



Commission on Aging  
Odile Lavault, Chair  
Darlene Bronson, Commission Secretary

## COMMISSION ON AGING REGULAR AGENDA

Wednesday, March 19, 2025  
North Berkeley Senior Center  
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair, Lavault
2. Roll Call by Secretary, Bronson
3. Public Comments  
The public may comment about any item not on the agenda. Public comments are limited to two minutes per speaker. Public comments regarding agenda items will be heard while the Commission is discussing the item.
4. Approval of minutes from February, 2025 (Attachment A)

The Commission may discuss any subject listed on the Agenda. Public comments regarding agenda items will be heard while the Commission is discussing the item. Public comments are limited to two minutes per speaker.

### Presentation

Aligning Street Safety and Emergency Response in the Berkeley Hills-This work reveals that the current status quo may be dangerous for people living in the Berkeley Hills, especially for those over the age of 60 who make up a high proportion of the area's residents. Morgan Elizabeth Cunneen-Franco, Lisa Schroer, Esteban Villaseñor Masters of City Planning Student at UC Berkeley (Attachment B)

### Staff report

### Discussion / Action Items

1. Yamaguchi proposes to include an agenda review at the end of preliminary matters
2. Provide input on the implementation of the newly passed Measure FF and schedule a presentation on FF at a future meeting, Orrick
3. Letter regarding implementation of Measure FF funds Recommendations for Measure FF letter-discussed that sidewalk funding, working group by Porter/Chisholm.
4. Commission on Aging work plan 2025 review, Lavault
5. New room location to Gooseberry room-April
6. Present BRSD program plan to the COA- Mary Triston will be rescheduled for

April COA meeting

**Commissioner reports**

Report on Senior Resource Fair update, Orrick

**Information Items**

\*\*Please submit all agenda items by Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> to the Commission Secretary, for the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting only.

**Items for Ongoing Discussion**

1. Safety & identify homebound seniors in Berkeley
2. Berkeley Rides for Seniors and Disabled waitlist
3. Older drivers' safety and DMV policies

**Adjournment**

**COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION**

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the **Disability Services Specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD)** at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the commission secretary for further information.

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the North Berkeley Senior Center located at 1901 Hearst Avenue, during regular business hours. The Commission Agenda and Minutes may be viewed on the City of Berkeley website: <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/commissions>.

**Secretary:**

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Health, Housing & Community  
Services Department  
Commission on Aging

## COMMISSION ON AGING REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 19, 2025  
1:30 p.m.

### 1. Roll Call

Present: (8) Cochran, Yamaguchi, Orrick, Lavault, Collins, Porter, Evans, Chisholm

Absent:

Excused Absence:

Staff Present: (2) Darlene Bronson, Donnaricia Scurry

Public: (8)

### 2. Public Comment (6)

### Presentation

Jessica Rothhaar, Senior Public Policy Manager of Northern California and Northern Nevada Alzheimer's Association.

### Staff Report

Oanh Guise provided an update on the Age-Friendly Budget. She outlined 4 areas of senior services: the senior centers, (SSU) case management, Meals on Wheels, and transportation (taxi scrip, Go Go Grandparent).

### Action Items

#### 1. Motion to send a letter to the Fire Department supporting hybrid meetings for upcoming fire planning workshops

M/S: Evans / Cochran

Ayes: Orrick, Porter, Yamaguchi, Lavault, Orrick

Noes: None

Abstain: None

**Motion passed.**

#### 2. Motion to move the discussion on newly passed Measure FF and schedule a presentation on FF to a future meeting after March

M/S: Orrick / Cochran

Ayes: Collins, Porter, Yamaguchi, Evans, Lavault

Noes: None

Abstain: None

**Motion passed.**

#### 3. Motion to elect Lavault as Chair

M/S: Orrick

Ayes: Collins, Porter, Yamaguchi, Evans, Lavault, Chisholm

Noes: None

Abstain: None

**Motion passed.**

**4. Motion to elect Yamaguchi as Vice Chair**

M/S: Orrick

Ayes: Collins, Porter, Yamaguchi, Evans, Lavault, Chisholm

Noes: None

Abstain: None

**Motion passed.**

**Discussion Items**

1. Orrick asked for a presentation on Measure FF by City of Berkeley Staff to be presented at a future meeting after March.
2. Commissioners opted to not create bylaws at this time. This will be a continued discussion.
3. Commissioners discussed creating a Commission on Aging work plan for 2025. We agreed to review the 2022 available work plan created by Porter for discussion at next month's meeting.
4. Reviewed the letter addressed to Mayor Ishii from Berkeleyans for Accessible Rights-of-Way, Commissioners did not sign the letter and will create their own letter. Porter/Chisholm volunteered to form a working group.
5. Commissioners decided to reschedule Orrick's report on the Senior Resource Fair until next month's meeting.

**Commissioners adjourned at 3:27p.m.**

Minutes Approved on:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darlene Bronson, Commission Secretary

# Getting In, Out, and About

Aligning street safety and emergency response in the Berkeley Hills

Esteban Villaseñor, Lisa Schroer, Morgan Cunneen-Franco  
December 5, 2024

## The Problem

The Berkeley Hills are a group of neighborhoods in eastern Berkeley with steep topography and diverse populations. They experience higher fire risk than the rest of the City, and have a number of roads and passages that are relatively dangerous to pedestrians. We researched how emergency services and city planners can create safe, navigable streets.

Fire and roadway injury are already dangers for people in the Berkeley



Hills. As the City considers upzoning single-family residential districts impeded emergency response, hindered evacuation, and traffic violence have the potential to compound existing risks. To address these challenges, we recommend a range of policy and infrastructure adjustments (under *Recommendations*) based on professional interviews, scholarly research, and case studies in similar cities.

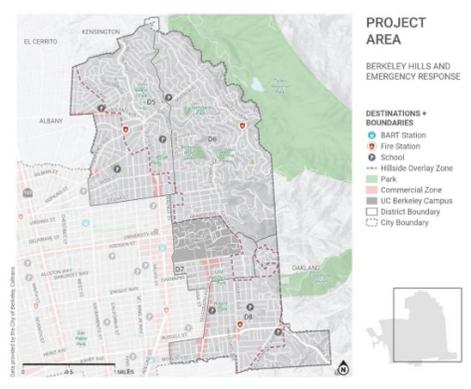


Parked cars in the Berkeley Hills significantly narrow the right of way for pedestrians, emergency services, and other drivers

Read the full report (at page bottom) for more information.

## Existing Conditions

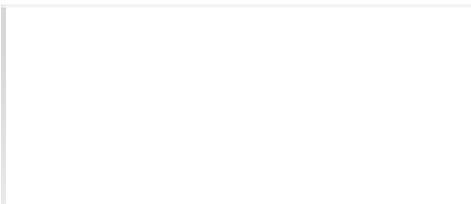
### Project Area



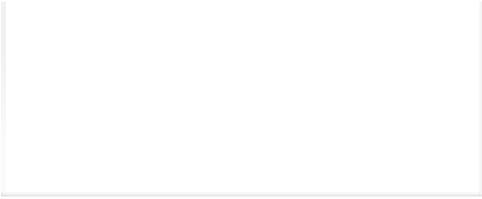
Our analysis focused on City's designated *hillside overlay zone* (HOZ), which includes neighborhoods clustered in the hills along Berkeley's eastern boundary: The Berkeley Hills, Cragmont, La Loma Park, Panoramic Hill, Southside, and Claremont. Due to steep topography, windy and narrow streets, and high fire risk, these areas face unique public safety and

transportation challenges.

### Population

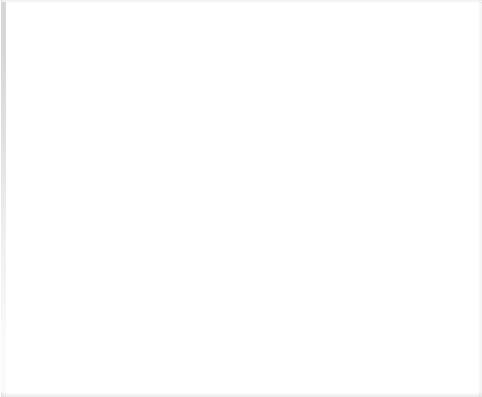


**39,000 Berkeley residents live within or near the hillside overlay zone**, and population density varies widely within this area. The north and south



sides of UC Berkeley’s campus are both located within the HOZ and have the highest population densities in the City. Reflecting the City’s zoning codes, most other HOZ neighborhoods have the lowest category of population density.

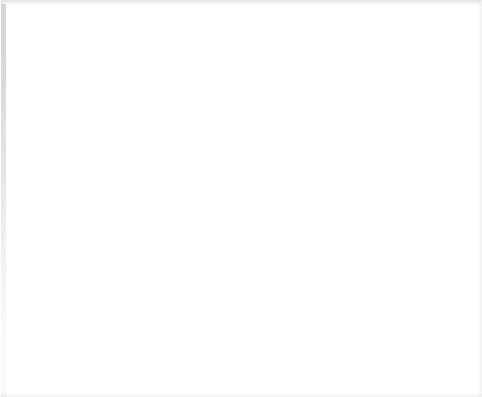
**Renters and Owners**



Housing units within the study area are **majority owner-occupied** (64.9%), compared to the City’s average where less than half of units are owner-occupied (44.9%). Similar to the geographical distribution of median household income, the neighborhoods located to the north and south sides of UC Berkeley have low owner-occupancy (19%), whereas the

Berkeley Hills, Cragmont, La Loma Park, and Claremont neighborhoods have high owner-occupancy (73.9%).

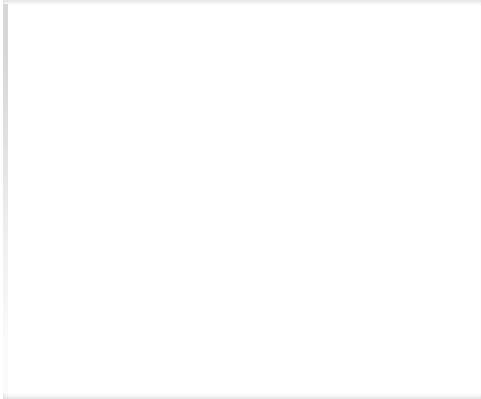
**Income (MHI)**



**Households within the hillside overlay zone are relatively high earning** (\$150,830) compared to those living outside of the hillside overlay (\$103,690). The following map shows the variation in MHI throughout the study area. The Berkeley Hills, Cragmont, La Loma Park, and Claremont neighborhoods have the highest average MHI (\$217,015). **The**

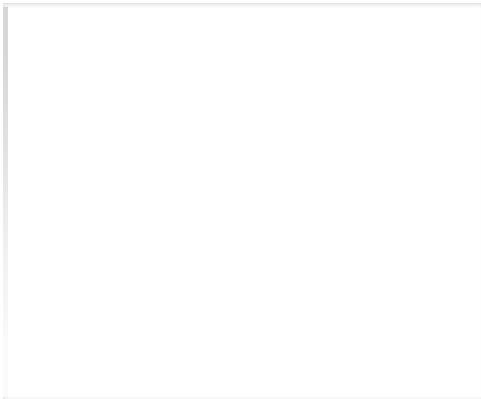
north and south sides of UC Berkeley's campus have the lowest average MHIs in the hillside overlay zone (\$58,945).

### Car Ownership



**Households in the HOZ also report owning more cars on average than the rest of the City.** A third of residents in the HOZ either drive alone (29.4%) or carpool (4.7%) as their primary means of transportation to work. Nearly one third (30.8%) of workers in the HOZ report working from home.

### Transit Access



Residents of the hillside overlay zone are primarily served by six AC Transit bus lines. These connect to Downtown Berkeley BART, Rockridge BART, downtown Oakland, and the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco. There are 218 transit stops served within the HOZ. The majority of residents living in the HOZ are within a five minute walk of an AC transit stop, however,

**infrequent buses and few route options limit the usefulness of transit to many residents.**

### Bicycling



Designated bike facilities are less abundant in the hillside overlay zone

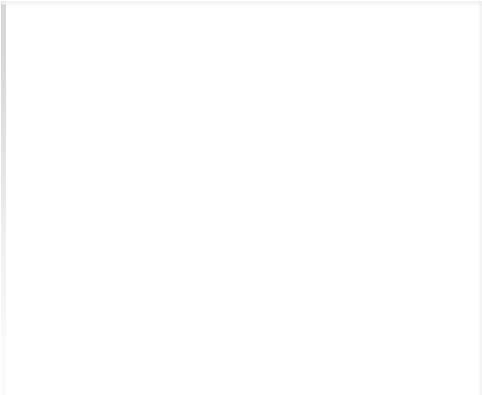


than elsewhere in Berkeley. Within the study area there are existing bike facilities on Spruce Street (Class III Bike Route), Virginia Street (Class IIIB Bicycle Boulevard), and Tunnel Road (Class II Bike Lane). Only three of the City's 36 Bay Wheels bikeshare stations are located within the hillside overlay

zone. These stations are concentrated along the western boundary of the study area close to the downtown core.

**Bikeshare and non-electric bikes are therefore more difficult for HOZ residents and likely used less frequently than in other parts of Berkeley.**

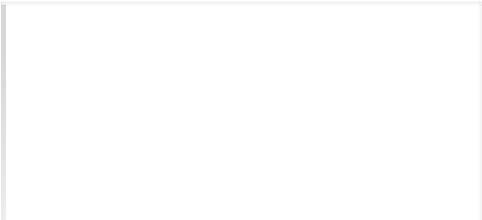
#### **Fire Hazard Severity Zone**



**Housing units in the hillside overlay zone are especially susceptible to fire hazards.** Structures in this area tend to be older, built from more flammable materials, and sit nearer to flammable forest canopy than in other parts of the city. The High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map highlights the areas at greatest risk from wildfire. Further complicating this situation is that the

streets in this area are among the steepest in the City.

#### **Street Slope**

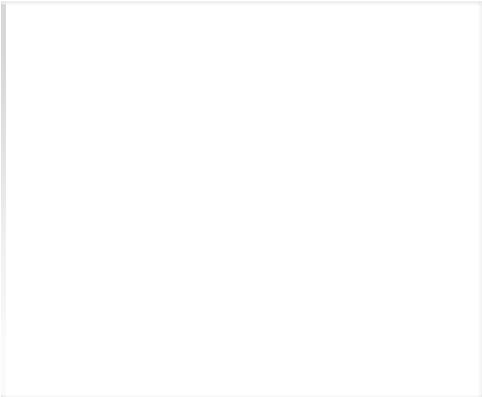


**Street slope affects both street safety and emergency response.** Steep streets may change sight lines for drivers, be harder for emergency vehicles to navigate, and affect



vehicles' ability to slow down and stop. Steepness is an important consideration for planning evacuation routes, emergency corridors, and daily-use street infrastructure.

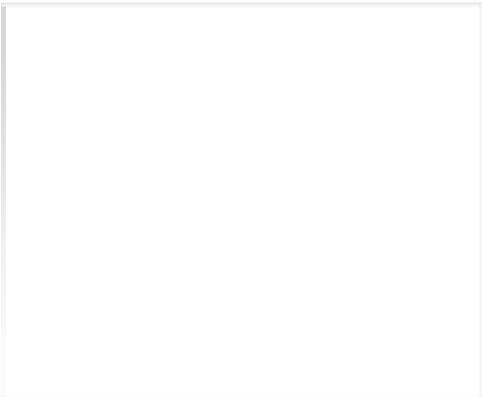
### **Pedestrian Evacuation Routes**



In evacuation scenarios, many residents rely on their own cars for transportation. The project area's arterial roadways such as Arlington Avenue, Marin Avenue, Grizzly Peak Boulevard, La Loma Avenue, and Tunnel Road are able to hold higher volumes of car traffic than smaller, local streets. These arterials will likely see increased car traffic in the event of

an evacuation. **For residents of the hillside overlay zone without access to a car, the City has designated pedestrian evacuation routes.** Planning to distribute the outflow of people across more than one mode helps avoid gridlock and equitably helps safe egress.

### **Biking and Walking Collisions**



Between 2018 to 2022, the study area experienced 24 pedestrian- and 59 bike-related collisions where a car collided with a person walking or biking. Of the 82 total collisions, one person died and 17 collisions resulted in severe injuries.

## Zoning



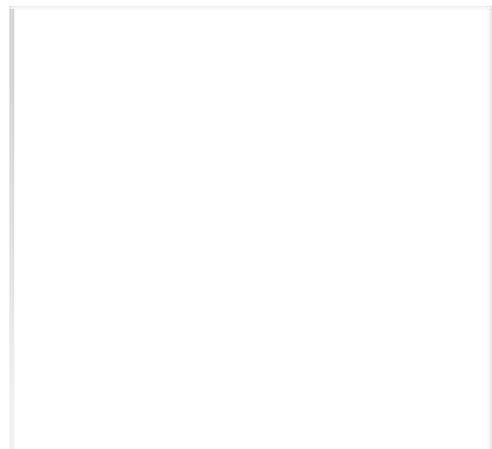
The findings in this report are increasingly important as the City of Berkeley considers upzoning single-family residential areas to allow the construction of denser multi-unit housing. Proponents of zoning code change note that denser housing is more affordable and will help address the City's gap in middle-housing options. Opponents fear that increased

density in the hillside overlay zone will exacerbate the challenges already faced by Berkeley's most fire-prone neighborhoods. To address these concerns, the City is conducting an evacuation study that models upzoning scenarios throughout Berkeley. The report is expected to be published in early 2025. Yellow areas on Figure 12 show the single-family residential districts with potential to be rezoned in the future.

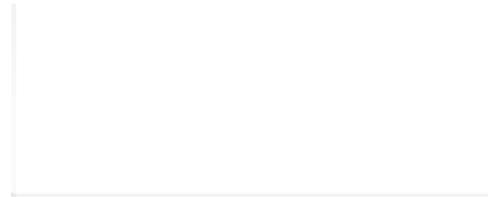
## Recommendations

### Enforce Existing Parking Regulations

Berkeley employs 22 full-time Parking Enforcement Officers but due to staffing and funding constraints, the City does not have adequate resources to enforce parking laws in the Berkeley Hills. Instead, the Police Department offers voluntary overtime to its officers to enforce parking laws in the hillside overlay zone during Red Flag events. The Berkeley Disaster and Fire Safety



Commission writes that “***a consistent lack of enforcement sends the message that parking restrictions in the Hills are not important, but in truth these restrictions are crucial for life-safety in these neighborhoods.***”



### **No Parking on Red Flag Days Program**

If implementing more permanent no parking zones is not feasible, Berkeley should implement a program similar to the Los Angeles No Parking on Red Flag Days. The Fire Department should assess the streets in Fire Zone 2 and 3 and determine street sections where prohibiting parking during Red Flag Days would assist with ingress and egress if a fire event occurred. This program should be paired with intensive community outreach to educate the public about why the program is being implemented and how to find out when a Red Flag Day has been called.

### **Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program**

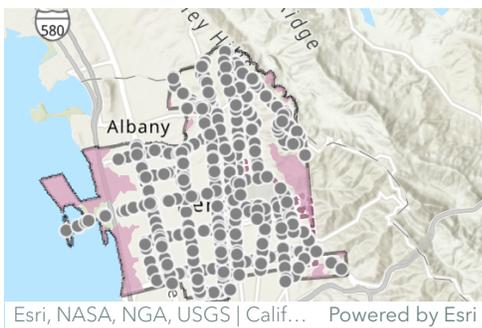
The City of Berkeley has an existing Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) program which covers neighborhoods surrounding the University of California, Berkeley and downtown. We propose an amended version of the current RPP program to be extended to the study area to discourage legal on-street parking and encourage the use of off-street parking. This program would restrict each household to purchase one on-street vehicle parking permit which would allow them to park in legal parking areas. All other vehicles, including visitors and those owned by residents, would be limited to parking on the curb for a two-hour limit. We do not make any recommendation regarding the cost of the parking permit, but it should be expensive enough to encourage people to make use of private off-street parking instead.

Extensive community outreach should be conducted to educate residents about the program and its underlying public safety purpose.

### **Subsidize Transportation Network Company Trips (Uber/Lyft etc.)**

To encourage Berkeley Hills residents to park off-street, the City of Berkeley should partner with Uber and/or Lyft to provide subsidized rides to residents who do not purchase an RPP pass. Subsidized trips would have to begin or end at the resident's home in the Berkeley Hills and should be encouraged to be used as a connector to BART or other transit options. The subsidy should be larger than the cost of the RPP pass to provide residents a large enough incentive not to purchase a pass. Ideally, this program would encourage those Berkeley Hills residents who cannot park their vehicle off-street and do not use their vehicle often to sell their vehicle and use the subsidized TNC trips instead. This program could improve the mobility of sub-populations in the Berkeley Hills which have difficulty getting around such as the elderly and people with disabilities.

### **Improve Transit Options**



**Berkeley Fire Zones**

To increase people's mobility in the Berkeley Hills, the City of Berkeley should work with AC Transit to expand bus coverage. Increasing the frequency of Bus 65 and 67, as well as expanding the routes to cover more streets in the Berkeley Hills would help make taking the bus more convenient. This in turn may, over time, reduce the number of cars per household and reduce the

number of cars parked on the street.

Additionally, the City of Berkeley should explore offering microtransit rides for Berkeley Hills residents to supplement traditional bus service.

### **Interdepartmental Cooperation between Fire and Transportation Depts.**

As cities continue to study and prioritize road user safety, Fire Departments are drawn into issues traditionally in the purview of Transportation Departments. To foster interdepartmental cooperation between the Fire and Transportation Departments, early career fire and transportation staff should learn about each other's operational needs and duties to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the department's work. A simple way to nurture mutual understanding is to periodically organize "ride alongs" where transportation staff can join a fire department for a day on the job and vice versa. While this could be quite an expensive program as a firefighter on a "ride along" would need to be backfilled by another firefighter on overtime, the value it could bring to fostering interdepartmental cooperation could justify such a program.

### **Smaller Fire Apparatuses**

Wheel base and water carrying capacity both affect the mobility of fire apparatuses. In recent years Berkeley has purchased a fire apparatus with a narrower wheelbase for use in the study area. Having a diverse fleet can help ensure that vehicles are appropriately sized for the emergency and area that they serve. Therefore, we recommend that more of the City's large fire trucks be replaced with smaller models at end-of-life.

### **Increase No Parking Zones**

Red curbs should be added to roads with widths less than 26-

feet and where residents have access to off-street parking. By limiting red curbing to narrow roads where residents have an alternative place to park, it may reduce the amount of opposition. Blue curbs should be painted in conjunction with red curbs to allow mobility-limited residents to park.

### **Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

The study area hosts an extensive network of pedestrian pathways which were built during the early 1900s to provide shortcuts through the long blocks to reach street car lines. These steep, narrow paths vary in quality from those with concrete steps and railings to overgrown dirt paths and are maintained by the Berkeley Path Wanderers, a volunteer organization. City staff have identified these paths as a crucial evacuation route for pedestrians out of the Berkeley Hills. In addition to current routine maintenance, pedestrian infrastructure such as crosswalks and pedestrian flashing lights should be installed where paths intersect major arterials.

### **Traffic Calming in High Need/ High Benefit Areas**

If the City wishes to expand the use of traffic calming measures, it should assess the study area and place traffic calming infrastructure at high conflict points. Spruce Street, which is a designated Class III bike route with “sharrows,” has been the site of numerous serious and fatal bike collisions. Because of its designation as a bike route and the high incidence of bike crashes, Spruce Street should be prioritized for traffic interventions.

The City should start by focusing traffic calming interventions on a small number of high need, high benefit areas. Successful implementation in a handful of carefully selected locations lightens the resource burden on the City, and can improve public trust in the efficacy of traffic calming infrastructure. Site selection should consider the effects of infrastructure on

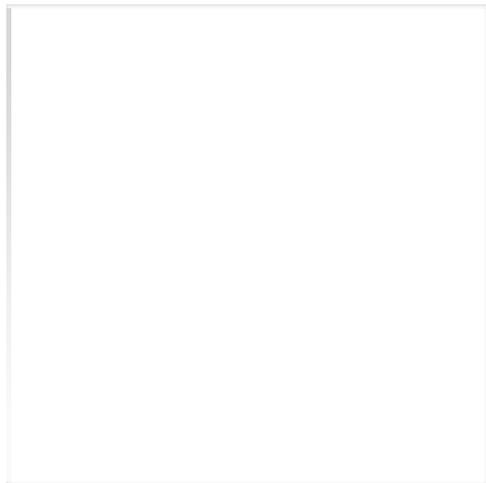
emergency response in the area.

**If upzoned, conduct traffic studies to determine traffic calming needs**

Should the City decide to allow increased density in the Berkeley Hills, it should conduct periodic traffic studies to understand the effects of increased traffic. By better understanding changing vehicle and road user dynamics, the City will be able to assess the efficacy of its interventions and recognize new opportunity sites.

**Conclusion**

The Berkeley Hills is a heterogeneous region of people with diverse lifestyles, mobility needs, and priorities. Wildfire looms large in residents' collective memory, while street trauma presents a daily threat to public safety. Risk distribution in the Berkeley Hills differs street-by-street and block-by-block. A safe city requires pedestrian-safe streets, reliable evacuation routes, and navigable emergency corridors. Emergency services and transportation planners can address these risks using the strategic policy and infrastructure adjustments outlined in this report. Past opposition to change by residents underscores the importance of interdepartmental collaboration and the ability to convincingly communicate risk management strategies to the public. Aligning the goals of emergency responders and transportation planners reveals opportunities for collaboration, equitable risk mitigation, and improved quality of life in the Berkeley Hills.



Codornices Park is a popular destination in the Berkeley Hills. Patrons arrive by foot, bike, bus, and car.

## Full Report PDF

### Full Report

Click for detailed information, sources, case studies,  
and literature review

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WrG2KcjVnkeCPbLSNw6fdGma\\_Yw15f/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WrG2KcjVnkeCPbLSNw6fdGma_Yw15f/view)

**Thank you, to the many professionals in the East Bay and around the country who shared their time and expertise for this report. Special thanks to Professor Karen Frick for her guidance and assistance throughout.**