



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember, District 1

CONSENT CALENDAR
January 17, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author)

SUBJECT: Referral for a Security Assessment of the 1700 and 1600 Blocks of San Pablo Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to conduct a security assessment of the 1700 and 1600 blocks of San Pablo Avenue two months after the City of Berkeley has entered into a lease of real property located at 1720 San Pablo Avenue (hereafter referred to as Berkeley Inn, a 27-room motel). Additional security measures deemed necessary should be implemented as soon as practicable after the security assessment is completed.

Recommended aspects of the security assessment include but are not limited to the following:

- A community meeting for immediate businesses, residents, and stakeholders of the 1700 and 1600 blocks of San Pablo Avenue to be hosted by the Office of Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani, City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley [or her designee(s)], and the Berkeley Police Department in order to assess the current street conditions and safety concerns; and
- A Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment to be conducted by the Berkeley Police Department for the 1700 and 1600 blocks of San Pablo Avenue.

Possible security measures may include but are not limited to the following:

- Increased Berkeley police patrols and/or the provision of private security services;
- Assistance from the Office of Economic Development to identify grant or other funding opportunities so businesses and residents may procure and install security cameras at key locations;

- Implementation of environmental design improvements, as recommended by the CPTED assessment, by the City of Berkeley and/or private property owners, as appropriate.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

New Uses in the 1700 and 1600 Blocks of San Pablo Avenue Warrant Safety Assessment. On December 6, 2022 Council approved the lease with the Berkeley Inn located on the 1700 block of San Pablo Avenue, as well as a contract amendment with the Dorothy Day House to operate the facility as a transitional shelter. The 1600 block of San Pablo Avenue is the site of a permanent supportive housing facility at the former Golden Bear Inn, operated by Bay Area Community Services, with residents in the process of moving in as of November 2022.

City Council's approval of the five-year lease agreement with owners of the Berkeley Inn, located at 1720 San Pablo Avenue, is critical in maintaining Berkeley's commitment to sheltering homeless populations as the Horizon Transitional Village, also administered by Dorothy Day house, provides 50 beds for unsheltered and encampment populations and will be closing at the end of this month on December 31, 2022. This hotel conversion fills a dire need for an alternate location to house this vulnerable population that likely would otherwise end up back on the street and in encampments. Additionally, it provides non-congregate shelter rooms that are preferred and more likely to be accepted by persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness by future residents.

BACKGROUND

Opportunity Sites for Homeless Shelters are Extremely Limited. The City's lease of the Berkeley Inn, a 27-room motel, to serve as a transitional non-congregate shelter facility replaces a larger 50-bed congregate shelter facility located at 742 Grayson Street. The Grayson site, known as the Horizon Transitional Village Program, is scheduled to close on Dec. 31, 2022 due to the termination of the City's lease with the private property owner. The City was able to extend its lease for the Grayson facility on Sept. 29, 2022 through the end of the year, but no further extensions are available. Staff have noted that the City engaged in an exhaustive search of City facilities to replace the Grayson facility, but none were found to be suitable, safe, or available for year-round use as a shelter for vulnerable homeless people¹. The number of motel operators willing to partner with the City is also limited; the City has previously housed homeless individuals at the Berkeley Inn with the use of 28-day motel vouchers provided by the county.

¹ See item #1: [Urgency Ordinance for Leasing the Real Property at 1720 San Pablo Avenue](#), on the December 6, 2022 Berkeley City Council Agenda.

Opportunity Sites for Homekey Permanent Supportive Housing (Golden Bear Inn) Identified by Respondents to City’s Request for Proposals (RFP). The City issued an RFP for a Homekey permanent supportive housing site in October 2021, with the option for RFP respondents to submit proposals for opportunity sites citywide. The selection of the Golden Bear Inn at 1620 San Pablo Avenue is the result of an RFP respondent identifying the site and a motel owner willing to sell as well as submitting a viable application to the City—which happened to be the only Homekey application the City received. Permanent supportive housing has been found to be the evidence-based solution to unsheltered homelessness.²

The San Pablo Corridor is a Priority Development Area. In 2021, the City of Berkeley received a \$750,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to begin developing a master plan for the San Pablo Corridor. It is the priority of Councilmember Kesarwani to use the limited grant funds to study effective city policies for filling vacant retail spaces (including by reviewing effective policies in neighboring local jurisdictions) and other strategies for supporting a thriving non-residential sector of small businesses, non-profit organizations, and arts and cultural institutions.

State Housing Laws Have Taken Away Control from Local Jurisdictions to Deny or Lower the Density of Projects, When They Meet Specific

Requirements. Over the last several years, new state approved housing laws limit both cities’ ability to reject development projects if they comply with local zoning and design rules, such as the Housing Accountability Act, and the number of times neighborhood groups can appeal such projects, such as SB 330. State law affects cities’ authority over development in additional ways: it further limits local government’s authority over development by speeding up approvals if affordable housing is included; it prevents cities from ordering design changes that would result in fewer units being built; and bars governments from changing zoning rules once a project has been proposed. Yet another piece of legislation, California’s Density Bonus law, allows developers to exceed local zoning limits if projects include affordable units. The goal of these housing laws is to keep cities from arbitrarily denying or delaying the construction of much needed housing. As a result, a community’s ability to alter or slow down development projects has been limited.

Housing Development Along San Pablo Corridor Is Driven by Decisions of Private Property Owners. In recent years, a number of parcels along the San Pablo Corridor have been developed or plans are underway to do so.

² See: Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness, National Academies Press, 2018. Contributors: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Policy and Global Affairs; Health and Medicine Division; Science and Technology for Sustainability Program; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on an Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing Programs for Homeless Individuals

- 1941 San Pablo Avenue: proposed 7 story mixed use development - in early planning stage
- 1835 San Pablo Avenue: entitled project for mostly market rate housing
- 1740 San Pablo Avenue: 54 units of affordable housing, approved and in process
- 1701 San Pablo Avenue: 110 affordable units for Berkeley Unified School District workforce, approved and in process
- 1620 San Pablo Avenue: 44 units of permanent supportive housing, approved and operating
- 1080 Jones Street, The Jones (at 1500 San Pablo Avenue): 170 units mostly market rate - operating and occupied
- 1201-1205 San Pablo Avenue: 66 units of mostly market rate housing - approved
- 1200 San Pablo Avenue: 7 story project previously approved by the Design Review Commission

The decisions to develop these parcels are not driven by the City, but by private property owners. Development occurs throughout the city where a private property owner wishes to do so.

FISCAL IMPACT

The security assessment will require one-time staff attention, and implementation of security measures may result in one-time and/or ongoing costs to the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Enhanced safety can encourage more residents to patronize the area on foot or bike, thus reducing vehicle miles traveled.

CONTACT PERSON

Rashi Kesarwani, Council Member District 1

(510) 981-7110