



Planning and Development Department  
Land Use Planning Division  
1947 Center Street  
Berkeley CA 94704

## **Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #2 Summary**

### **Ashby + North Berkeley BART Zoning and Development Parameters**

**Date + Time:** August 3, 2020 at 6 pm

**Location:** Online via Zoom Webinar virtual meeting

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. CAG Roles and Responsibilities
3. Planning Process
4. Zoning/AB2923, Project Parameters and Community Goals
5. Preliminary Site Concepts
6. Next Steps
7. Public Comment

### **Attendance**

There were 13 out of 15 Community Advisory Group (CAG) members in attendance as well as over 70 members from the public.

The following members of the project team (City, BART and consultants) made presentations or helped answer questions during the meeting:

#### **City**

- Alisa Shen - Principal Planner

#### **BART**

- Abby Thorne-Lyman - Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) Director
- Rachel Factor – Principal Planner

#### **Consultants**

- Karen Murray - Van Meter Williams Pollack (VMWP)
- Dave Javid - Plan to Place
- Laurence Lewis - Kittleson & Associates



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## Meeting Summary

The purpose of the second CAG meeting was to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and process for the advisory group, share and gather input on project goals and development parameters for each site, illustrate and understand AB2923 requirements for zoning as applied to each station site, and discuss big-picture physical design ideas for each site. The following notes summarize the main agenda items, presentation and discussion.

### **CAG Introduction, Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities**

Following up on the discussion at the first CAG meeting, the project team provided a brief overview of the CAG roles and responsibilities. Below are the key themes from the CAG discussion that followed:

- Incorporate equity, which has been previously missing in planning decisions, in this process
- Present hard numbers in addition to percentages to better acknowledge public comprehension of the subject
- Acknowledge the context within Berkeley including the roots of the housing crisis and redlining
- Facilitated CAG conversations and discussions will lead to a better outcome and recommendation to the Planning Commission. Get CAG more involved.
- Provide an overview and objectives for the Community Workshop
- Share documents and meeting materials well in advance of the CAG meetings
- Acknowledge that BART ridership is the number one priority for BART's role in this process

### **Planning Process**

Alisa Shen provided an overview of the project objectives and timeline of outreach activities (*visit the project website for more information: <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning/>*). Laurence Lewis, from Kittleson + Associates who are leading the transportation analysis, provided an overview of the transportation analysis parameters, expectations for future transit, and the implications it has on site concepts. The CAG had an opportunity to comment, and below are the key themes from the CAG discussion that followed:

- Consider the impact of COVID-19 in the analysis and interpretation of future transportation patterns.
- Study the surrounding circulation systems
- Rethink the necessity of cars and the implications of electric vehicles
- Share the analysis findings, including any historical data
- Consider the mobility challenges for the disabled and plan accordingly



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- Share the expectation for Transit Oriented Development to increase ridership
- Consider affordability in transportation analysis

### **Zoning/AB2923, Project Parameters, and Community Goals**

The project team provided a brief overview on zoning and AB2923, including the goals and objectives from existing planning efforts including Adeline Corridor Specific Plan Vision and North Berkeley Goals and Development Objectives. From the analysis of the related planning efforts, the project team provided a summary of the “knowns” and “unknowns” related the project goals for each station, in the following categories: Housing, Community Uses/Amenities, Building Form/Character, Station Access and Transportation, Public Spaces, and Sustainability.

The CAG participated in a live poll to share their top three priorities, which resulted in following: *Housing (85%), Station Access and Transportation (65%), and Uses and Community Amenities (40%) (for complete poll results, please refer to the Appendix)*. Below is a summary of the key themes that came out of the CAG conversation about this topic

- Consider whether Equity and Inclusion should be called out as a stand-alone project Goal or be integrated/highlighted within the other goals
- Determine if Sustainability should be pulled out as a stand-alone Goal or an underlying theme among all Goals
- Review the feasibility of affordable housing at a range of levels and the inherent affordable housing in surrounding areas
- Encourage diversity of developers in the RFP process and break down parcels to allow for multiple projects
- Present studies on the relationship between sustainability and equity on ridership
- Ensure a reduction in accidents on bike/pedestrian pathways

### **Preliminary Site Concepts**

The project team introduced preliminary site concepts for each station with an overview of considerations and a range of elements that make up each concept including: Economic Conditions, Funding + Resources, Technology (buildings + mobility), Laws + Regulations, and Policy.

#### **Ashby BART**

Three preliminary concepts were presented for the Ashby BART station: Option A “Minimal Change” (split into two options: Option A1+A2), Option B “Road Diet/Flea Market”, and Option C “Central Plaza/Flea Market”.



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After the presentation the CAG participated in the following live poll. The first question asked if the Ashby concepts encompassed the priorities from the “Community Goals” section, the following is the results: 46% were Neutral, 31% Agreed, 15% Strongly Agreed, and 8% Strongly Disagreed.

The second question asked which proposed circulation pattern best serves the community, the station, and the open space/flea market: 38% preferred Option C, 31% Option B, and 15% for Option A.

The last question asked about the balance of housing and the flea market in the following priorities: *Maximize site area for housing* (46%), *Equally balance flea market and housing* (38%), and lastly, *Maximize area for flea market* (15%). For complete poll results, please refer to the Appendix.



Ashby BART Station Preliminary Concepts - snapshot of notes recorded on the virtual whiteboard

A summary of the key themes that came out of the CAG conversation that followed the poll are included below:

- Option A1:
  - Consider a community recreation center on this site, regional sports center, supportive housing
- Option A2:
  - Desire for buildings to address Adeline directly, and not be set back so far and down low where the parking lot



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- Option B
  - Reduce lanes on Adeline, road diet has potential
  - Reconsider substation access, drop-off zones, and sidewalk width for better circulation and opportunity for a better use of the area
  - Explain how parking will work for residents and BART patrons in the next round
  - Review the community's initial input into the option from previous efforts
- Option C
  - Review Adeline's circulation, in particular the number of lanes
  - Consider overhead tunnel decking for the substation, even if it is more expensive
  - Like the potential for community amenities
- General Comments
  - When preparing the RFP, consider who is included in the process and who isn't, whether intentional or not, and how much we ask of them
  - Consider which of these concepts would be most suitable for various community goals, such as accessibility, affordable housing, the ability to partner with neighborhood partners for development
  - The flea market and housing should not be looked at in opposition
  - Following up on an earlier point, provide documents for CAG review well in advance of the meetings so CAG can take them out to community members
  - Consider how the CAG and City might weigh input depending on the participants interest and location relative to either station
  - Discuss the financial tradeoffs and benefits of balancing affordability concerns at both stations
  - Expand the maps to show the context and circulation flow in the surrounding areas
  - Consider pushing the envelope with the concepts. There's only one shot to get this right.
  - Consider how we can encourage community benefits now, not in 5-10 years when the project is complete
  - Emphasize the power and impact of good design

### **North Berkeley BART**

Two preliminary site concepts were presented for the North Berkeley station: Option A "Maintain Street Grid" and Option B "Minimal Streets".

After the presentation, the CAG participated in a similar live poll about the North Berkeley BART station concept.





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The majority of CAG members agreed that the site concepts do build off from the known Community Goals, as illustrated in the following results: 50% Agreed or Strongly Agreed, 36% were Neutral, and 14% either Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed.

The second poll question asked which circulation best serves the community, the station, and open space: 71% preferred Option B, 14% liked both, and 7% each preferred Option A and Neither option.

When asked about the balance of open space and housing, the CAG felt that the balance should *Maximize site area for housing* (57%), *Equally balance open space and housing* (36%), and lastly, *Maximize site area for open space* (7%). For complete poll results, please refer to the Appendix.



N. Berkeley BART Station Preliminary Concepts - snapshot of notes recorded on the virtual whiteboard

A summary of the key themes that came out of the CAG conversation that followed the poll are included below:

- Option A:  
**Circulation**
  - Show bike facilities on Acton
  - Concern about BART truck access to the site sacrificing placemaking and safety
  - Streets seem to dominate the schemes, too much area dedicated to vehicle streets, pivot that over to focus on the greenway as the major piece
  - Consider the pedestrian/biker dangers of East Drive. If BART needs cash truck access, there could be temporary access on a space that is usually pedestrian-only.



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## Uses

- Utilize the zone of influence as a strong open space to free up the rest of the development for housing. Don't let cost be a deterring factor, only get a chance to build this once.
- Focus on the Ohlone Greenway as a main are for open space, there is a risk of adding too much open space that might not be activated.
- Consider connectivity to existing open space rather than adding more open space
- What kind of community uses can occur here like a grocery? (not just another cafe)
- The "urban block" term does not meet community desires
- In next iteration, show housing units to compare and clarify what the tradeoffs more by showing options that are more different
- Option B:
  - Consider extending greenway/car-free access along Acton
  - Consider roundabouts to help traffic circulation
- General Comments:
  - Integrate the streets and street design more strongly into the development
  - Maximize housing and buildable area tied into the Ohlone Greenway, and ensure connection to the greenway includes proper safety measures
  - Consider maximizing buildable area, since there is already a large amount of open space created by BART tunnel and Zone of Influence
  - Discuss the tradeoffs of open space to housing in relatable and measurable ways
  - Connections to adjacent and nearby open space are perhaps as important as onsite open space
  - Consider how to better integrate the sub-station. It has a negative impact.
  - Concern about the safety of bikers, pedestrians, and the disabled related to vehicular circulation
  - Add an analysis and/or discussion of Hill commuters to the station
  - Consider the existing community and the balance of housing units
  - Extend map boundaries to show nearby amenities and circulation
  - Discuss the feasibility of 100% affordable housing
  - Consider community benefits, including the flea market and reduced commercial to avoid dead zones
  - Engage BART members who have previously opposed limiting vehicular access
  - Reconsider BART's need for so many parking lots
  - Provide the CAG with talking points when going out into the community



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## Next Steps

Prior to public comment, the project team discussed future engagement opportunities including office hours (August 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>), the first community workshop on August 31<sup>st</sup>, upcoming online informational videos (e.g., Introduction to Housing Development, Economic Feasibility and Public Value Recapture), and the next CAG meeting(s) planned for October 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Public Comments

The following are notes from the public comments received from approximately 20 meeting participants who provided comment.

- Maximize open space and reduce Adeline width, to achieve a cohesive open space for south Berkeley akin to Ohlone Greenway
- Concern about the designation of an urban center for North Berkeley and the 7-story height limit
- Consider having 2 lanes along Adeline, not 3 or 4. South Berkeley needs more green space like North Berkeley has
- Reevaluate commercial on the bottom floor, especially with many spaces in Berkeley currently not being occupied
- Concern of the voice of community members with disabilities not being heard in relation to mobility
- Explain how parking will work for residents and BART patrons in the next round
- Consider integrating green infrastructure to mitigate potential flooding issues within this watershed
- Conduct a solar study to show how 7+ story buildings might affect neighboring homes that might rely on solar roof panels
- Consider balancing affordable and subsidized housing across both stations, and the historical context, as well as and ownership of affordable housing
- Concern about parking concepts (e.g., podium, lot)
- The flea market should not be limited in any capacity
- Back community led projects and community-serving buildings (e.g., Equity and Diversity Rec Center's innovative plan for Ashby BART)
- Reevaluate location of open space, to keep them away from streets and activate building spaces, and amount of open space at the Ashby Station
- Expand the open space connections in North Berkeley
- Consider impact of potential natural disasters and emergency evacuation plans
- Consider how the project can alleviate taxes of lower income residents





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- Consider the RFP and limitation to restrict large developers/private enterprises
- Engage the community related to the architectural style of buildings
- Consider city vacancy and expectation for filled units

## Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10pm. Additional comments were accepted through August 17<sup>th</sup> by email and mail.

Via email:  
bartplanning@cityofberkeley.info

Or via mail:  
City of Berkeley Planning and Building Department  
1947 Center Street 2nd Floor,  
Berkeley CA, 94704 (Attn: Alisa Shen)

For more information, please visit: [www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning).



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## APPENDIX

### Summary notes from the Office Hours held during the week of August 10, 2020

Two sessions of office hours were held during the week of August 10, 2020. Approximately 40 members of the public and CAG members participated or attended over the two sessions. Below is a summary of key themes, comments, and questions.

#### ZONING STANDARDS PROCESS

- How will the feedback on the preliminary site concepts be integrated into the process going forward, particularly the economic feasibility analysis?
- It's still not exactly clear what the CAG should be doing and how to best contribute. Are we pretty much constrained too much by state law?

#### PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

- Disagreement with the designation of North Berkeley BART as Urban Neighborhood/City Center in BART's *2017 Transit Oriented Development Guidelines*
  - The neighborhood is low rise and single family; 7 stories is too high and out of context.
  - Development should be "contextual, affordable and green;" not as large as the Urban Neighborhood/City Center designation calls for.
  - Designation should be changed
- Accessibility to the station and housing for people with disabilities
  - More consultation needs to happen with this community, particularly around road changes
  - More data collection specifically about people with disabilities and transportation. TNCs and bike shares are not always accommodating or usable
  - BART is increasingly unusable for people with disabilities, and displacing parking can be an issue
- Transit use and other mode share data are out of date because of the pandemic. It is possible that there will be more telecommuting and less transit use. Plans should not overestimate how many people will take transit.
- Affordable housing should be the priority, not just housing
  - Low-rise buildings are cheaper to build, making affordable housing more feasible

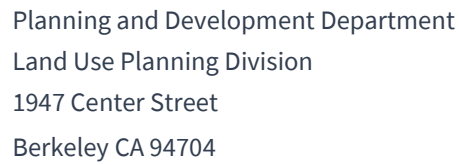


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- Ground floor retail
  - If we have ground floor retail, it should serve the residents of the neighborhood. It should not attract citywide or regional customers, and there should be no parking for retail uses.
  - Why have retail at all if the point is to maximize housing?
- Local participation in project development
  - How can we involve local and smaller developers in this project? Can we get detail on the trade-offs?
  - Has BART ever undertaken a joint-venture with local and regional-level partners?
- How is project feasibility defined with respect to BART's return and the developer's return on their investments?
  - This is public land and it should be for public good
  - Depth of affordability is critical. How will developer profits effect what can be built?
- It is important to preserve parking
  - How is BART going to be used if it displaces all that parking?
  - Even in TOD, there are few people who can rely only on BART for all their trips. People need cars and places to park them
- Narrowing Ashby: we need to see some scenarios about how this could happen
- North Berkeley BART is not just a local resource; it's regional. Both as transportation and as an opportunity to address the wider housing crisis.

### **Public Comments Received by Email**

- Comments received by email through August 17, 2020 are attached following the Preliminary Design Concepts and Live Poll results.



## Ashby BART Station

[illegible]

**OPTION A2**

Map showing the proposed development and transit improvements for the Ed Roberts Campus area, including the Woolsey / Prince Bicycle Boulevard Connector and the Flea Market / Reconfigured Parking (Lots A-B - 35,000 sf).

Key features and locations labeled on the map:

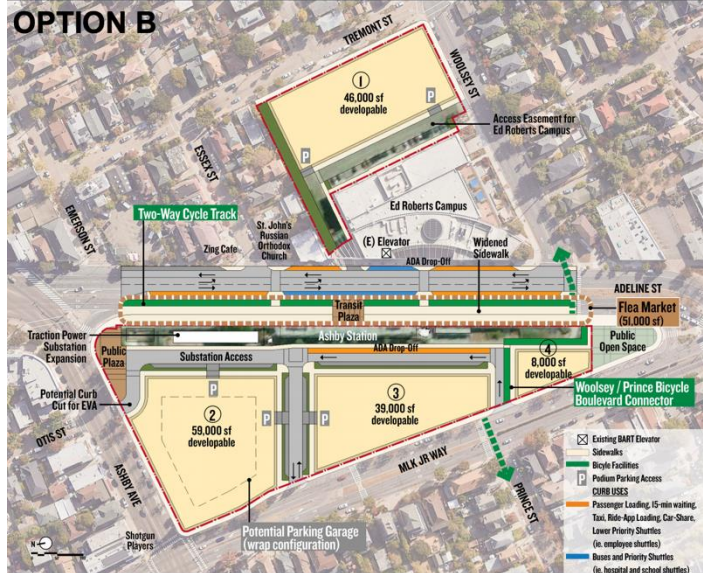
- Streets:** TREMONT ST, WOOD ST, ED ST, EMERSON ST, ADAMS ST, ASHBY ST, MLK JR WAY, ADELINE ST, POTRERO ST.
- Landmarks and Existing Structures:** Ed Roberts Campus, St. John's Russian Orthodox Church, Zing Cafe, Traction Power Substation, Public Plaza, Potrero Plaza, Shogun Players.
- Proposed Development:**
  - 46,000 sf developable area (yellow shaded).
  - 78,000 sf developable area (yellow shaded).
  - Flea Market / Reconfigured Parking (Lots A-B - 35,000 sf) (orange shaded).
- Transit and Mobility Improvements:**
  - Restriped Bike Lanes (green line).
  - Woolsey / Prince Bicycle Boulevard Connector (green line).
  - ASHBY STATION (BART station).
  - ADA Drop-Off / Pick-Up zones.
  - Public Open Space.
  - Potential Curb Cut for EYA.
- Legend:**
  - Existing BART Elevator
  - Sidewalks
  - Bicycle Facilities
  - Pedium Parking Access
  - CHSR USBS
  - Passenger Loading, 15-min waiting
  - Taxi, Ride-Ap Loading, Car Share, Lower Priority shuttles (i.e. employee shuttles)
  - Bus Transit and Priority Shuttles



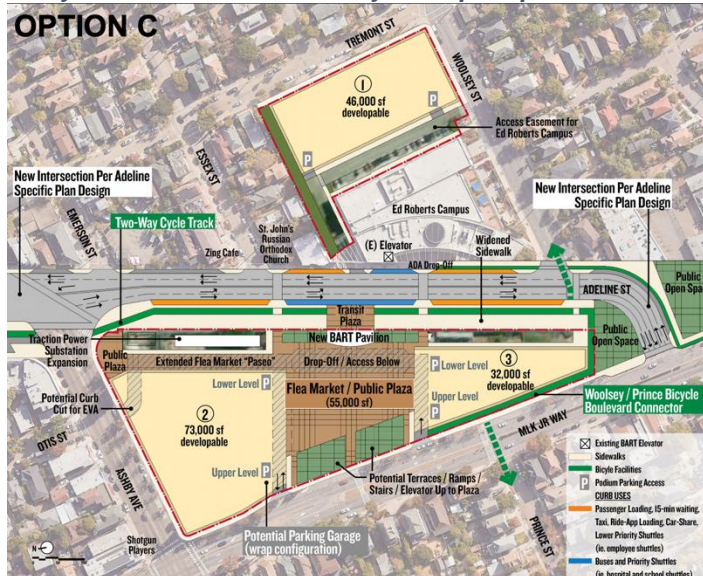


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### Ashby BART Station - Preliminary Concept - Option B



### Ashby BART Station - Preliminary Concept - Option C





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## North Berkeley BART Station

### N. Berkeley BART Station - Preliminary Concept - Option A



### N. Berkeley BART Station - Preliminary Concept - Option B



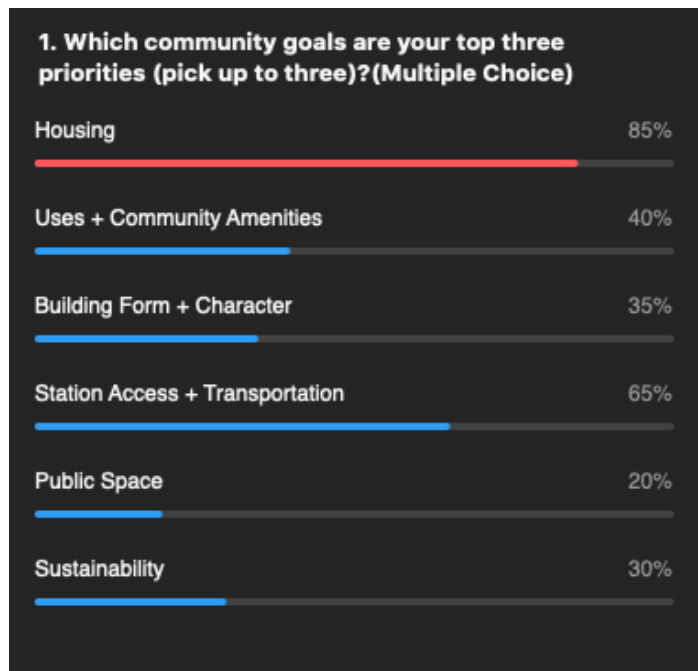




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## LIVE POLL RESULTS

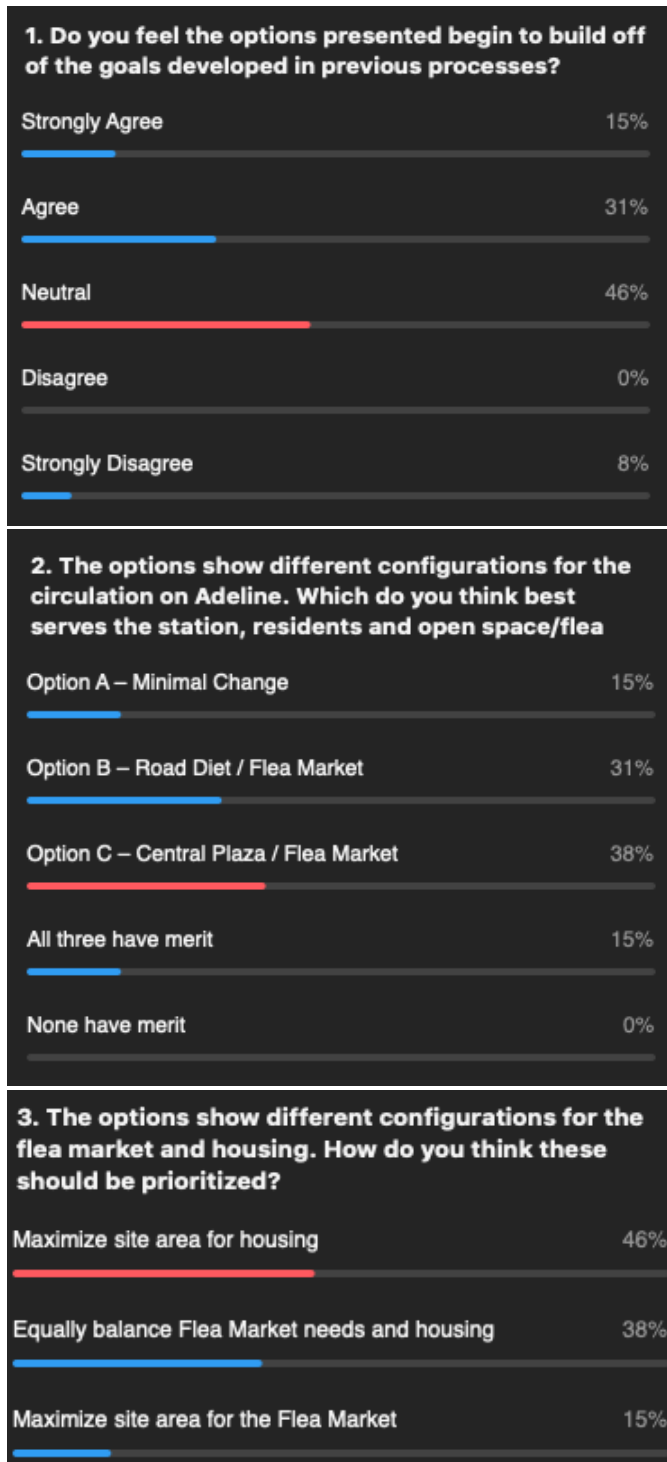
### *Community Goals*





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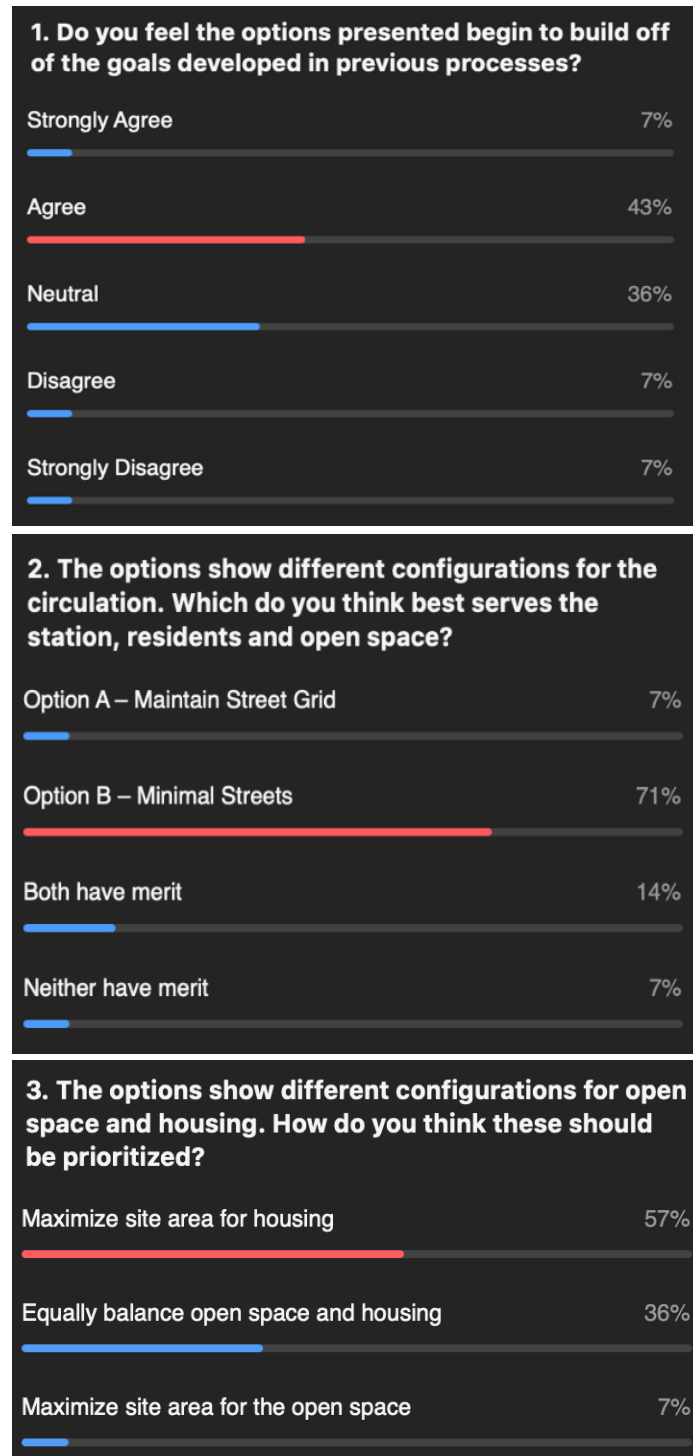
### Ashby BART Station





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### North Berkeley BART Station





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## **PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED BY EMAIL THROUGH AUGUST 17, 2020**

**Horner, Justin**

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**From:** sgilma2340@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:14 AM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART development

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Community Advisory Group:

I am writing about the proposed development at North Berkeley BART. I understand that the law requires the city to zone the 7-story minimum, but this minimum is based on the misclassification of this North Berkeley neighborhood as an Urban Center when in fact it is a low-rise, residential neighborhood. In addition, high rise structures will create traffic congestion and parking problems.

In the interests of maintaining some vestige of appropriate local control, the City of Berkeley and BART need to uphold their MOU and zone in the "context of the built form characteristics of a surrounding lower density neighborhood." This development therefore should be no more than four stories in the center, two stories at the perimeter.

It is also extremely important that the dwellings be highly affordable and rent-controlled. We don't need more expensive market-rate rentals in Berkeley--we are well ahead of regional requirements for market-rate. I'm sure I don't need to remind you that we were in the midst of a severe affordable housing crisis before the pandemic hit. This crisis is now being greatly exacerbated by the dire economic repercussions of the pandemic, which of course will be felt most keenly by low and no-income people, categories expanding at a dizzying rate because of the pandemic. Now more than ever, truly affordable housing is desperately needed.

Sincerely,

Steve Gilmartin  
1330 Virginia St  
Berkeley, CA

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** J & J Schroeder <janicejimschroeder@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2020 7:55 AM  
**To:** Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council; bartplanning  
**Subject:** Housing development at North Berkeley BART and Ashby BART stations

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor Arreguin, City Councilmembers and BART Planning members:

At the Zoom meetings today and on Thursday, I urge you to seriously consider these points when considering the development of housing at North Berkeley BART and Ashby BART:

- New housing should be very affordable and rent-controlled to make the units available to very low-income, low-income and middle income people rather than building even more expensive market-rate rentals.
- There is more than adequate land at the sites available for 4 story structures in the center and 2 story structures at the perimeter which will maintain the character of the lower density neighborhood (as per the MOU between Berkeley and BART), allow for solar panel installation at 1 story houses close to the BART stations without shadowing the panels by erecting high buildings.
- We must maximize affordability and green construction and low rise structures are less expensive to build so they are more feasible.
- We must put people before profit and make new housing available to the most vulnerable (unhoused, disabled, low-income, seniors) in our community.

Please consider these points at your meetings.

Thank you,  
Janice Schroeder



**Horner, Justin**

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**From:** E.Horowitz <eahorowitz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 09, 2020 11:10 PM  
**To:** bartplanning; Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART Station development

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As a longtime homeowner and taxpayer in the North Berkeley BART Station neighborhood, I have two major questions about the planned development of the parking lot:

**1. How did our neighborhood of 1000 square foot, one and two story bungalows get designated as an Urban Center instead of a Neighborhood Center?**

I have tried and tried to get a clear explanation of how that decision was arrived at, but have never gotten a satisfactory reply. I've emailed my state legislators, Berkeley city staff, and BART staff. If I get any reply at all, I'm just referred to lengthy documents. I've skimmed the documents, and the documents that are linked in them. I've searched further online for answers, and have skimmed through AB 2923 and BART documents -- wherever my search led. I have not found a clear, comprehensible answer.

We North Berkeley BART station neighbors are owed the courtesy of a clear explanation, understandable by lay people, of how this happened. And please explain how our neighborhood is considered more urban than the El Cerrito del Norte neighborhood, which is located on San Pablo Ave., but got designated Neighborhood Center while we got designated Urban. Did El Cerrito citizens do a better job of lobbying the legislators, or what? I would like to join a campaign to get our legislators to revisit this issue and correct the North Berkeley BART station designation.

**2. Since Transit-Oriented Development, mitigating the housing crisis, and increasing BART ridership are the stated goals of the development, why devote the ground floor of the buildings to commercial space?** There are already too many storefronts and other commercial spaces standing empty in Berkeley, including along University Ave. a few blocks from the North Berkeley BART Station.

Every new apartment building in Berkeley has commercial space on its ground floor, and most of them stand empty for years after being built. My understanding is that developers don't care, as it gives them tax write-offs. But we neighbors do care. The development on our BART lot should be devoted entirely to housing. Don't waste precious space on storefronts that will likely just add to the sad proliferation of empty storefronts in Berkeley.

Liz Horowitz  
1421 McGee Ave.  
Berkeley

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** David Brandon <drdavidlbrandon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 09, 2020 5:11 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** Comments on BART TOD - CAG#2

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Thank you all for your service. I live 2 1/2 blocks from the edge of the North Berkeley BART station plaza. I have lived here for 37 years and use BART regularly. My 2 kids grew up in this neighborhood and attended nearby Jefferson school that is very close to the station. It is paramount for us to focus on a functional development plan that serves the citizens of Berkeley.

In May 2019 I attended the special City Council meeting that approved going ahead with an MOU with BART. I'm shocked by the currently proposed building heights that weren't even hinted at back then.

It is important that this neighborhood not be ruined by a monstrous building complex completely out of proportion with structures anywhere nearby. Realistically, it is essential to keep North Berkeley BART easily approachable by foot and bicycle by residents of the area, including those who have mobility limitations, as well as by cars and buses. The Ohlone Greenway is an important resource for all of us.

The station is NOT "a couple of blocks" from University Avenue—but, MORE IMPORTANTLY, the surrounding area is a *distinct neighborhood*. I also point out that many businesses have done poorly on University Avenue west of MLK, and it is a stretch to think business development at North Berkeley BART would be an economic success! Rather, let's keep commercial development and traffic focused on University Avenue, with its multiple new storefronts, while maintaining attractive and functional paths for walking and bicycling.

While we look to the future, let's serve our community and NOT destroy this neighborhood.

Again, my appreciation to those who serve us as volunteers, City and BART officials, and consultants.

David Brandon

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Alisa <moonmom@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 09, 2020 4:41 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** City of Berkeley & BART "office hours" questions and comments, 8/10/20

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Attn: Bart Planning, Jesse Arreguin and City Council,

- I understand that the law requires the city to zone the 7-story minimum, but we the citizens of Berkeley do not want a higher minimum.
- **The site was misclassified as an Urban Center.** North Berkeley is a low-rise, residential neighborhood, mostly one story homes.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Berkeley and BART **says that BART will work with the city, to zone in the "context of the built form characteristics of a surrounding lower density neighborhood".**
- The neighborhood citizens want the site to maximize affordability and green construction. **Low rise structures are less expensive to build, making affordable housing more feasible.** Nearby residents who have or are considering solar panels would be shadowed by high buildings, and we want to encourage solar.
- The dwellings should be highly affordable and rent-controlled. **We don't need more expensive market-rate rentals in Berkeley - we are well ahead of regional requirements for market-rate.**
- **The pandemic has already changed things drastically. BART ridership is way down and many people are working at home. Tenants will not want to live in a building where they must use elevators. There is plenty of land at the site available to build four stories in the center, two stories at the perimeter.**
- High rise structures will create parking problems. How will women, elders and disabled people safely access Bart in the evening? Lack of parking leaves more than half the population who use Bart, vulnerable to attacks, rape and muggings.
- This land does not belong to Bart. It is public land which belongs to the taxpayers. Bart should not be exploiting it for private corporate gain.

Alisa Foster  
Devin Cory  
Teah Cory  
1803 Mcgee Ave  
Berkeley CA 94703  
(510) 684-7240

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Michael Katz <mqkatz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 07, 2020 5:52 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** 3 comments on BART housing development (re: 8/3/2020 CAG meeting)

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear CAG members, and Berkeley and BART staff,  
Thank you for your efforts to successfully develop affordable housing at Ashby and North Berkeley BART.

Please let me document my suggestions at the CAG's 8/3/2020 meeting. These are all about getting housing built promptly, with the best overall outcomes::

1. **At Ashby BART, to avoid crippling delays, select a plan that does not depend on any street reconfiguration. Otherwise, no housing will get developed any time soon.**
2. **At North Berkeley BART, to avoid crippling delays (rippling out to other sites), please take contextual development seriously. Build out, not up. This neighborhood's history and fabric are 1- and 2-story, mixed-income housing. With so much floor area available, 5 stories or fewer will be cheaper/quicker to finance, and will raise less opposition.**
3. **At North Berkeley BART, to sustain BART ridership: Replace 100% of commuter parking, and build new, realistic models of post-pandemic ridership impacts and preferences.**

To expand a bit on each:

**1. At Ashby BART, to avoid crippling delays, select a plan that does not depend on any street reconfiguration.**

Just look at the recent record downtown, where the City of Berkeley dragged out a project to reconfigure only 2 blocks of Shattuck Ave. for 3 years.

Throughout those 3 years, this mismanaged project imposed potentially lethal new hazards (not to mention severe inconveniences) for pedestrians, cyclists, and BART and bus riders. These were the very parties who were supposed to somehow benefit from this project.

Notable among the hazards was the takeover of parking spaces for construction equipment and junk. Because of inescapable parking demand for commercial deliveries, there was rampant double-parking. So southbound Shattuck was often narrowed down to an unsustainable single lane. This created congestion backups, and needless hazards especially for cyclists.

Crews were paid to widen the same streets they'd just narrowed, and narrow streets they'd just widened. With this folly nearing completion, there's no sign that anything has improved for transit riders or other nonmotorists. **The only parties that clearly benefited were the public-works contractors, who got a 3-year sinecure to keep doing, undoing, and redoing the same work.**

This fiasco provides clear evidence: City of Berkeley Transportation and Public-Works management simply lacks the capacity and skill to competently plan or manage major street reconfiguration projects.

Around Ashby BART, the notions floated for reconfiguring Adeline St. (etc.) are far more complex, involving several blocks. **Expect any such project to exponentially bloat out to 10 years, before ground would be broken for even one unit of new housing.**

During this extended delay, everyone – including BART – would lose. Streets would become constricted and much more hazardous for pedestrians and cyclists. Access to Ashby BART – via bus, private vehicles, or bicycle – would be worsened.

Let's not get fooled again. Forget about street configuration fantasies. Proceed with a realistic plan to develop housing within the streets' current layout, while also reserving open space for the weekend flea market AND weekend BART commuter parking.

## **2. At North Berkeley BART, to avoid crippling delays both here and at other sites, please take contextual development seriously. Build out, not up.**

BART intends this site to be a pilot for developing housing at several other stations, which are similarly situated in residential neighborhoods. So the stakes are high, because of the ripple effect. Whatever AB 2923 allows, BART can best avoid delays by exercising restraint.

This neighborhood's history and fabric are 1- and 2-story, mixed-income housing. Consultants have now determined that the vast majority of the parcel is developable land, so there's plenty of floor area available to build low-rise structures. Two stories at the edges, going no higher than 5 stories at the site's interior, constitute a reasonable maximum.

If BART insists on building to 7 stories or even higher, there will be at least 3 sources of needless delay at this site alone:

- a. Good luck finding a developer willing and able to finance concrete-and-steel framing for affordable housing, amid an economic depression that's likely to last for years.
- b. Good luck finding tenants willing to occupy structures with elevator-only access, amid what might turn out to be long-term or permanent risk of lethal contagious diseases.
- c. Expect neighbors' lawsuits alleging that BART improperly classified this site (under its AB 2923 authority) as Urban Neighborhood/City Center rather than the appropriate Neighborhood/Town Center. The plaintiffs would seemingly have a solid case on the merits – and even if they didn't, the courts are moving very slowly through their pandemic backlog.

If BART insists on an aggressive development pattern that provokes such controversy and legal action, expect similar resistance, legal pushback, and delays to ripple out to all the other proposed residential-neighborhood development sites that will be closely watching how sensitively BART works with its neighbors (including longtime residents) in Berkeley.

## **3. At North Berkeley BART, to sustain BART ridership: Replace 100% of commuter parking, and build new, realistic models of post-pandemic ridership impacts and preferences.**

In the 8/3/2020 CAG meeting, a staffer mentioned having established models showing that displacing commuter parking for adjacent housing would yield a net increase in BART ridership.

Any such models are quaint, but probably of historic interest only. They've been scrambled by the pandemic, perhaps permanently. In its own interest, BART needs to build new models that accurately reflect the post-pandemic world.

Publicly reported statistics for July 17 through Aug. 3 show that Bay Area vehicle traffic has rebounded to an average 80% of pre-pandemic levels at monitored locations. (Even higher at some locations.) But BART ridership remains at only 11% of pre-pandemic levels, and most transit agencies are stuck around 10%.

Clearly, people's willingness to crowd onto public transit has drastically diminished. BART's own projections show low ridership for months or years to come.

And this diminished preference for transit might become permanent. This pandemic is already being described as a once-in-a-century event like the 1930s' Great Depression. Many of us have known older relatives (etc.) whose behavior was permanently altered by that hardship. They remained frugal and price-averse even after decades of economic recovery and personal affluence.

This is particularly relevant at North Berkeley BART. This station's market area is relatively affluent, so potential BART riders have cars, and have choices. Many are hills residents who, as a practical matter, depend on vehicle usage. Even more so as cash-strapped AC Transit proposes to permanently eliminate their already minimal-frequency bus lines.

If these riders are unable to drive to BART – because BART fails to replace their commuter parking spaces, which already had a long reservations backlog before the pandemic – they'll simply bypass BART, and drive all the way to their destinations. Workday destinations are miles away, in San Francisco and the Pleasanton tech corridor.

So updated models are essential – and so is replacement of commuter parking. Otherwise, it's highly likely that everyone loses. BART will get a one-time real estate windfall, but significantly and permanently drive down its own net ridership. And by putting more cars on the road, Berkeley and the region will worsen our climate impact, just when it's crucial to shrink it.

For the record, I'm writing as a North Berkeley telecommuter, who – before the pandemic – was a daily BART rider, who biked or walked to BART. But most of my neighbors don't share my non-driving preferences. And neither do my loved ones. In 10 years, I've convinced my partner to get on a bicycle only 3 times. (One of those was for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit a live volcano.) Every other time, she's been willing ride BART only if we could drive to and park at North Berkeley BART.

Thank you for considering these comments toward actually getting some housing built at both BART stations – in a reasonable timeframe, with the fewest delays, with the least contention, and with the lowest impacts on ridership.

Respectfully yours,  
Michael Katz  
Berkeley 94709



## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Laura Klein <lauraanneklein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 07, 2020 2:33 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART project

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear CAG members, Mayor Arreguin, and Councilmembers,

I urge the CAG and the City Council to zone the North Berkeley BART site for no more than 7 stories and to advocate for building 4 stories inside the site and 2 stories on the perimeter, for the following reasons:

1. North Berkeley was clearly misclassified as an Urban Center. This is an absurd designation. 7 stories is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. In fact, NOTHING outside of downtown Berkeley is 7 stories (except for the Fantasy Building.) The community never agreed to this, and the vast majority of the neighbors are appalled at this misclassification.
2. 7 or more stories will cast shadows over the neighboring homes, creating gloom and making residents' solar panels dysfunctional.
3. Low rise construction is less expensive, making it much more suitable for AFFORDABLE housing, which is what we all want.
4. Covid-19 has changed everything. Market rate vacancies in Berkeley and Oakland buildings are high. No one will want to get in an elevator, which would be necessary for any building above 4 stories. If high rises are built, it is likely they will have large numbers of vacancies. Many tech workers will be working from home, so a huge development will not necessarily generate ridership for BART. Consider these recent quotes from the SF Chronicle:

*"With downtown office towers sitting empty and ongoing fears of infection spread on public transit and tight living quarters, many residents are selling their city homes and looking elsewhere. Conversely, real estate in more spacious, less crowded regions outside of the city is surging as people look to a future of working remotely."*

*"The real decline may hit the condo and rental market more than the single-family market, as those who were renting may be more likely to [leave the city entirely](#) and those who want to stay may be seeing homeownership with new eyes. "It seems as though buyers are prioritizing single-family homes as opposed to condominiums and, more particularly, homes that offer some outdoor space,"*

*said Sotheby's agent Tania Toubba. "One of my clients was tired of sheltering in his small apartment and decided it was time to buy a place with some space."*

*"While [rents may continue to decline](#) and condos without private outdoor space are likely to see a drop in value, the single-family homes those condo-owners and renters now want have become more desirable than ever. "Single-family homes at the entry-level seem to be moving quickly, while some of the higher price points are slower," said Compass agent Dennis Otto."*

I urge you to develop housing on the site that is affordable, green (solar, grey water, and LEED), and contextual to the neighborhood (4 stories within, 2 stories on the perimeter). We do **not** need more big market rate development. Public land for the public good!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Klein  
1519 Virginia Street  
Berkeley CA 94703

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Arlene Acuna <arleneacuna46@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 07, 2020 12:56 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** re: NO BERK BART housing site

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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Hello,

While I am very much sensitive to our housing needs along with reducing our carbon footprint, my biggest concerns are:

1- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING!!!** This has not been honored much at all in the multiple constructions around town...WHY is the City allowing such high rents?

Studios in the \$3k range is ridiculous. (eg San Pablo and Cedar recently completed and historically a lower income neighborhood anyway!).

I am very distressed that the City Council members along with the Rent Stabilization Board do not do something about the rent rates all of these high rise rental units going up...which, inevitably, may also be the case at the No Berk BART station.

2-I do agree that there should be a height limit...**NO to 7 STORIES!!!** While we have to think "future" and know that our "cushy" little quiet neighborhoods won't be around "forever", let's keep some moderation for the time being...one day in the far future, this entire neighborhood may be high rises! But, too much, too fast...we still have rudimentary solar options...in time this will improve, along with how to create housing and lessen the use of fuel driven cars.

That's my feedback for now.

Thanks,

Arlene Acuna

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** sperberstein <sperberstein@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 05, 2020 3:24 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** nbneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com; Kesarwani, Rashi; STEPHEN SPERBER  
**Subject:** Proposed Housing at North Berkeley BART Station

WARNING: This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.  
DO NOT CLICK ON links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

BART Planning Committee Members:

My wife and I live on Lincoln Street just above Sacramento and near the North Berkeley BART station. Our neighbors and we have serious concerns about some of the BART proposals for housing construction on that site. We urge you to reclassify North Berkeley BART from its current Urban designation to an appropriate designation of Neighborhood/Town Center.

We have strong concerns and objections about the impact that high-rise housing will have on our neighborhood which is clearly residential and does not have any characteristics or infrastructure of an urban center. Advocating for anything above 4 stories of building fails to understand the destructive impact of that kind of density on our neighborhood. At certain times of day, Sacramento Street and our neighborhood cannot support the additional traffic congestion and auto and pedestrian safety issues that high-rise housing on the BART property will create.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Stephen Sperber  
Roberta Silverstein

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Andrew Livsey <alivsey51@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 05, 2020 11:43 AM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART Housing

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

To: CAG member

I have lived on Acton Street, across from BART's parking lot, since 1982. Now, I understand that an anonymous alliance of BART executives, real estate interests and urban planners have conspired to decree that an enormous tribute to the gods of Density and Transit be raised up in our midst. This plan was codified into law, sanctified as part of a larger project (AB 2923), and handed down to us from on high as a fait accompli, with no input from or consultation with the peasants in the surrounding land.

I also understand that addressing the central issue here— the original sin of the mis-categorization of our neighborhood as an Urban Center— lies beyond CAG's scope . Yet this absurd presumption underlies BART's demand that you good people somehow elegantly slip a 7 to 12 story building into a landscape of 1 to 2 story homes.

Beyond it's disregard for our community's feelings, I worry that the proposal to erect such a large building in our neighborhood raises practical concerns for those of us living in its shadow: A building this size will take years to construct, and subject our neighborhood to many months of noise and dust pollution. I worry that such a tall structure would block a substantial amount of morning light from many of our houses, sabotaging the investments we've made in gardens and solar panels. I also fear that the destruction of the parking lot, combined with the influx of hundreds of new people, will exacerbate an already serious parking problem around the BART station.

Finally, I question the wisdom of taking on a project with such long-term consequences, as work patterns (and therefore transit patterns) are evolving away from offices toward working from home, making TOD an outdated concept.

If you build it, will they come?

Sincerely,

Andrew Livsey

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Jason Warriner <jason.jaywar@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 10:10 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART lot

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

As a North Berkeley BART neighbor, I feel like my voice should be heard. My family and I will have to live with what is built there for as long as we own our home. It's no longer NIMBY vs. YIMBY, it's what's there now and what should go there in the future. "One size fits all" solutions never work and so the context of the site must be the focus—like all good architecture and urban development. Developments that do not consider their environments or the needs of the community have been abandoned for the most part because of the negative effects they have on the surrounding neighborhoods.

These are my concerns:

- We need a contextual, affordable, green development that will improve life for everyone in the area. Affordable housing for teachers, for example. No million dollar condos!
- We must have access for those with disabilities.
- I have serious concerns about traffic and parking congestion. This area is already an extreme pedestrian hazard. So much so that the city is currently in the process of altering the roads and pedestrian crossways that surround the southern approach to this area! One day a couple of years ago I watched out my front door in horror while an SUV sat on top of a woman, pinning her to the ground. The driver of the car sat in front of my house and threw up into the gutter. I will never forget that trauma and it is only one of many incidents I have experienced since moving to this neighborhood. This area is extremely dangerous to pedestrians and will only become more so as more people begin living here. It is a fiction that just because you live next to BART you will no longer need a car.
- I outright reject a seven (plus) story building. Our community is not an Urban Center, and should never have been classified as one!
- There should be property taxes that support the services that this development will demand (e.g. schools, libraries, parks, social services, etc.)
- Do we need more commercial storefronts? Have you seen what has happened to retail in this country over the last ten years? The last six months? There are empty storefronts up and down University avenue. Have you seen how long the storefronts all along University Ave and along San Pablo and Delaware have sat empty? They've NEVER been successfully rented to a storefront business. So many businesses come and go along University and San Pablo avenue that I can no longer keep track. Many storefronts sitting derelict, graffiti covered and unrented for years—some over a decade (and counting), contributing to an overall decline in the area.

I beg everyone involved with this project not to cave to pressure, to be thoughtful, inclusive and honest. What you decide to do will change my neighborhood forever.





## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Eileen Hughes <jnyahsgrandma@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 7:56 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Eileen Hughes  
**Subject:** N Berk BART

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.  
**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I was unable to attend the meeting last night re development at North Berkeley BART.

I agree with the bullet points below.

- Advocating contextual, affordable, green development
- Urging access for those with disabilities
- Voicing concerns about traffic, parking congestion, unnecessary commercial development, and shadowing affecting solar panels

Most importantly:

- Rejecting seven story buildings. Our community is not an Urban Center, and should never have been classified as one!

Eileen Hughes  
1721 Sacramento Street

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** John Hitchen <johnhitchen@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 5:31 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** Parking at North Berkeley BART Station

WARNING: This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.  
DO NOT CLICK ON links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I am a 48 year Berkeley resident, and a 35 year North Berkeley property owner.  
I used BART frequently before the Covid Pandemic, but since I am over 65, it is not clear on that BART is safe for my wife and I going forward.

I will make two important points regarding BART's entry into the housing business.

First, and foremost; we cannot use BART at all if we cannot drive and park near a station. Berkeley has effectively closed off 90% of all parking spaces with its wasteful permit parking system.  
Most days, the streets are nearly free of cars, so the majority of residents are not even using these spaces. Before the Pandemic, the lots were all full by 8am or so, demonstrating the extreme demand.  
If parking is further reduced, it is basically discrimination against Seniors and Disabled people, which is clearly illegal under Federal law.

Second, I recommend that the residential permit parking program be reviewed to determine if a parking meter system with a resident exemption might be the best way to allocate parking in the neighborhoods surrounding the BART station. If a resident is parked on the street, that space is not available, but other spaces can be purchased by BART riders at current rates.

As far as affordability, I believe BART has a duty to balance its responsibility to taxpayers who continue to subsidize this very expensive system, and the progressive social goal of creating affordable housing.  
Personally, I don't believe in engineering affordability, but I understand the political pressure to somehow make rental units cheaper than market forces dictate. I do think this is way beyond the mandate that voters approved back in the 1960's.

In my world, BART would not be building high-rise residences anywhere.

So, simply understand that all of these new schemes are a total negative for folks of my generation, and I would be happiest if everything stayed status quo.  
I am simply being honest and logical.

Best Regards,

John Hitchen  
845 Oxford Street

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Barbara Fisher <barbara.fisher2000@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 4:49 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** N. Berkeley BART TOD parking

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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I have read BART's Tech Guide to AB2923 and have this input regarding plans for parking/access to BART:

In situations where vehicle parking is reduced or eliminated as a result of a TOD project, BART must “develop and fund an access plan that maintains station access for at least the number of customers who live further than one-half mile from the station.” (Tech Guide, pag 52).

That reduced number of parking spaces is something over 600 (~640) (not counting satellite lots which I believe cannot be developed, ~110). The N. Berkeley BART station serves the Berkeley Hills, Kensington, and other neighborhoods sometimes several miles away. For those patrons, this station is auto dependent. (I might add, it is poorly served by AC Transit buses and we can't all afford to take an uber every time we wish to ride BART) What is the plan?

The parking plan must be actually operational before the current lots are removed!

Thank you,

Barbara Fisher

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Barbara Fisher <barbara.fisher2000@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 4:46 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** N. Berkeley BART TOD

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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I live near the N. Berkeley BART station which is designated Urban Neighborhood/City Center

I've read the AB2923 Tech Guide...twice. I find the language a little tricky to interpret so I'd like to clarify...the height requirements.

It seems to me that it says - the maximum building height, in the zoning we write, must be at least 7 stories. (in other words, the height maximum as written in our zoning, can be any height we want as long as it's at least 7 stories.)

The Tech Guide also says, buildings are often not built up to what is allowed in the zoning.

Furthermore, I do not see anything about a minimum height requirement.

But the rule we must adhere to is that there are at least 75 DU/acre.

Is that all correct and if not, what is the correct interpretation of the height requirements?

Thank you,

Barbara Fisher

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**Horner, Justin**

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**From:** Elana naftalin-kelman <elanank@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 04, 2020 4:41 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** to the CAG

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

To the members of the CAG,

I am a neighbor of North Berkeley BART. I live on Short St. a few houses away from the BART station. And I am concerned about what this type of building will do to my neighborhood, for my family and our community.

We know that the site is classified as an Urban Center because it lies within 1/2 mile of University Ave, but the neighborhood is not urban. BART's Neighborhood Center classification is much more appropriate to the site, but the classification is baked into law now and there's no willingness on the part of BART or Sacramento to revisit it. Per Item 1 of Berkeley's General Plan, Berkeley is a "city of neighborhoods with character that should be preserved" and North Berkeley is a low-rise, residential neighborhood.

Please help us keep our residential neighborhood!

Thank You,

Elana

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Clarke Teresa <tkclarke2@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 03, 2020 10:23 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Cc:** Teresa Clarke  
**Subject:** August 3 2020 BART Options presented at CAG- Building, open space relationships, pedestrian traffic and streets

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

To planning staff and consultants-

All the schemes presented for both BARTs have some fatal flaws in terms of the relationship of the buildings to the open space, streets and pedestrian traffic. It is important to show this clearly now and get it right in the diagrammatic phase.

We must follow some basic principles of good urban design:

- 1) Buildings should form the open space.
- 2) The new development should connect with its surroundings at the street level.
- 3) Commercial retail activities such as vendors and ground floor need pedestrian exposure.

On Ashby BART options:

- 1) Buildings should be built along the west side of Adeline Street **at the same level of the street** to complete the street. Peter Waller is correct in saying that a lower street or a lower plaza would be a disaster.
- 2) The historic commercial buildings and pedestrian access north of Ashby on the west side must connect to the experience south of Ashby at the new BART development on this west side of Adeline..
- 3) The ground floor commercial and the Flea Market space on the street and/or on a plaza needs to be connected to pedestrian access at the street level and pedestrian traffic should travel through the Flea Market and past the ground floor commercial to get to access to the BART. This creates a viable exposure for the vendors and for the ground floor commercial.

On North Berkeley BART:

- 1) Buildings should be built around the plaza to create the space of the plaza.
- 2) Minimize having streets along the plaza- what is purpose of streets wrapping around on the south east side of the plaza?. And in general make more room for buildings for housing and less for streets.
- 3) Commercial and vendor spaces need to be part of the plaza, and again pedestrian travel path must past these commercial activities to provide exposure to the businesses.
- 4) Where there is not ground floor commercial, the housing should actively engage the plaza with its own semi public open space.

*Teresa Clarke*





## Horner, Justin

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**From:** meryl siegal <merylsiegal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 03, 2020 10:18 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** August 3rd meeting commentary

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

**DO NOT CLICK ON** links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear CAG,

Please accept my comments regarding tonight's planning meeting. Unfortunately, I was unable to participate directly due to technical difficulties, although I did listen to the whole meeting. I have lived in North Berkeley since 1985.

Regarding the North Berkeley BART design, it is imperative that the development fit in with the context of the community and provide a beautiful asset to the community and to the city of Berkeley. Toward that end certainly not going over 7 stories will be key--- and if possible, that height should be lowered. There are no buildings higher than 7 stories outside of downtown Berkeley. Housing created within the context of the neighborhood is a feature of the City of Berkeley General Plan. Many of us in Berkeley know that the city is overbuilt now focusing on expensive rentals. The notion of creating community through mid - to lower cost condominium units would be a real plus for Berkeley and for the Bay Area where asset building for lower to middle income people is almost impossible. Safe, affordable housing for families should be a priority as well. I concur that the BART project should be a community within a community.

I do believe parking and transportation to and from BART will become an issue for the wider neighborhood and I did not hear any real substantive approaches to this issue tonight especially for the elderly and disabled population.

Sincerely,  
Meryl Siegal

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** leah greenblat <lgreenblat@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 03, 2020 8:31 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** Ashby Plans from CAG meeting

WARNING: This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.  
DO NOT CLICK ON links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Alisa,  
I'm watching the CAG meeting and the presentation of preliminary site concepts for the Ashby BART station. I participated in the Adeline study and live east of the station.

Many people from the east use Prince St. to access the station by foot from the stairs and ramps at Tremont. When the Ed Roberts campus was built it increased the walking distance from those stairs into the station threefold. (No longer are you supposed to enter the station from what was the east side. You have to walk around above ground and then double back underground.) The proposals I saw tonight appears to eliminate the existing connection and would again increase the walking route to the station. The proposals cut off the connection from the east. Employees from Alta Bates, Whole Foods and nearby convalescent homes use Prince to get to BART. It is a major walking route for the Halcyon neighborhood. Ashby is not pleasant to walk and Prince is the closest through street. Woolsey is uncomfortably dark in the evenings and scary.

It was mentioned but I want to reiterate that the development proposed in the east parking lot definitely needs to step down and conform with the two story residential neighborhood that exists east of Tremont.

Please reach out to the Halcyon neighborhood group to make sure they are aware of the upcoming community meeting.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes,  
Leah Greenblat  
3052 Wheeler St.

Sent from Leah's iPad

## Horner, Justin

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**From:** Colette Meunier <Colette.Meunier@mindspring.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 03, 2020 8:23 PM  
**To:** bartplanning  
**Subject:** URGENT: CAG Meeting Aug 3 - lack of graphics showing on ZOOM

**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.  
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Alisa:

I am watching the Zoom meeting and at several points when Dave Javid said things were showing on the screen they were not. What was not shown: the results of polling the CAG members and the PPT showing development alternatives. There did not seem to be any mechanism to alert the presenters that the material was not showing.

--

COLETTE MEUNIER  
1560 Sacramento Street  
Berkeley, California 94702  
510.847.9731  
[colette.meunier@mindspring.com](mailto:colette.meunier@mindspring.com)

**From:** [Eileen Hughes](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#)  
**Subject:** BART PLANNING meeting 12:30-2PM TODAY (Thursday)  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 9:52:45 AM

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**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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I am unable to attend the BART planning meeting today. However I fully agree with the points made in the bullets In the attached email below.

I am dismayed and disturbed that for-profit interests are dominating the conversation about BART development. I support development consistent with the character of the neighborhoods. Moreover there is already a very significant increase in for-profit development in Berkeley.

Eileen Hughes  
1721 Sacramento Street

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** North Berkeley Neighborhood Alliance  
<[nbneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com](mailto:nbneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** August 13, 2020 at 8:13:44 AM PDT  
**To:** North Berkeley Neighborhood Alliance  
<[nbneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com](mailto:nbneighborhoodalliance@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** **CORRECTION: Reminder: attend "office hours" 12:30-2PM TODAY (Thursday)!**

Dear neighbors:

The City of Berkeley and BART will be holding "office hours" TODAY, Thursday from 12:30-2PM for questions and comments about items discussed at CAG Meeting #2. They say "You are welcome to join the Zoom call at any time during the sessions, and we will moderate the discussion to *make sure that each attendee has an opportunity to engage.*"

**If you attended the Monday meeting and spoke, thank you so much!** Our plea for a sane approach to the site predominated the comments! There are plenty of folks on the other side of the issue,

pushing hard for housing that fills in and pushes up North Berkeley. We will continue to notify you of opportunities to weigh in against high-rise housing at North Berkeley BART. We need to stay in the game, letting BART and the City know how much we value and require a contextual approach that does not loom over our beloved neighborhood.

**If you missed the Monday meeting, please attend this one.**

We must keep the pressure on, because there are certain groups who want BART to build big and high, and they're very persistent and outspoken.

**If you can't attend (or even if you do) email:**

[bartplanning@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:bartplanning@cityofberkeley.info) and "cc":  
[mayor@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:mayor@cityofberkeley.info), [council@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:council@cityofberkeley.info)

**Talking points: (please feel free to personalize and add your own)**

- We understand that the law requires the city to zone the 7-story minimum, but we do not want a higher minimum. The site was misclassified as an Urban Center. Berkeley is a "city of neighborhoods with character that should be preserved" and North Berkeley is a low-rise, residential neighborhood.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Berkeley and BART says that BART will work with the city to zone in the "context of the built form characteristics of a surrounding lower density neighborhood". We must hold them to it!
- We want the site to maximize affordability and green construction. Low rise structures are less expensive to build, making affordable housing more feasible. Nearby residents who have or are considering solar panels would be shadowed by high buildings, and we want to encourage solar.
- The dwellings should be highly affordable and rent-controlled. We don't need more expensive market-rate rentals in Berkeley - we are well ahead of regional requirements for market-rate.
- The pandemic has already changed things drastically. BART ridership is way down and many people are working at home. Tenants will not want to live in a building where they must use elevators. There is plenty of land at the site available to build four stories in the center, two stories at the perimeter.
- High rise structures will create traffic congestion and parking problems.

Public land for the public good!

How to join:

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

**Thursday, August 13th from 12:30pm - 2pm**

[https://zoom.us/j/96397530244?  
pwd=L1lTdEd6QUI3aFp3VlpNTlZQNEprZz09](https://zoom.us/j/96397530244?pwd=L1lTdEd6QUI3aFp3VlpNTlZQNEprZz09)

**Meeting ID:** 963 9753 0244 **Password:** 034094

**To join by phone:** (669 )900-6833 **Meeting ID:** 963 9753 0244  
**Password:** 0340944

Thank you for all that you do!

Your neighbor,

Tony



**From:** [Wanda Warkentin](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley and Ashby Bart proposed development and the Undemocratic Democrats  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:41:48 AM

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**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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Council, Mayor and BART planners:

Yesterday I had to take my "evil" little automobile for a service in the San Pablo and Dwight Way neighborhood. As I walked back to my dwelling place in the Gilman and San Pablo area, my heart broke to see the demise of creative businesses and the ugly manipulated blight (what developers and experts create so they can take over your city). It took about 40 minutes to get from there to here and not one bus went by. The lie is: transportation right outside your living space to get efficiently to where you need to go without a car.

Our Council and Mayor listen to the experts(UC?) who are bought by the corporate elites who bully the citizens with their YIMBY soldiers who club us over the head with phony environmental "climate change" policies and their ideas of what kind of housing we need. When citizens want truly environmental and people-friendly housing solutions, a YIMBY need only get up and say sanctimoniously "We need *even taller* buildings for climate change!" (actual quote).

BART has been degraded to where no one wants to take it anymore. We no longer have viable public transportation in Berkeley. I used to get around without a car before "progressives" came to occupy the seats of our council with their Climate Change Action Plan. (Of course we can now blame Covid 19 for everything.) Now with the "lockdown", seems our city officials and BART are going full steam ahead with the "Smart" housing in BART parking lots.

Yet with all this talk of curbing the human's use of energy by getting them out of single family homes and making it impossible to drive a car to solve the climate change problem, *not a mention is made of the the energy monster that is the wireless cloud (equivalent of adding 4.9 million cars to the roads)* Technology is actually being promoted as a solution!! The "Smart Grid" -- humans in as small a space as possible, small cells every 200 feet, garish and monstrously powerful cell towers within 100 feet of small groceries, churches and schools to control and have full spectrum dominance over the human being's ability to get around and monitoring of our energy use with the "Internet of Things", is the elephant in this room.

The Technocrats want to redo our city and are doing it under the guise of solving an environmental problem. Meanwhile they are also coming up with creative ways to steal the

property of unsuspecting Berkeley citizens, who foolishly believe that Progressives have their best interests at heart.

Sincerely,

Wanda Warkentin

**From:** [Lynda Caesara](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#)  
**Cc:** [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley Bart Expansion  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 10:12:02 PM

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**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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Hi ,

I was unable to attend the office hours sessions offered. So I am writing instead.

A 7-story building on the Bart parking lot is totally out of context for the neighborhood. The highest buildings around are 4 stories on University Ave. It doesn't get higher than that until you get to downtown Berkeley. We never should have been zoned for 7 we are not a city center!!!. We certainly should not go higher than 7.

In order to remodel our house on Hearst we had to get shadow studies done. We would not have been approved if we had shadowed our neighbors. This building should not be exempt from shadow studies. Solar is important for climate change. shadowing peoples roof tops prevents those investments.

I was at the council meeting when the MOU was approved. Bart said that it would work with The City of Berkeley to keep within the neighborhood context. We must insist that they do so. Four stories in the center with 2 stories at the perimeter is much more in the context of the neighborhood.

Our existing infra structure is aging. Adding more people burdens the existing delivery of sewer, water and gas. the streets are not in good repair. More housing will not help that. WE don't need more cars on the roads creating more wear and congestion. the idea that people will not need cars is not realistic.

We don't need more market rate housing in Berkeley. We have met our quota. We do need affordable housing in Berkeley so that we can house our teachers and firefighters; We need the people who work in Berkeley to be able to live in Berkeley.

I have lived on Virginia St now since 1982. Almost 40 years. We have purchased a house for my son and his family on Hearst Ave near the bike path. We had to mortgage both properties substantially in order to make the purchase. the neighbor hoods that we live in are not high-income neighborhoods. Most of the families are working class. Our neighbors don't have high incomes. My son works for Berkeley High and never would have been able to buy into the neighborhood.

We don't need more market rate housing in Berkeley. We have met our quota. We do need affordable housing in Berkeley so that we can house our teachers and firefighters; We need the people who work in Berkeley to be able to live in Berkeley.

Parking is an issue. What will be done for the people from the hills who will not ride Bart because it takes an hour to get home by bus?

Retail at the Bart station is not supportable. The store fronts on University remain vacant. Stores on Martin Luther King cannot remain in business. Why would one build more retail when our existing retail is not filled?

WE want to support our neighborhoods in Berkeley not strain them beyond sustainability and force more people to leave the area.

A note on all of the housing bills in Sacramento. It feels very much like the real-estate land grab by developers. Not a movement to house people. It has the flavor of the LA water grab (i.e. the movie Chinatown) or when we lost our streetcars in Berkely to the Bus companies. WE can't let our public land be used against us for the profit of developers. It doesn't serve the city in the long run. Please protect our city not degrade it.

Thank you ,  
Lynda Caesara  
1619 Virginia St.

**From:** [Toni Casal](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#); [All Council](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [Kesarwani, Rashi](#)  
**Cc:** [North Berkeley Neighborhood Alliance](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley Bart Housing  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 9:58:54 AM

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**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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I'm writing to express my dismay about the plans for a high rise building at the North Berkeley BART station. I live in District One. I was shocked when I learned that the family oriented neighborhood is scheduled for a highrise building that will change the character of the neighborhood.

When I inquired about the decision I was told that North Berkeley BART was classified as being a commercial area. We all know that is not the case. North Berkeley is not a commercial area, it is a residential area. Who made this decision? and who was in the room when the decision was made? Can I see the paper trail? Because it is the wrong decision and a misclassification that should be revisited and modified. I would appreciate a response to these questions.

If building is to occur at the site it must be in line with the neighborhood surrounding it and cannot be 10 stories high. Something 4 stories high with units stepping down to 2 stories on the perimeter would preserve the neighborhood and add needed low and moderate income housing to the community. It also avoids the massive costs and disruption of building a high rise.

Any housing should be priced moderately and low income. We have enough high priced units in the city. Check out these rental rates on a new complex a few blocks from the North Berkeley station. <https://www.apartments.com/parc-at-1300-berkeley-ca/22web78/> A 500 square foot bedroom is \$2450, a 2 bedroom is over \$3,300. Those are the comps now, in 2020. Most comments from the community are pro-low income, pro-green and want the building to fit the neighborhood. Yes on all 3.

Here's a suggestion that would make the building popular. Create affordable housing for Berkeley school teachers, and other school personnel who have even lower salaries than teachers.

Can we please see examples of similar,successful projects that are architecturally in tune with their neighborhoods, green, provide low income housing and enhance the neighborhood. Examples can be from California or anywhere in the world. When I see the housing at MacArthur Commons at the Oakland BART station I am frankly horrified. Rents are market rate, meaning exorbitant. I hope this is not a BART property.

This all begs the question, why is BART going into the housing business. It is not their core business and they have no expertise in this area. We know they are suffering financially and many fear they may use this transit village strategy to bail themselves out of their current, and

frequent money problems. That does not bode well for low income rents.

Please take the concerns of our neighborhood seriously. Something great could come out of all this, a model that is a low-rise, green, and low income. It would be an example to other cities. The current proposal of more than 7 stories, in a residential neighborhood feels like an arrogant bully plans to move into my neighborhood.

Thanks for your kind attention,  
Toni Casal

**From:** [Deborah Gouailhardou](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#)  
**Cc:** [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART project  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 12:29:36 PM

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Hello

I am a life-long resident of the area around the North Berkeley BART station (literally - I grew up on Hopkins Street, now reside on Lincoln Street).

I want to plea with the BART Planning board, mayor and the city council to consider the nature of our North Berkeley neighborhood when planning housing at the BART station - a neighborhood of mostly one story houses. This not an 'urban area', but a residential area, bordered by large thoroughfares where businesses and large apartment buildings can be found.

I understand that housing is short, and this argument is being used to push this BART development. But here are many, many places in Berkeley where vacant lots and dilapidated buildings along main streets near grocery stores and other conveniences can be, and have been, used to build large apartment buildings. For instance, the new building near the intersection of Cedar and San Pablo is such a project - and a very welcome one, replacing an unoccupied warehouse and vacant lot. I see many such lots along University and San Pablo, that could be investigated for housing projects

Since NB BART is not near grocery shopping, residents, except ambitious walkers, will probably want cars to do their shopping. I am not sure if the idea is that the residents will take BART to go shopping, but I don't think that is a realistic scenario given that grocery stores are not near BART stations. We already struggle to park our own cars in the surrounding neighborhoods and adding so many households to the neighborhood will make parking much more difficult.

Also, I wonder if this project can be put on hold until we see what the post-COVID-19 world is like. This project was conceived in the pre-COVID-19 world and we don't know at this point what the challenges of the next years will be for our health and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Deborah Gouailhardou



**From:** [melissa\\_riley](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#)  
**Cc:** [Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART site for housing: We must build lower  
**Date:** Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:10:09 AM

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Dear BART Planners,

I am in favor of more truly affordable housing and housing for those with low or no incomes in Berkeley. This can be done most effectively along high traffic corridors, especially where some taller buildings are already prevalent, and at best, by building many many beautiful 4 storey buildings along such corridors, which will create a greater sense of vibrancy, walkability and neighborhood connection. To paraphrase Jane Jacobs, we want "Eyes on the Street."

Buildings above approximately four storeys do not allow for such visual awareness and do not create the ownership, place identity, and sense of responsibility which lead to the effective civic participation, collaboration, and neighborliness we need.

Building seven storeys or higher on the North Berkeley site does not make sense. I agree with those who propose two and four storey buildings there, which are at a human scale, consonant with the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, greater density is no longer considered desirable, especially now that we understand the dangers of too many people in one building: spreading virus and alienation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Melissa Riley. 510 708-2155  
1721 Cedar Street  
Berkeley. CA. 94703

**From:** [E.Horowitz](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART development  
**Date:** Friday, August 14, 2020 4:48:10 PM

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Ms. Chen

This week I spoke at one of the "office hours" about the North Berkeley BART Station. You told me at the meeting that you would reply to the email I sent a few days before the meeting, regarding why North Berkeley BART was designated Urban Center rather than Neighborhood. Especially since El Cerrito del Norte, located right on San Pablo Ave., got the Neighborhood designation.

I am still waiting for specific and complete explanation of how this inappropriate designation was made.

Thank you,

Liz Horowitz

**From:** [E.Horowitz](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#); [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#)  
**Subject:** North Berkeley BART development suggestion  
**Date:** Friday, August 14, 2020 4:36:52 PM

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The stated goal of BART parking lot development is to provide badly needed housing and to increase BART ridership. One thing Berkeley does NOT need is more commercial space -- we have plenty of empty storefronts in town! So here is a suggestion for the North Berkeley BART station:

Put housing on the ground floor -- it's perfect for ADA accessible housing -- AND/OR put a parking garage for BART commuters on the ground floor (and maybe underground as well).

PLEASE do not make it harder for residents in the Berkeley Hills and West Berkeley to commute by BART. And do not add to our already depressing abundance of empty commercial space all over town, much of which is on the ground floor of new apartment buildings, as well as along University Ave. just a few blocks from North Berkeley BART.

Liz Horowitz  
1421 McGee Ave.  
Berkeley

**From:** [aimee baldwin](#)  
**To:** [bartplanning](#)  
**Subject:** Public Roof Garden at North Berkeley BART  
**Date:** Monday, August 17, 2020 3:48:41 PM

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**WARNING:** This email originated outside of City of Berkeley.

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#### North Berkeley BART roof garden

I have spent quite a lot of time thinking about the proposed developments on the North Berkeley BART Station parking lot. I look at it frequently, as I live two blocks away from it, use BART regularly, and walk around or through the parking lot on my way somewhere else. If a development over one story tall goes up on the parking lot, I will be able to see it from the sidewalk in front of my house.

Despite the parking lot being a place that is clearly not designed for aesthetic enjoyment, it is a large open space with sunlight, and flowering trees (crab apples and plums are amazing when they are in bloom); a place where I can get a great view of Mount Tamalpais, see the wide open sky, see the sun setting at the horizon, and I can watch the moon rise over the Berkeley hills....sometimes all at once. It is obvious that this will be lost when a development is built here. It will be a loss not only for the neighbors who live directly across the street from the station, but also for the Ohlone Greenway Park, and anyone who walks near the station. There are few sites in the flats of Berkeley with this kind of open horizon-to-horizon view.

There is talk about making an open space park between the potentially 7 story tall buildings to be built on the North Berkeley BART station, where development is prevented by the underground BART tunnels. This would essentially be a greenway alley between tall buildings. While this would make a nice connected thoroughfare between the Ohlone Greenway on either side of the station, it would NOT replace the loss of access to sunlight and views blocked by new buildings in the North Berkeley BART parking lot.

What Berkeley needs to replace the public's views is a public rooftop garden on the highest structure built on the North Berkeley BART station. It could offer a completely unique 360 degree horizon-wide view from the flats of Berkeley, as most surrounding buildings are single story, few are 2-3 stories, and there are NO nearby raised freeways or BART tracks (which are often equivalent of 3-5 stories tall). I am not proposing something implausible. San Francisco has many Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) on rooftops (though, could we keep it as a \_Publicly\_ Owned Public Open Space, rather than privatize the space?). Other examples of existing roof/elevated parks and green spaces include the park on the Oakland Kaiser Center Rooftop Garden, the new SF Transbay bus center Salesforce Park, the High Line in NYC. I have visited and enjoyed all of these spaces that provide a respite from urban street life: where I can catch extra sunlight among gardens away from traffic and out of the bustle of sidewalks. Nature can thrive there too: I have seen hummingbirds come to feed on the flowers in the densely urban Salesforce Park.

As Berkeley is becoming filled in with taller and denser buildings, public access to sunlight is slowly eroding, and it would benefit our city to establish a resolution to this problem sooner rather than later: replace loss of easy access to sunlight and views in the center of Berkeley by providing equally accessible sunlight and views on publicly available rooftops in the center of Berkeley.

When BART was first being built, we, the residents of Berkeley, decided to pay extra to fully underground the BART tracks, as a consideration for our quality of life. We still enjoy the benefits of that decision. I hope that we could come together again to make a decision to make the quality of life in our community better for everyone by including public rooftop gardens on any North Berkeley BART station development, and other large developments in Berkeley.