

**Late Correspondence 2**  
**Received after Noon**  
**Wednesday, May 6, 2026**  
**Planning Commission**

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Angela Swartz <angelaswartz531@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2026 8:57 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Re: SFGATE story: Outcome of last night's meeting

Following up on these questions!

Angela Swartz

[LinkedIn](#)  
[angelaswartz.com](https://angelaswartz.com)  
[x.com/angelaswartz](https://x.com/angelaswartz)

On Thu, May 7, 2026 at 2:37 PM Angela Swartz <[angelaswartz531@gmail.com](mailto:angelaswartz531@gmail.com)> wrote:

And do you know when this might go to the City Council?

On Thu, May 7, 2026 at 11:31 AM Angela Swartz <[angelaswartz531@gmail.com](mailto:angelaswartz531@gmail.com)> wrote:

One more question, with the state's density bonus law, how tall could these buildings actually be?

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Thanks so much, Justin!

On Thu, May 7, 2026 at 11:28 AM Planning Commission <[PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov)> wrote:

Hi Angela,

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The Commission also recommended that qualifying development projects be reviewed through an Administrative Use Permit process, which involves a less intensive level of review than other development approvals. In addition, the Commission recommended a set of design standards intended to improve commercial storefronts and enhance the pedestrian environment at the ground-floor level.



Justin Horner

Principal Planner  
Planning and Development, Land Use Division  
1947 Center St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704  
**Phone:** (510) 981-7476  
**Email:** [jhorner@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:jhorner@berkeleyca.gov)  
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**Sent:** Thursday, May 7, 2026 8:55 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission <[PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov)>  
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## Planning Commission

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**From:** Toni Mester <tonimester@sonic.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2026 8:15 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** May 6 vote

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.

Hi Justin and Alisa,

Would you kindly send me the vote of the Planning Commission Wed. May 6. I tuned into the meeting via Zoom and had a hard time hearing the final decision. The audio is not great, and it was a struggle to hear the audience mic and also the commissioners. I couldn't hear Darryl Owens comments at all.

At any rate, the vote is what's important right now, and lots of people want to know, so I will share it with my community contacts.

Thanks so much,  
Toni Mester D2

## Planning Commission

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**From:** kelly hammargren <kellyhammargren@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2026 12:10 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** May 6, 2026 Planning Commission meeting

**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.

Hello Justin Horner and Alisa Shen,

Could you please post the presentation on the Planning Commission webpage with the Meeting Agenda.

Could you please forward the final motion.

Could you please forward the May 6, Planning Commission meeting transcript.

Could you please consider posting the meeting audio recordings as is done for the Council Committees. The recordings are put in a folder with the four to five most recent available for listening.

Thank you

kelly hammargren

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Angela Swartz <angelaswartz531@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 7, 2026 2:37 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
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The Commission also recommended that qualifying development projects be reviewed through an Administrative Use Permit process, which involves a less intensive level of review than other development approvals. In addition, the Commission recommended a set of design standards intended to improve commercial storefronts and enhance the pedestrian environment at the ground-floor level.



**Justin Horner**

Principal Planner  
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1947 Center St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704  
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## Planning Commission

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**Sent:** Thursday, May 7, 2026 8:56 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** SFGATE story: Outcome of last night's meeting

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[LinkedIn](#)  
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## Planning Commission

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**From:** Planning Dept. Mailbox  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 7, 2026 8:13 AM  
**To:** Ramakrishnan, Uttara; Horner, Justin; Shen, Alisa  
**Subject:** FW: Planning height limits on College, Solano and No. Shattuck

Forwarding public comment.

**Jim Bondi**, Associate Management Analyst  
City of Berkeley, Department of Planning & Development  
1947 Center St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 981-7428  
[JBondi@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:JBondi@berkeleyca.gov)  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/>

### Fraud Alert

A phishing scam is targeting Berkeley clients with fraudulent invoices. Take steps to protect from fraud:

- Before replying to invoice requests, verify that the message is from a legitimate email address ending in @cityofberkeley.info or @berkeleyca.gov
- The Berkeley Planning and Development Department will never call you for payment and will never ask you to wire funds
- If you are unsure about a request for payment you have received, please email [planning@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov). Report fraud attempts to Berkeley Police at (510) 981-5900

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**From:** Aileen Paterson <paterson.aileenh@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 5:55 PM  
**To:** Planning Dept. Mailbox <Planning@berkeleyca.gov>  
**Subject:** Planning height limits on College, Solano and No. Shattuck

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“I would like for Berkeley to walk its talk [of] progressive, welcoming values as a sanctuary city,” Commissioner Savlan Hauser said, “and house people in these high-amenity, high-opportunity neighborhoods [where] we know people want to be.”

I think what the city needs to do is create NEW high-amenity, high-opportunity neighborhoods, instead of rewarding developers and installing tall simple boxes throughout Berkeley with little green space for people to enjoy, little city-cooling trees, and little curb appeal.

Aileen Paterson  
1490 Rose St  
Berkeley

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Zoom <no-reply@zoomgov.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 10:39 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Cloud Recording - Planning Commission - May 6 is now available

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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Hi Planning Commission,

Your cloud recording is now available.

Topic: Planning Commission - May 6  
Date: May 6, 2026 05:55 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

[View Detail](#)

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You can copy the recording information below and share with others

<https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/rec/share/QmRGoJBJ9HIh6bUT4cCLH-XG9LePZP1jtPvNnm1ptliUOnEihbppzcP3CDUTRR4.egozLc71IEkopgl0>

Passcode: s?PDJf6#

Thank you,  
-The Zoom Team



+1.888.799.9666

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55 Almaden Blvd  
San Jose, CA 95113

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Julie Nachtwey <julieanachtwey@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 10:42 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Hearing tonight WED May 6  
**Attachments:** Peter Calthorpe letter Elmwood rezoning 5.5.26.pdf

**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.

TO: Justin Horner, secretary Planning Commission  
RE: Planning Commission hearing tonight WED May 6, 6:30pm  
SUBJECT: Please read the letter ATTACHED BELOW

### LETTER FROM PETER CALTHORPE

Good morning. Last evening TUES May 5 we received a compelling letter from Peter Calthorpe, reknown architect and city planner. He has been advised of the proposed upzoning in The Elmwood and other corridors along North Shattuck and Solano. His letter dated May 5, 2026, speaks for itself.

### LETTER ATTACHED BELOW

Please -- can you be sure to forward Calthorpe's letter to each member of the Planning Commission before tonight's hearing?

This is critical to our community and the future of Berkeley. You are welcome to forward this entire email.

### EVERYBODY'S BACKYARD

During last Sunday's Music in the Elmwood festival, my team and I spoke to more than 350 patrons of The Elmwood local shopping district. More than half of these folks were not from Berkeley but from Oakland, Piedmont, San Leandro, Castro Valley, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, Martinez, Benicia, Daly and City Vallejo. The Elmwood is also frequented by out-of-state family members visiting students at UC Berkeley. The neighborhood shopping districts everyone frequents also includes North Shattuck, Solano and 4th Street. The sales tax collected by our small businesses contributes to the City of Berkeley's funding.

Please confirm receipt of this email.

SCROLL DOWN for Calthorpe letter

Thank you.

Julie Nachtwey

Berkeley resident since 1980

--

Julie Nachtwey

[julieanachtwey@gmail.com](mailto:julieanachtwey@gmail.com)

510.376.7440

## Planning Commission

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**From:** janet hurwich <drhurwich@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2026 6:26 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Elmwood's College Avenue corridor

**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 Berkeley Planning Commissioners

I am strongly opposed to the dramatic proposal to develop multi-story highrise residential buildings in Elmwood's College Avenue corridor.

The Elmwood district on College Avenue is an attractive corridor full of thriving small businesses. Large high-rise buildings in this area are totally out of character and will destroy its ambiance. But this is the least of the problems.

Sidewalks on College Avenue are already overcrowded making walking extremely hard for people with disabilities, for those who are older or who have children. Traffic is heavy and parking all but impossible.

Other negative consequences include increased noise, trash and air pollution.

The character of the district is that of a small local neighborhood shopping area - similar to 4th Street and other local commercial districts in Berkeley and Oakland. The charm of the Elmwood district will be destroyed by high rise apartments, and this charm is what guarantees the continuing success of this business district. Thriving small businesses are important to Berkeley

From a safety point of view, the Berkeley Fire Station trucks on Russell St at College already have difficulty in getting through College Avenue in emergencies. The street is narrow - a major corridor through south Berkeley - and very congested. It intersects with Ashby Ave, another major thru-corridor out of the city.

South Berkeley residents will be seriously impacted in an emergency evacuation. Another unintended consequence will be **negative impacts on OAKLAND'S evacuation routes** as the Rockridge district is a continuation of the College Avenue Elmwood corridor.

The intense development in this long-standing neighborhood shopping corridor is a poorly conceived and bad idea for the people who live, work or have to drive or walk through the Elmwood. Please do not allow this plan to go forward.

Sincerely

~Janet Hurwich, Ph.D

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Calthorpe, Peter <Peter.Calthorpe@hdrinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 6:47 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Cc:** Klein, Jordan; Berkeley Mayor's Office; All Council  
**Subject:** Elmwood rezoning

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To Whom It May Concern:

Forty years ago, I wrote a book called *Sustainable Communities* which launched a legion of movements to rethink the way we shape cities. Ten years later I authored *The Next American Metropolis* which helped create the Congress for New Urbanism and idea of Transit Oriented Development.

Over the years I worked for HUD developing the HOPE VI program to build over 160,000 units of the nation's decaying affordable housing and for the State of California as principal author of *Vision California 2050*. This plan was the first statewide land-use study to identify polices to create affordable and environmentally sustainable forms of infill growth. I also developed the University Ave Plan for Berkeley, the first time the idea of infill housing on moribund strip commercial land was tested at scale. It took time but it was a success.

Over these years, I think I have learned a few things about sustainable development, housing, and equity.

Recently I helped conceive, analyze, and shape state legislation to address the workforce housing crisis in California -- AB 2011. Adopted in 2022 this bill rezones 'by right' all strip commercial lands in the state to mixed-use, mixed-income multifamily housing. It mandates that such mixed-income infill be located in developments on roads of at least 4 lanes.

Regarding the rezoning of the Elmwood, I think one has to look at it from two perspectives —urban design and social equity. From an urban design perspective, it is inappropriate to build midrise buildings on two lane streets. Not only is it functionally difficult, but it doesn't respect the context of the street or meet any urban design standard that I've ever come across. AB 2011 establishes height limits based on street width, starting at 4 lanes. It is completely consistent with the vision for Shattuck and Solano -- but not Elmwood.

The second issue is social equity in areas that consist of largely wealthy housing. Elmwood offers little opportunity to address that with midrise development given the small parcel sizes. If up-zoned it would result in high end, big-view condos -- not diverse housing. Even though the city has an affordable inclusionary element, the in-lieu fee will allow developers to sift the affordable units away from Elmwood. Adding high end housing to Elwood doesn't increase equity. In fact, the small parcels on College will cost a lot to build, further frustrating the goal of affordability.

For decades I have designed places that try to replicate the sensitive and rare local retail chemistry that exists in Elmwood. The place has so much history, human scale, and life -- a rare place in America today. It should be preserved and nurtured.

Finally, the potential development is trivial in the context of real needs. My conclusion is that from an urban design and functional standpoint the rezoning is inappropriate. From an equity standpoint it is at best symbolic and at worst counterproductive. It seems more like an act of retribution, not intelligent problem solving. I support the focused option if it only includes 7-11 and Post Office sites. And the height limit is 4 stories.

Peter Calthorpe

**Peter Calthorpe**

2095 Rose Street, Suite 201  
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[Peter.Calthorpe@hdrinc.com](mailto:Peter.Calthorpe@hdrinc.com)

[calthorpe.com](http://calthorpe.com)

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Alexander Moore <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 4:10 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Please allow seven stories base zoning across all of North Shattuck, College, and Solano

**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.

Planning Commissioners,

Dear Chair Marthinsen and Members of the Berkeley Planning Commission,

I am writing to urge you to recommend the simple, seven-story version of the Corridors Zoning Update to the City Council, and to do so now, without further delays.

The voters spoke when they installed a pro-housing Council, and City Council could not have been clearer when five of those nine members directed staff to study a seven-story base zoning for North Shattuck, Solano, and College Avenues. That is the same standard the city is establishing on San Pablo Avenue and other major corridors: a reasonable, consistent floor for transit-served streets in a city facing a severe housing shortage.

Yet the draft ordinance before you tonight falls far short of that direction, proposing as few as four stories in some places and limiting upzoning to a handful of handpicked "opportunity sites" rather than applying it across the full corridors. Additionally, the proposed direction introduces additional classes of properties with the opportunity sites, complicating, rather than simplifying the zoning patchwork, as well as picking winners and losers on individual parcels. The Commission should push back on that scaling-back and send Council a recommendation that honors the direction it was given.

I also urge the Commission to send this to Council promptly. This process has been underway for well over two years, and is part of Berkeley's Housing Element commitment. There have been multiple community workshops, surveys, study sessions, subcommittee reports, and Council briefings. The city has the analysis it needs and additional study will not resolve the opposition of entrenched interests. It will only delay the homes Berkeley urgently needs. The longer this sits, the longer residents wait for housing, and the longer Berkeley remains out of compliance with its own Housing Element commitments to the state.

Some have argued that upzoning to seven stories will actually reduce affordable housing production by removing developers' incentive to trigger the state density bonus. However, that perspective fails to take into account the economic reality that housing development operates on razor-thin margins that have been getting worse and worse. Further restricting the size of projects will push more projects into infeasibility. Reducing zoned capacity is not a recipe for producing more subsidized housing; it is a strategy for producing less housing of every kind. Fewer homes in these desirable areas mean that renters and prospective buyers will remain locked into bidding wars over scarcer options. The way to improve affordability in these corridors is to allow more homes, period.

On the business vitality question: Solano, North Shattuck, and the Elmwood are neighborhood retail districts. Their appeal is that they are not surrounded in a sea of parking lots like big box stores, so they depend on walk-in customers from nearby homes and transit. Today, those blocks are surrounded by some of the most expensive, lowest-density housing in Berkeley. Adding hundreds of new homes above and adjacent to these corridors means more neighbors who walk to Zachary's, to Cheeseboard, to the Elmwood Café. Sales tax analysis has shown that access to strong foot traffic sustains vibrant small businesses. More residents living on the corridor is a great way to achieve that.

Finally, I want to emphasize the fair housing dimension of this decision. These are some of Berkeley's highest-resource neighborhoods: areas with excellent schools, safe streets, good air quality, strong transit access, and abundant parks and amenities. These are precisely the enclaves that California's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing law is meant to open up. For decades, exclusionary zoning pushed disadvantaged residents towards the freeway and out of Berkeley in general. The Corridors rezoning is one of Berkeley's most concrete opportunities to begin reversing that history and allow a broader slice of people to live near the resources and opportunities concentrated in these neighborhoods. Watering down the proposal to placate opponents who have and continue to benefit from their exclusivity would be a moral failure, not just a policy one.

Please recommend seven-story base zoning along the full extent of the three corridors, minimize setbacks and stepdowns that would reduce buildable capacity, preserve ground-floor retail requirements where appropriate, and send this to Council without further delay. Berkeley made a commitment. It is time to honor it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Alexander Moore  
District 5 Resident

Alexander Moore  
awmoore@gmail.com  
815 SAN LUIS RD  
BERKELEY, California 94707

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Rachel Heyman Resnikoff <rachel@resnikoff.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:41 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Comment re: up-zoning

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I live in the Elmwood. College Ave here is ONE LANE IN EACH DIRECTION. It's already backed up and slow moving most of the time. Tall buildings will create a shade tunnel for blocks.

MEANWHILE, there is an empty lot at College and Claremont that was been abandoned years ago. Granted, it needs environmental remediation given it used to be a gas station, but on the other hand it's probably cheap, given how long it's been empty.

I STRONGLY SUGGEST that some developer or other should be encouraged to build on this property, certainly before causing the abandonment of the unique culture of the retail shops in the Elmwood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rachel Resnikoff  
Tunnel Rd. Berkeley

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Margots999@sonic.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 3:20 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Speaker selection at commission meetings.

**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 attended a commission meeting recently and was surprised to see that the chair randomly selected 10 speaker cards and only allowed them to speak to items on the agenda.

So it is very clear that the commission is not interested in what people have to say but only wishes to appear democratic.

Some people might have some wisdom that commissioners might benefit from hearing, but commissioners will never know.

You may call this democratic but it is only pretense.

Margot Smith  
510-486-8010  
510-660-5508 (Text)  
[Margots999@sonic.net](mailto:Margots999@sonic.net)

## Planning Commission

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**From:** Planning Dept. Mailbox  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 2:53 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** FW: The CZU and the PITCH proposal

Hi PC staff, forwarding this public comment intended for you.

**Jim Bondi**, Associate Management Analyst  
City of Berkeley, Department of Planning & Development  
1947 Center St., 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510) 981-7428  
[JBondi@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:JBondi@berkeleyca.gov)  
<https://berkeleyca.gov/>

### Fraud Alert

A phishing scam is targeting Berkeley clients with fraudulent invoices. Take steps to protect from fraud:

- Before replying to invoice requests, verify that the message is from a legitimate email address ending in @cityofberkeley.info or @berkeleyca.gov
- The Berkeley Planning and Development Department will never call you for payment and will never ask you to wire funds
- If you are unsure about a request for payment you have received, please email [planning@berkeleyca.gov](mailto:planning@berkeleyca.gov). Report fraud attempts to Berkeley Police at (510) 981-5900

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**From:** dnacrady@aol.com <dnacrady@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 2:28 PM  
**To:** Planning Dept. Mailbox <Planning@berkeleyca.gov>  
**Subject:** The CZU and the PITCH proposal

**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 Planning Commission,

Please adapt the Mark Humbert initiated PITCH proposal. The currently proposed CZU does not reflect the specific challenges and realities of the Elmwood neighborhood.

We are in no way opposed to thoughtful infill but far better sites exist for the much needed additional housing in our district. The Elmwood is a small ecosystem of diverse shops on a very narrow corridor that serves a very large neighborhood of local and regional pedestrians, families and students. Additionally, College Avenue is one of the few cross town streets and would be wildly impacted by the building of these outsize structures (likely to the detriment of the existing shops). The PITCH proposal is a viable and far superior alternative to the current CZU.

Thank you for your consideration!  
Adele Crady

## Planning Commission

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**From:** H. Hernandez <hh@imagists.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2026 1:27 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Treat all Commercial areas fairly!

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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.

Planning Commission members -

As a District 5 resident of Berkeley, living blocks away from the North Shattuck area, and 1/2 mile from the Golden Block of Solano Ave., I'm writing to ask you to implement the Corridor Zoning plan without restriction to certain parcels.

The Corridor Zoning is, more than anything else, a step towards fair housing across the city - addressing the legacy of restrictive zoning that kept certain people from living in our most highly resourced neighborhoods.

The current proposal to implement zoning only for certain 'mixed use opportunity areas', i.e., specific parcels in each area, is unlike anything that was done for other areas in Berkeley. Doing so would reinforce the history of privilege and exclusion that Corridor Zoning is intended to lessen and run contrary to Council's original direction. It also breaks the goals in the Housing Element of 'achieving consistency among all transit and commercial corridors, especially between formerly red-lined areas and higher-resource areas'.

This proposal is also unnecessary. I understand the concerns regarding preserving our historic businesses. But the City staff's excellent analysis shows that few sites in each district are likely to be developed - usually because the lots are too small or already owned by an established long-term business.

The fair and appropriate proposal would be to apply the street width based zoning (as shown on Table 2 of this week's staff report) equally in each district. I urge you to implement that promptly for Council's consideration and approval.

Regards,  
[your name]