meaningful community-requested protections, including adequate unpaved ground-level green space and protected community/civic space. Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful community input and the long-term needs of South Berkeley. Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely, Eunice Lee A South Berkeley Resident

From: [Michael Calderon](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#); [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16 Meeting
Date: Saturday, September 5, 2026 2:45:45 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners,

I am a South Berkeley community member writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS).

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to complete their review of the ODS as soon as possible and make a recommendation to the City Council.

I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for **building as much housing as possible**. This may include raising the height limits on the project beyond the original submittal.

I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate housing in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley's broad housing and environmental goals as this process moves forward. As has been argued by many organizations ([Here is the Sierra Club for example](#)), dense transit oriented urban living is one of the best ways to fight climate change.

If the Commission decides to continue the matter, I ask that you approve the ODS with more housing. Please first incorporate meaningful transit oriented housing, including reducing parking to encourage transit use.

Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful environmental consideration and the long-term housing needs of South Berkeley.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,
Michael Calderón

From: [Amber Richardson](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT request for continuance Ashby BART Objective Design Standards
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2026 9:43:52 AM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to voice my concerns with the proposals for the West Lot housing development.

Within a 3 block radius of Ashby BART there are 5 projects in various phases of construction bringing thousands of residents to the area. Given the lack of meaningful investment in South Berkeley from decades of neglect we have not a single green space, not a single park within walking distance of BART.

Additionally this area has the lowest rates of homeownership in all of Berkeley. This is a direct result of the damage to these neighborhoods by the construction of BART and racist zoning laws.

I request that this proposal include actual green space that can accommodate the thousands of residents who will be housed here. Consider the quality of life of the residents of South Berkeley as if we are the wealthy, lawsuit pursuing neighbors to the North.

I also request that this development include meaningful access to ownership of the constructed units to allow residents to build the wealth that was robbed from previous residents.

You have an opportunity to make meaningful change for South Berkeley. Please treat us with respect.

Amber Richardson

From: [Gloria Bromberg](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#); [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16 Meeting
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2026 8:17:10 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners, I am a South Berkeley resident who lives on Martin Luther King Jr Way, directly across from the Ashby BART station. I'm writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS). I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to continue consideration of the ODS for 30–60 days to allow sufficient time for meaningful community review and for outstanding concerns to be addressed before a recommendation is made to the City Council. I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for meaningful unpaved ground-level green space, mature trees, protected community/civic space, and careful consideration of building height and neighborhood impacts. I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate open space in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.42 (Measure L) and Berkeley's broader open-space goals as this process moves forward. If the Commission decides not to continue the matter, I ask that you not approve the ODS as currently written. Please first incorporate meaningful community-requested protections, including adequate unpaved ground-level green space and protected community/civic space. Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful community input and the long-term needs of South Berkeley. Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely,

Gloria Bromberg
3018 Martin Luther King Jr Way
Berkeley, CA 94703-2402

From: [Sara Shendelman](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Shen, Alisa](#)
Cc: [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#)
Subject: Building at Ashby BART: Public Comment & Request for Continuance
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2026 9:08:22 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16 Meeting Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners, I am a South Berkeley resident/community member writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS). I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to continue consideration of the ODS for 30–60 days to allow sufficient time for meaningful community review and for outstanding concerns to be addressed before a recommendation is made to the City Council. I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for meaningful unpaved ground-level green space, mature trees, protected community/civic space, and careful consideration of building height and neighborhood impacts. I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate open space in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.42 (Measure L) and Berkeley's broader open-space goals as this process moves forward.

We are paving our way into suffocating and adversely affecting our basic nature without having antidotes to modern life.

More trees, more grass - not less!! If the Commission decides not to continue the matter, I ask that you not approve the ODS as currently written. Please first incorporate meaningful community-requested protections, including adequate unpaved ground-level green space and protected community/civic space. Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful community input and the long-term needs of South Berkeley. Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely,

Rabbi Sara Shendelman South Berkeley resident

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There is no difficulty that comes that is not accompanied by the support you need to expand into the light, solve the problem and create powerful healing and growth.

"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and

purpose. We can't choose our circumstances, but we can choose our attitude. In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice. The salvation of man is through love and in love."

Viktor Frankl

Little ideas that tickle and nag and refuse to go away
should never be ignored,
for in them lie the seeds of destiny.

**What if.....everything you are going through, is
preparing you for what you asked for?**

The essential thing is not to win, but to have fought in a way that enlarged your spirit.

R Sara

From: [Shane McCall](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#); [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16th Meeting
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2026 9:19:47 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners, I am a South Berkeley resident writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS). I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to continue consideration of the ODS for 30–60 days to allow sufficient time for meaningful community review and for outstanding concerns to be addressed before a recommendation is made to the City Council. I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for meaningful unpaved ground-level green space, mature trees, protected community/civic space, and careful consideration of building height and neighborhood impacts. I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate open space in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.42 (Measure L) and Berkeley's broader open-space goals as this process moves forward. If the Commission decides not to continue the matter, I ask that you not approve the ODS as currently written. Please first incorporate meaningful community-requested protections, including adequate unpaved ground-level green space and protected community/civic space. Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful community input and the long-term needs of South Berkeley.

Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely, Shane McCall (South Berkeley resident)

From: [blancheb.b.](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Further Apt Buildings @ Ashby Parking Lot
Date: Monday, September 7, 2026 12:31:36 AM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Comission,
Please dont allow construction of extremely tall apt buildings. Please take into consideration the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and include a park, a community center and tree's, This part of Berkeley is devoid of parks and green spaces.

Thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely

B. Bolsega
3132 MLK Jr Way
Berkeley, CA, 94703

From: [Alden Jenks](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#)
Subject: High-rises Around Ashby BART
Date: Monday, September 7, 2026 5:01:36 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I think there are enough high-rise buildings in Berkeley now. There are two within walking distance of the station. The size of this plan is going to be ruinous for the neighborhood --- the traffic, noise, trash, crime. Please. Restrain yourselves, just this once.

Alden Jenks

From: [Alice Shen](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Horner, Justin](#); [Klein, Jordan](#); [Bartlett, Ben](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT & REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE: Ashby BART Objective Design Standards (ODS) – September 16 Meeting
Date: Monday, September 7, 2026 7:23:45 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Planning Commissioners, I am a South Berkeley resident/community member writing regarding the Ashby BART West Lot Objective Design Standards (ODS). I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to continue consideration of the ODS for 30–60 days to allow sufficient time for meaningful community review and for outstanding concerns to be addressed before a recommendation is made to the City Council. I ask that the final Objective Design Standards include strong, enforceable protections for meaningful unpaved ground-level green space, mature trees, protected community/civic space, and careful consideration of building height and neighborhood impacts. I am particularly concerned about the need for adequate open space in South Berkeley and ask the Commission and City staff to fully consider Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.42 (Measure L) and Berkeley's broader open-space goals as this process moves forward. If the Commission decides not to continue the matter, I ask that you not approve the ODS as currently written. Please first incorporate meaningful community-requested protections, including adequate unpaved ground-level green space and protected community/civic space. Please take the time necessary to ensure that the final standards reflect meaningful community input and the long-term needs of South Berkeley. Thank you for considering my comments. Sincerely, Alice Shen South Berkeley resident / Berkeley community member