

**Supplemental
Correspondence**
(Received before
12 pm
June 4, 2025)

Supplemental Correspondence

From: jennifer cole <jnifacole@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 10:59 PM
To: Adena Ishii; Igor Tregub; Kesarwani, Rashi; Messner, Faye
Subject: Comment re Wednesday June 4 mtg planning commission public hearing

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

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I'd like to address proposed zoning changes for our District 1 neighborhood. I've just received neighborhood notice that our local zoning in West Berkeley West of San Pablo is being revised, - to potentially rezone us from R1-a to R2- to supply more housing to meet the CA State mandate. I've checked in with a variety of neighbors, and we are concerned, as we drill into reading the Housing Element and other city documents, that in a rush to build "missing middle" infill / backyard units, local lot developers could be incentivized via "flexibility in site development standards" (p 18, Goal E, H-35)

1) The proposal for "flexible" standards under R2 (proposed for a vote by Council and in development) could indeed encourage and streamline the building process, but as we have seen in MUA developments @ 5th and Page Streets, these same standards can result in new housing which does not meet any inclusive or environmental criterion District One (and others) could thrive with. We need more real green space between buildings, not just permeable driveways punctuating dense building blocks. Its 2025. We need to breathe, grow something, have conversations on porches and benches. We need some angles of sunlight, and not just in August. We need green infrastructure, safe biking, walkability, and socially conscious services nearby. We need planning to include a variety of neighbors and expertise including social workers and health professionals.

We have all been through a lot since the most recent pandemic and with what we have learned Berkeley can certainly do better than the zoning reforms proposed so far.

2) I appreciate the growing need for socially designed housing, but I am unable to find any vacancy information for our newest development projects here in Berkeley. (If there is a shortage of staff to provide this information - maybe a partnership with UCB's City planning students could help generate the data and share it?)

3) I can see that The San Pablo Avenue Plan addresses housing opportunities at scale, and with neighborhood dialog, much could be respectfully designed and built upon existing corridors (San Pablo and University) this could honor both the Boulevard itself and existing homes adjacent. (See The Jones project or Trachtenbergs design for San Pablo and Hearst) for approaches that could be scaled to fit elsewhere along these Avenues)

Our existing standards, (defined in the City's document as a set of rules which address requirements, setbacks, building heights and parking, etc.) were carefully crafted by our City to honor our neighbors and neighborhoods.

Abandoning civic design for healthy communities is a greedy move that does not serve any of our long term residents, and does not (as sometimes claimed) combat historic racism.

To the contrary, building large expensive condos does add supply or change the housing landscape for the people who are struggling to enter the housing market (and competing with privileged groups)-nor for those just trying to stick around despite their harsh economic reality. This planning approach will leave even more people out in the cold and we can surely do better for our growing communities!

We are in a new chapter of civic life, which demands us to tackle a changing climate, up-value our street-side and commons design, articulate spaces for mental and physical health benefits, to justly thrive. We all need to step up. I urge you to rethink our proposed zoning changes within R2 - because building housing quickly here to reach a quota does not solve the nuanced issues of the homing (and many other connected) needs facing us now.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Cole
9th Street
94710

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Shen, Alisa
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 8:20 AM
To: Planning Commission
Subject: FW: R-1A, R-2, Middle Housing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: Virginia Browning <vexxie@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 9:53 PM
To: Shen, Alisa <AShen@berkeleyca.gov>; All Council <council@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: R-1A, R-2, Middle Housing

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

Dear Housing Commission and Council re: merging of R-1A and R-2, Middle Housing.

I see NO PROBLEM with merging R-1A with R-2. But I see potential problems in the new standards for the new zoning category with regards to reduced set-backs and open space.

I'm FOR some type of middle-sized mutli-family housing being further encouraged. If done well, I think this is more important than building giant towers and much better than sprawling single-family lots.

Because this is going to affect my quality of life personally very much here, and that of some neighbors, I have tried to follow this since "Middle Housing" was a thing. I even stared down the Housing Element document and attempted to comment about the need to protect solar and open space. I've been trying to follow this for a long time. Changes have been made. I'm not a housing professional, but I think I'm a good person who provides housing for several low-income people and care about quality of life for all of us here. I'm not a housing professional, and I think for such a comprehensive change as rezoning to achieve double the number of residents of our city, we non-professional residents here should have a right to try to understand what is happening to their quality of life and even to weigh in. There seems to be inadequate concern for open space in this proposal, and perhaps non-housing-professionals might have at least as good a handle on that need as housing professionals do.

You have a table (for example) that asserts an allowed height of 35' and a setback of 22', but I don't see addressed the possibility of a density bonus for someone building on say a 10,000 sf parcel where a taller building might negatively shade and damage solar and vegetable-garden access for neighbors. Without ANY provision for interrogating the ministerial allowing, I don't see how there is real protection in this proposal for currently unforeseen but potentially important contingencies.

I see a table that gently allows "multi-family" housing where none was allowed before without a hearing, and that is probably fine and good! I'd say most of us are for multi-family housing neighbors. Sure. Of course. But how much multi is really multi? And though concern with use of a density bonus is brushed aside, in some

instances it certainly is a concern. There are individual cases where a 5' setback is simply a terrible idea in a certain spot, yet allowed here in some circumstances. The lack of provision for adequate COMMON open space (not a roof, not a private balcony) is one of the very saddest parts of this. Trees, greenery, climate help...Where is it here?

I'm concerned that lack of ANY process for individual contingencies could really present problems in individual cases. AND, I have yet to hear this hashed out at even one "townhall" hearing where I can hear from neighbors whose experiences and thoughts could inform mine. It isn't adequate to attend a presentation where the only way we can ask questions is one on one by standing on sore disabled legs in a line with a planner in a room so loud we can't hear others' questions and answers. It seems intentionally not adequate.

We need:

more public discussion of this "Middle Housing" – which by the way is NOT addressing affordability – even the planners themselves said it would likely be at least 50 years before rents might go down significantly in response to the additional units built. We don't need to rebuild the wheel on this one – in every other similar community, rents have gone UP in response to this type upzoning, not down.

I very much appreciate the words in this petition I signed – I had no hand in writing it, but it expresses my own views about needs seeming to be overlooked in this "Middle Housing" proposal perfectly.

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/petition-to-call-for-public-debate-on-pending-zoning-proposal?source=direct_link&&link_id=0&can_id=6c014bb80b1e6573ef53b530124cfad7&email_referrer=email_2759810&email_subject=berkeley-deserves-a-realistic-housing-ordinance&

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Supplemental Correspondence

From: Shen, Alisa
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 8:15 AM
To: Planning Commission
Cc: Messner, Faye; Horner, Justin
Subject: Fw: Zoning consolidation / middle housing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: Colleen W <whitney.colleen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 10:49:17 PM
To: Shen, Alisa <AShen@berkeleyca.gov>
Cc: All Council <council@berkeleyca.gov>; Kesarwani, Rashi <RKesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: Zoning consolidation / middle housing

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

I'm writing to register strong concern regarding the Middle Housing proposal, as outlined in the presentation made in a District 1 and 2 Community Meeting in October.

I am a homeowner in District 1, in an area zoned as R-2. I'm in favor of encouraging reasonable increase in density throughout the city, but this proposal goes astray in several significant ways.

- * Instead of jumping from a maximum 2 units on a 5000 sf lot to 3 or even 4, it jumps to 5 for R-1 and 6 for R-2. I have heard no discussion of impacts on infrastructure and city services such as police, fire, schools and parking.
- * One of the things that makes Berkeley liveable, as crowded as it is, is green spaces and gardens. Allowing up to 6 units with as little as 5ft of space between them will remove a lot of green space.
- * This proposal doesn't outline similar proposed changes in other districts. There are already equity issues in the burdens of homeless encampments in D1 and D2. This proposal would result in more crowding, traffic and noise, all concentrated in D1 and D2.
- * Zone certification would speed up projects, but I don't agree with making permits non-appealable.

I'm not against the idea of addressing Middle Housing, but I ask you to consider modifying the proposal to reduce the maximum density to a more reasonable level, increase the minimum space between units, and add the ability to appeal.

Thank you,

Colleen Whitney,
1335 Kains Ave. (homeowner)