

**Supplemental
Communications**
(Received before
12 pm
December 4)

From: [Heike Helmer](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Rivera, Robert](#)
Subject: Feedback on Topics (can't make the Dec 4 meeting)
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 7:13:20 PM

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TO: The SPA Planning Commission

I really enjoyed the SP walking tour, the QR code survey and reading your report for tomorrow's agenda. While I won't be able to attend the meeting in person, here is some feedback on the topics you provided:

Prioritization of Public Improvements in the Corridor:

Lighting, wide sidewalks and landscaping should be prioritized. Focus investment on Gilman and Cedar nodules.

Open Space and Community Gathering Locations: (This is my personal #1 priority)

At least one open space and community gathering location should be available in each section/node of SPA (about every 3 blocks). Design these spaces for multi-functions, i.e. provide some with a concrete stage for a neighborhood festival (music, speeches, performances - maybe a Friday night outdoor concert series? Poetry jams?), or install some chess tables, and include enclosed toddler playground areas in some spaces (example: [Peralta @ Solano Ave design is perfect - do more of that!](#)) Also provide green spaces with planters and benches in each community gathering space (photos attached).

Housing and Commercial Density:

Commerce should be on the ground floor and residential housing should be above. That already works well in Europe.

Commercial and Retail Clustering:

Retail space can be split into smaller rooms and can be shared. For example, Cloverdale CA used to have a ground floor large warehouse space that operated as a Co-op of about 10 small business owners, having their own "stall" areas in the open space and displaying antiques and crafts for sale. Right at the front entrance door was a variety store that drew pedestrians in with fun displays. That Co-op was so cool and it was a thriving hot spot for many years! However, the COVID pandemic took it down. It is very important that we have different types of retail on SPA, so people can just walk from store to store - grocery market, cafes that are two blocks apart, different types of restaurants, flowershop, jewelry store, affordable new clothing, affordable used clothing (SPCA thrift store? Goodwill?), butcher with a deli, hardware store, bank, laundromat, medical services (massage, chiropractor, acupuncture) - these all draw people into the area and will be useful for all the incoming SPA residents.

Residential on Ground Floors:

For overall safety reasons, I don't think residential living should be allowed on the ground floor.

Building Heights:

I wholeheartedly object to taller buildings along SPA. *Guideline: there always needs to be sun on one of the sidewalks and in the middle.* We want people to feel relaxed as they walk & shop and appreciate the landscaping along SPA, which also requires sunshine. No mini-Manhattan! No extra tall highrises bordering residential neighborhoods! I don't want to feel small and compressed by surrounding buildings. I want to feel expansive and free - that puts me in the mood to stay, explore and spend money. (Please check out images of the downtown area of [Fort Bragg](#). They got it right. Also, you didn't ask, but parking needs to be provided for tenants on the building site - maybe even underground. If you want to draw people to SPA, you've got to have parking. We are not coming on buses and bikes, going home with heavy items. Public transportation as a sole source will limit our ability to shop more. One of the buildings should be a public parking garage somewhere between Cedar and Ashby.

Local Density Bonus or other Funding Mechanisms:

Other funding mechanisms should be studied.

Thank you for this opportunity to give more detailed input,
Heike Helmer















