

**Late Correspondence**  
**Received After Noon**  
**Wednesday March 11, 2026**  
**Planning Commission**

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** Moni Gangopadhyay <moni.district1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:59 AM  
**To:** Horner, Justin; Planning Commission  
**Cc:** evepapajak@gmail.com; merylsiegal@gmail.com; el\_compay\_nando@yahoo.com; monilaw7@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Comments on San Pablo Specific Plan for March 18, 2026 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.

To the Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the San Pablo Specific Plan. As a West Berkeley resident who lives near and bikes, shops, walks and drives along this corridor, I welcome a robust exchange between city planners and city residents, visitors and corridor users.

The San Pablo Corridor is an excellent location for siting new housing in Berkeley and West Berkeley is in great need of more open spaces for our community to commune and engage with our environment. The San Pablo Specific Plan has the potential to achieve both goals, and both goals can be realistically realized in our great district.

San Pablo Avenue has great potential - it is a major transportation corridor with connectivity to other major transportation corridor, its many useful shops and businesses, and its abundance of single story buildings, a few of which are underutilized or vacant. However, given the permanent nature of upzoning (given State laws), it is critical that the city's zoning plans for this corridor are done in a thoughtful, nuanced and targeted way that achieves the city's noble objectives without inadvertently undermining them.

I am an experienced policymaker with one of the State's largest agencies. I have created, shaped, and led the State's policy efforts in billions of dollars worth of program affecting millions across the State. As a keen observer of policies that shape our world, I know when policies are designed well and when they are designed to fail. Please accept my comment in the spirit of collaboration and with an understanding behind their context and my background.

### **1. Zoning for housing must be done strategically; at nodes**

Upzoning of San Pablo Avenue must be done in a targeted fashion, focusing on nodes rather than applied broadly. If applied to large swaths of the corridor it becomes a blunt instrument to achieve more housing and will ultimately do more harm than good. The fact of the matter is upzoning raises land values, driving up rents for small businesses and residents who face runaway rental prices from landlords eager to financial benefit from upzoning. This not only drives out low- and moderate income residents and small businesses, it also makes it much more expensive to build housing that can be priced or rented out at affordable rates. For the same reason, upzoning on San Pablo Avenue should be capped at 5 stories, similar to the new(ish) Jones Street apartments.

Think about it - in New York City (where I'm from), there are five boroughs. The borough with the tallest, most dense housing is also the borough with the most expensive housing. We can learn from this.

## **2. Focus on Affordability**

After the growth that Berkeley has seen in housing in very recent years, it clear that the housing crisis is dominated by a lack of affordable housing. The City of Berkeley should require affordable units in new buildings planned for the San Pablo Corridor. As the Planning Commission notes, low income tenants have a preference for living in a mixed income neighborhood. This is a mixed income neighborhood and a perfect opportunity to zone for affordable housing. According to the Planning Commission's findings "affordable housing buildings in mixed income neighborhoods leads to measurable economic and health benefits for low-income tenants." Many of us in West Berkeley would welcome low- and moderate income neighbors such as ourselves.

The Planning Commission states that building providing affordable units on-site in market rate buildings costs a developer twice as much as paying in-lieu fee (at 5); however; the Commission has not provided any evidence of this. Regardless, if this is even true, the in lieu fee does not change the cost of building affordable units. It merely transfers the cost to another developer.

## **3. Sidewalk easements must be consistent with Berkeley's Pedestrian Plan**

It is great news that the City Council is supportive of policies aimed at widening sidewalks to create safer, more comfortable, and active pedestrian environments. The quality of life and safety of our residents is of great importance to this city, which has seen many traffic injuries of late.

As in my previous comments, please require sidewalk depths that are consistent with Berkeley's Pedestrian Plan.

## **4. Implement the Community benefit of POPOS.**

West Berkeley should not just be the site of concrete development. This is not fair to our part of the city that provides so many benefits to our city. Zoning should include requirement for POPOS. The Planning Commission states that "City Council was not supportive of policies requiring POPOS." However, I have had further conversation with a City Council member who shared that it was very late in the evening, they were tired and they did not get to adequately engage on this issue. They are correct. This City Council started their evaluation of San Pablo Corridor plans after 9 or 10 pm. Please allow for proper and adequate due process and community and Council engagement before leaving out POPOS.

Sincerely,  
Moni Gangopadhyay, District 1

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**Moni Gangopadhyay for District 1**  
[Moni.District1@gmail.com](mailto:Moni.District1@gmail.com)

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** Berkeley Neighborhoods Council <bnc50@berkeleyneighborhoodscouncil.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:57 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Cc:** Berkeley Neighborhoods Council  
**Subject:** Comments on the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

**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,

We agree with the members of Beautiful San Pablo and the businesses on San Pablo Avenue that the city exercise caution in its decision to rezone SPA for heights and to use the density bonus to achieve affordable housing in the corridor. Inclusive housing that incorporates affordable units has been shown to work on the corridor already as well as on North Shattuck .We respectfully ask that at this time, no upzoning is needed and should not occur, and certainly not at the 7 story level.

New Development in the area is welcome and is beginning. **Please do not create anymore structures that will only be for a single economic demographic (and will be in violation of AB 686) . We have seen the state density bonus work for SPA and we ask that you allow the state density bonus to continue to play out on the corridor to create affordable housing. That includes any condo structures that are built in conjunction with the SPASP. Affordable condos included in a condo structure would be a welcome addition to creating an integrated, highly resourced, area that is walkable and has amenities for the wider community.**

We are asking that the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan be designed carefully in proportion to the street. We have the success of developments on SPA under the current 4 - story zoning including the “Jones” housing and the BUSD Workforce housing. These are 5 and 6 story buildings. If the city creates a 7 -story zoning cap it will be counterproductive to having on-site affordability requirements and other community benefits. The latter is one of the main corner stones of the proposed San Pablo Avenue plan that Mr. Rivera set out to create. Community benefits and amenities need to be part and parcel of development in this formerly red-lined area.

That said, we are looking forward to some places, perhaps at street nodes where there is Privately Owned Public Space. We see this on the ground floor level as a way to create an Avenue that will be a star of the city, a show-case for the city. And we hope you will agree. The idea of undulating heights can be achieved currently with the state density bonus, and not radical changes in the base height. Using the state density bonus can give us the affordable housing needed for the City’s goals.

The CZU consultants produced a compelling table, demonstrating that the mid-rise construction type can be fully realized with a 4-story base, reaching 6 stories with a 50% State Density Bonus, which has been a viable and successful formula, or 7-8 stories with inclusion of higher affordability. Why change it and *reduce* the incentives to create affordable housing? Trying to spur investment with more lenient conditions may be futile, as development is currently stalled due to high interest rates and market saturation. Construction is cyclical based on the current economic situation. We do not believe that more should be handed to developers without community benefits at this stage of the plan.

Finally, regarding inclusive economic integration in housing units — that is including the density bonus to CREATE affordable housing and social mobility has been demonstrated for the younger generation of the Hope IV project. We continue to support economic integration, affordable units provided by the density bonus as a way this can be achieved.

Thank you.

Berkeley Neighborhoods Council Exec Board

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** meryl siegal <merylsiegal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:47 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** San Pablo Avenue Plan comments

**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,

Comments on the SPASP for Wed, March 18th meeting.

San Pablo Avenue, a formerly red-lined area, has has periods of great liveliness, and perhaps, because of the pandemic, it has been neglected and some areas left to be distressed. Because of these conditions it is incumbent upon the city to be extremely careful in its development and to not create more distress and economic segregation in the area. Development will happen (perhaps with) municipal changes regarding empty storefronts, but definitely with neighborhood amenities, and we welcome the ideas of including community meeting places, such as gyms, theaters, etc. in housing developments open to the wider community and adding life and amenities to the wider neighborhood.

We already have the highest number of very, very low income single structure housing in the city as well as a lively encampment. New Development in the area is welcome and is beginning. **Please do not create anymore structures that will only be for a single economic demographic (and will be in violation of AB 686) . We have seen the state density bonus work for SPA and we ask that you allow the state density bonus to continue to play out on the corridor to create affordable housing. That includes any condo structures that are built in conjunction with the SPASP. Affordable condos included in a condo structure would be a welcome addition to creating an integrated, highly resourced, area that is walkable and has amenities for the wider community.**

We are asking that the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan be designed carefully in proportion to the street. We have the success of developments on SPA under the current 4 - story zoning including the "Jones" housing and the BUSD Workforce housing. These are 5 and 6 story buildings. If the city creates a 7 -story zoning cap it will be counterproductive to having on-site affordability requirements and other community benefits. The latter is one of the main corner stones of the proposed San Pablo Avenue plan that Mr. Rivera set out to create. Community benefits and amenities is what we have been promised.

That said, we are looking forward to some places, perhaps at street nodes where there is Privately Owned Public Space. We see this on the ground floor level as a way to create an Avenue that will be a star of the city, a show-case for the city. And we hope you will agree. The idea of undulating heights can be achieved currently with the state density bonus, and not radical changes in the base height. Using the state density bonus can give us the affordable housing needed for the City's goals.

The CZU consultants produced a compelling table, demonstrating that the mid-rise construction type can be fully realized with a 4-story base, reaching 6 stories with a 50% State Density Bonus, which has been a viable and successful formula, or 7-8 stories with inclusion of higher affordability. Why change it and *reduce* the incentives to create affordable housing? Trying to spur investment with more lenient conditions may be futile, as development is currently stalled due to high interest rates and market saturation. Construction is cyclical based on the current economic situation. We do not believe that more should be handed to developers without community benefits at this stage of the plan.

Finally, regarding inclusive economic integration in housing units — that is including the density bonus to CREATE affordable housing and Social mobility, our research shows the positive growth of intergeneration achievement when housing units are **economically integrated**, and the impact of this on the younger generation in the Hope IV project.

<https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/hope-iv-affordable-housing/> - "...the stated goals for people and places were worth the cost: long-term educational achievement, job placement and earnings and private investment."

"In January, [Opportunity Insights published a report](#) examining the long-term effect of the HOPE VI program. Using sophisticated methodology and research techniques, the report made a series of blockbuster findings:

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- "HOPE VI reduced neighborhood poverty rates by attracting higher-income families to revitalized neighborhoods but had no causal impact on the earnings of adults living in public housing units."
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- 
- HOPE VI had a measurable impact on the life opportunities and employment outcomes and earnings of children living in economically integrated developments. "Children raised in revitalized public housing units earned more, were more likely to attend college, and were less likely to be incarcerated."
- 
- 
- 
- The remarkable improvements in children's outcomes were driven in large part by changes in social interaction: "HOPE VI increased interaction between public housing residents and peers in surrounding neighborhoods and increased earnings more for subgroups with higher-income peers.""
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These results are new and contradict the 2012 City of Berkeley Survey as well as the 2012 Annie E. Casey foundation report submitted by the Planning Department. Please let us know if you need to have our analysis of these documents.

Finally, we have seen in areas such as Oakland MacArthur BART, and 4th street south of University that density automatically does not create vibrancy. That will have to be designed into the SPASP. We hope that open space (POPOS), community benefits for the first floor of projects (medical, retail, the excellent idea of maker spaces, etc.) will enliven San Pablo Avenue and make it a safe, vibrant and walkable area. Here are the important design concepts of CPTED will ensure an excellent outcome to have SAFETY built into all housing design.

Here is a the International CPTED Association's outline of its principles: <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED> plus a clear outline of design standards which support these principles: [https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2021-02/2013%20Crime%20Prevention%20Through%20Environmental%20Design\\_0.pdf](https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2021-02/2013%20Crime%20Prevention%20Through%20Environmental%20Design_0.pdf)

Sincerely,

Meryl Siegal

Co-founder, Beautiful San Pablo

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 11:24 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission; Horner, Justin  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** URGENT: LATE COMMUNICATION: March 18, 2026 – Item 10A & 10B – Evidence from APN 055-1878-00701  
**Attachments:** HCE26-000763-MASTER REGULATORY DEFICIENCY MATRIX-24212425  
DURANT-55-1818-00701.pdf

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**CONFIDENTIAL & PROTECTED RECORD**  
**ATTENTION: PLANNING COMMISSION SECRETARY**  
**MANDATORY REDACTION REQUEST:**

Pursuant to **BMC 13.79.060** and **CA Gov. Code § 7922.525**, I formally request that all personal identifiers (name, phone, email) be **REDACTED** from this communication before it is posted to any public website or Supplemental Communications packet.

**Dear Secretary Horner and Planning Commissioners,**

I am a participant in the City Auditor's Whistleblower Program submitting evidence for **Agenda Item 10A (Technical Edits)** and **Item 10B (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan)** provided by the Case HCE #26-000763 | APN 055-1878-00701. It's a relevant case of a controversial project ZP#2024-0162 **currently** being processed by the **Planning Department**. Documentation of demolition ineligibility under **BMC § 23.326** suggests the City may incur an **\$8.45M liability** if it fails to reconcile these regulatory discrepancies and safety omissions before further entitlements are granted.

The specific amendments in **Item 10A** involve technical edits to **Title 23** and residential district rules. I am providing a concrete, real-life case study to demonstrate how current "enforcement uncertainty" in these codes is being used to bypass life-safety mandates. To ensure the integrity of the Zoning Ordinance, I urge the Commission to codify the following clarifications:

**1. Resolution of Parcel Aggregation "Uncertainty" (25 CCR § 42)**

Current enforcement is stalled by "uncertainty" regarding the 16-unit threshold on multi-structure parcels. APN 055-1878-00701 has 19 **aggregated units** over 3 separate structures on a **single contiguous parcel**. Technical Edits must clarify that the "Apartment House" mandate applies to the entire legal lot/parcel, not individual structures.

- **Statutory Definition (HSC § 17920(a)):** An "Apartment house" is any structure or portion thereof intended for living. Per 25 CCR § 42, the mandate applies to the "premises"—the entire contiguous parcel.
-

- **Administrative Precedent (25 CCR § 42):** The State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) interprets this mandate to apply to the total unit count on a single contiguous parcel under unified ownership. Splitting a 19-unit parcel into "separate structures" for safety staffing is a prohibited "piecemeal" enforcement strategy
- 
- **Fire Code Integration (CFC § 907.6.4):** Multiple buildings on a single property are defined as "zones" of a unified life-safety system.
- 
- **Judicial Precedent (*Cox v. City of Oakland* (2025) 17 Cal.5th 362):** The California Supreme Court affirmed that multiple structures on a single deed remain a single legal unit.
- 

**Policy Request: Title 23 must explicitly prohibit "piecemeal" enforcement.** The City cannot recognize **19 units** to grant lucrative **high-density entitlements (ZP#2024-0162)** while simultaneously claiming "uncertainty" to evade the safety staffing required for that same unit count. Allowing separate structures on a single parcel to be treated as independent "**sub-16 unit**" entities to avoid an onsite manager is a direct violation of State Law.

## **2. Ending "Paper-Only" RHSP Fraud (BMC 19.40.080)**

Technical loopholes allow for "rubber-stamping" of RHSP Self-Certifications without physical entry, facilitating documented administrative fraud (CPC § 115).

- **The Hazard:** This lack of verification allows "Safety Vacuums" to persist—including smoke alarm impairments on exit corridors and hazardous appliances—until they become life-safety emergencies.
- 
- **Policy Request:** I request a Mandatory Physical Verification Trigger be added to Technical Edits for high-density parcels. Specific rules must empower HCE and BFD to cite non-compliance immediately, rather than facilitating cycles of fraudulent self-certification.

## **3. Safety Infrastructure in "By-Right" Zoning**

As the Commission moves toward ministerial ("by-right") approvals, Technical Edits must codify that streamlined permitting does not bypass HSC § 17920.3 standards. High-density models must include functional, onsite emergency access points (CFC 506.1) and onsite infrastructure to prevent response failures, especially in light of **smart door locks and their battery maintenance**.

## **4. Nonconforming Structure Replacement Standards**

Technical Edits to Section 23.324.050 must ensure that the replacement of appliances or building systems (such as the uncertified stoves documented in HCE #26-000763) does not bypass CPC § 1211.7 or SB 330's replacement housing protections.

## **Relevancy to Item 10B (San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan):**

APN 055-1878-00701 provides a "real-world" warning that the Plan's goals for increased density are being undermined by the following safety infrastructure gaps:

- **High-Density vs. High-Safety Standard:** The Commission cannot promote "higher-intensity development" without closing the "Responsible Person" loophole. This 19-unit parcel is the "test case" showing that when the City grants high-density entitlements, it currently fails to enforce the staffing required to manage that density safely.
- 
- **Objective Design vs. Actual Maintenance:** "Objective Design Standards" (ODS) are useless without Objective Maintenance Standards. I urge the Commission to include language in the Specific Plan that ties high-density design to functional, onsite maintenance infrastructure, **rather than the "offshore call center" model with non-local skeleton crew.**
- 
- **Safety in the Public Realm:** "Safety" in a Specific Plan must extend from the sidewalk into the dwelling units. HCE #26-000763 documents near-fatal injuries and multiple gas leaks occurring *inside* multiple units due to unmaintained hazardous appliances and "Safety Vacuums" imposed on individual units. **One unit can impact the entire building.**
- 
- **Integrity of Regional Hubs:** As a Priority Development Area (PDA), the integrity of the planning process is compromised when regional housing goals are fulfilled by landlords who use "paper-only" self-certifications to bypass physical inspections.
- 

**Service of Evidence:**

The Master Regulatory Deficiency Matrix is attached. The full 18-Exhibit Evidence Packet—detailing gas emergencies and retaliatory threats (CIV § 1942.5) used to suppress these safety reports—is on file with the City Attorney, Auditor, and Housing Advisory Commission. It is available for your confidential review.

Sincerely,  
Safety Concerns

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:52 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission; All Council; Berkeley Mayor's Office; San Pablo Plan; Rivera, Robert  
**Subject:** SPASP, Re-Segregation of Berkeley: is it greed or just being lazy?

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
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You need to carefully consider the outcome of the city's SPASP and the CZU. The city's promotion of an in-lieu affordable housing "City Density Bonus", and the suggestion to just upzone to developer preferred height of 7 stories so developers do not need to use the State Density bonus will result in undermining integration and effectively re-segregate our city. Currently, the use of the State Density Bonus in our new residential buildings, is our best mechanism to *ensure integrated affordable housing units* directly with market rate housing, and get affordable units dispersed across the city.

The building approved at 2109 Virginia at Shattuck illustrates how developers using existing zoning with the State Density Bonus get us the heights and affordable units that the city says it wants. It will integrate residents of multiple socioeconomic backgrounds in one building, and it brings affordable housing units to a high resourced neighborhood that lacks its fair share of affordable housing. The State Density Bonus with existing zoning is working, even in a tough financial market for developers. Do not undermine this with citywide permanent zoning changes.

The [HOPE VI study](#) shows that in order to fight the negative effects of historic segregation and poverty, it is essential to fully integrate communities in ways that promote the most social interaction across socioeconomic lines. This is not just disadvantaged people having access to higher resources that comes from living in a nicer neighborhood. But rather, the key factor is strong direct social ties to the people of different socioeconomic backgrounds. This can not happen when people are segregated into different isolating buildings, or if neighborhoods aren't designed to foster human interaction.

In addition, the City must implement geographic equity guardrails on the placement of in-lieu-fee funded housing to prevent concentration of low income affordable housing developments in formerly redlined, and struggling and disinvested city neighborhoods. The city must adopt a plan to ensure lower income residents can move into high-resourced neighborhoods, and to *fight concentration of poverty* and repeating lines of segregation. [You can read more discussions on Geographic Equity in consideration in SF: <https://missionlocal.org/2025/04/sf-map-homeless-shelters-restrictions/> ]

The city is obligated under [AB 686 to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing](#), to fight patterns of segregation, fight concentration of poverty, and to invest in transforming disinvested areas into higher resourced areas of opportunity.

I ask you to fight re-segregating our city by using zoning to actively foster integration and social interaction, within buildings, across neighborhoods, and throughout our city. Leave zoning heights so that they do not

Item 12: Correspondence  
Late Correspondence  
Planning Commission  
March 18, 2026

undermine the utilization of the State Density Bonus. Implement geographic equity in locations of in-lieu fee funded housing. Use zoning to foster diverse integrated vibrant communities, not to re-segregate our city.

-Aimee Baldwin  
Beautiful San Pablo

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:14 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission; All Council; Berkeley Mayor's Office; Rivera, Robert; San Pablo Plan  
**Subject:** The purpose of urban design in city planning; SPASP

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Dear planners of our city's future,

I am resending a letter below that I sent in 2024 as a reminder, or introduction for those of you who are new, that design choices can have an effect on how people act, and interact, in our public spaces. I am not inventing this concept of CPTED in urban planning and design, it is an internationally recognized design strategy.

I have heard numerous comments at city meetings that make the assumption that streetscape vibrancy is an automatic result of population density and nothing else. To fight this lazy dismissal of the importance of intentional design and civic policy, please visit the commercial spaces at the base of the new development at MacArthur BART, or take a walk starting at Pete's coffee on 4th street, and continue south past University to where the new high-density housing is, and observe where the most pedestrian and social activity is. Residential density alone doesn't create vibrancy or social interaction.

I have also recently sent you information on the [Hope VI study](#) of integrated living's increased social interactions across socioeconomic line's positive effects on outcomes of disadvantaged children (higher levels of education, higher employment, higher earnings, reduced incarceration). Please keep in mind that for the sake of all our futures, we need to *design* a city and enact supporting policies that will foster social interactions across socioeconomic lines. Support local stores and businesses, prevent vacancies, integrate arts and cultural uses, support community oriented activities and uses, prevent high-amenity buildings that act as privatized fortresses that residents never leave, design streetscape to support pedestrian and commercial activity. We've given this feedback over the past 2+ years.

The San Pablo Ave Specific Plan can not only focus on increasing the number of residential units, but must focus on community building through design and policy.

The SPASP is an opportunity to lift up this disinvested commercial corridor that transforms entire districts that suffer from injustices of decades of segregation and neglect from the city, into a thriving example of a successful diverse, well integrated, vibrant 15-minute city, where everyone of us all of us would want to raise our children and live out the rest of our lives.

-Aimee Baldwin  
Beautiful San Pablo

Our community group, Beautiful San Pablo, has been working with community stakeholders, and participating in city meetings and development discussions, towards our goal of creating a vibrant, pedestrian destination on San Pablo, which can support local businesses, support livelihoods, provide sustenance, and create a strong resilient community for everyone in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Berkeley needs to incorporate principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) into all citywide Objective Design Standards. As we move away from relying on policing for community safety, CPTED can inherently improve safety for all community members, simply by the design of its buildings and streetscapes.

CPTED principles maximize connection of a building's occupants with the street and the surrounding community, supports Natural Surveillance by enhancing streetscape vitality and activity, increasing opportunities for "eyes on the street," – direct sight-lines between building occupants and public spaces– and it improves safety by creating a sense of common responsibility over public spaces.

In order to create street vitality and strong community bonds, building design should enhance and support connection between individual building occupants and the greater community, which requires inviting, welcoming, active, and well maintained street level design.

There are some aspects of CPTED that are out of the hands of Objective Design Standards, such as filling vacant commercial storefronts, but we have to start with the physical shapes of our urban landscape, so I am here to ask the planning commission mandate that the designs of all Berkeley's building and streetscapes maximize CPTED principles.

Here is a the International CPTED Association's outline of its principles: <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED> plus a clear outline of design standards which support these principles: [https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2021-02/2013%20Crime%20Prevention%20Through%20Environmental%20Design\\_0.pdf](https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2021-02/2013%20Crime%20Prevention%20Through%20Environmental%20Design_0.pdf)

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** lauren parsons <laurengae@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 8:58 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** San Pablo Specific Plan

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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 Justin Horner,

As a long-term west Berkeley homeowner, I think it is unnecessary to rezone San Pablo Ave.

Current zoning is four stories, five with first floor commercial. With 100% density bonus, buildings can be 8 stories, which is tall enough for this area where there are a number of smaller established commercial business buildings in an area surrounded by smaller sized houses on modest lots.

The Berkeley Unified School District building is 6 stories and 100% affordable and at 6 stories and no setback from sidewalk already looks imposing.

We residents want a safe, vibrant, walkable San Pablo with businesses that not only support needs of local residents, but also attract others to our area.

The pandemic took a toll on many San Pablo Ave. businesses, leaving unpleasant vacancies persisting for years. This area has suffered more than other Berkeley business district corridors. And this area also has enough accommodations for homeless, Golden Bear Homes and nearby Dorothy Day House. West Berkeley residents deserve nice amenities like more affluent Berkeley neighborhoods.

I urge you to maintain current zoning on San Pablo.

Respectfully,

Lauren Parsons

Sent from my iPhone

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 11:57 AM  
**To:** All Council; Berkeley Mayor's Office; Planning Commission; Rivera, Robert  
**Subject:** San Pablo Ave Specific Plan

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This is a short recap of the vision from our community group, Beautiful San Pablo, for the future of San Pablo Ave, which we have repeated to the planners and consultants working on the SPASP during the 2+ past years.

The City of Berkeley must ensure that all DEVELOPMENTS FACILITATE AND SUPPORT A DIVERSE, INTEGRATED, THRIVING COMMUNITY

Rezoning of Berkeley's largest corridor, San Pablo Ave, must implement design standards and enact all measures necessary to support a thriving community as a condition to zoning changes –not as an afterthought or broken promise. Zoning must particularly include measures to:

**Foster Social Integration** no privatized-amenity-fortress buildings, support public gathering spaces, activate welcoming public engagement at street level of buildings, prevent empty storefronts

**Ensure Demographic Diversity** all incomes, ages, professions, social status, heritages, genders, abilities... mixed together within buildings and blocks. Not all rentals. Include condos, especially BMR condos and opportunities for first time buyers to purchase..

**Support Small Businesses** they are what make the commercial district commercial, integral to community, walkability, vibrancy, safety, access to resources; protect legacy businesses and small businesses; support *15 minute city* design.

**Ensure Community Safety and Health** reduce environmental pollutants, maintain walkability, create access to nature, include well maintained tranquil public spaces, improve lighting and street crossings, prevent dilapidation/litter/vandalism, ensure access to natural light and fresh air, adopt CPTED objective designs....

**Respect Histories** acknowledge and support the needs of legacy and existing residents, businesses, and artisan professions, repair historic and ongoing systemic disinvestment, actively reduce gentrifying or segregated outcomes while bringing new neighbors and improved liveability to the corridor.

The SPASP should be approached as a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform San Pablo Ave into a diverse, thriving vibrant walkable commercial corridor; finally addressing decades of segregation and disinvestment.

-Aimee Baldwin

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 11:47 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission; All Council; Berkeley Mayor's Office; Rivera, Robert  
**Subject:** Creating high opportunity integrated neighborhoods

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Dear Council, Mayor, and Planning Commission,

Over the past 2+ years, I have repeatedly voiced the importance of **diversity and integration** in the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan, and that the plan must emphasize designing housing and community amenities **to facilitate interactions**, diversity, integration, and inclusion across all socio-economic groups, professions, races, gender identities, ages, interests, political viewpoints...etc.

I do not see a focus on diversity and integration in the SPASP draft, or the CZU plans, but rather see a spectrum of concessions to asset-owning classes to permanently improve the profitability of developments by reducing the incentive of integrated inclusionary affordable units of the State Density Bonus, and instead offer to allow developers to further segregate of market rate housing from affordable units.

There is no citywide plan to guarantee that in-lieu-fee financed affordable housing won't be concentrated into our formerly redlined communities, and there is no plan to bring financially disadvantaged residents to historically exclusionary communities of Berkeley.

The lack of commitment to diversity and integration as a foundation of our citywide rezoning actions is incredibly disappointing.

I am sending you evidence from long term study about the importance of integration in successful outcomes for disadvantaged children.

We must fight the lingering problems of historic systemic segregation and oppression with **active intentions to foster integration and diversity**.

There was a program/project called Hope VI that studied outcomes of low-income children in high opportunity diverse and well integrated communities. It's what we've been asking the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan to do for our historically redlined and disinvested community.

Here are a couple articles, but you can find other writing about it if you search for Hope VI

<https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/hope-iv-affordable-housing/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/28/opinion/american-dream-poverty.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

A short summary says:

- HOPE VI had a measurable impact on the life opportunities and employment outcomes and earnings of children living in **economically integrated developments**. "Children raised in

revitalized public housing units earned more, were more likely to attend college, and were less likely to be incarcerated.”

- The remarkable improvements in children’s outcomes were driven in large part by changes in **social interaction**: “HOPE VI increased interaction between public housing residents and peers in surrounding neighborhoods and increased earnings more for subgroups with higher-income peers.”

*Together, these results indicate that distressed public housing projects were essentially islands that had limited social interaction with nearby communities. The HOPE VI program built a bridge to surrounding communities, allowing public housing residents to benefit from interacting with those residents. When those peers were higher-income, children gained more from the HOPE VI treatment, perhaps because of changes in their behaviors, aspirations, or connections to economic and social opportunities.*

With our rezoning of San Pablo Ave and CZU, we have an opportunity to correct past injustices of segregation by designing inclusive, diverse, integrated communities that will foster social interaction between people of all walks of life. Please do not let a currently stalled financial market for developers dictate long term permanent zoning changes across the city that will only deepen segregation or further concentrate poverty in disadvantaged areas.

-Aimee Baldwin

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** Gael Alcock <gael@glotrans.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 7:12 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Subject:** San Pablo Specific Plan meeting

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Dear Justin Horner,  
I'm sending a copy of my letter in response to my councilmember's newsletter announcement.  
Gael

Dear Councilmember Taplin, Council, and Mayor,

Because affordable housing is my top priority, I will go to the March 18 presentation on San Pablo Specific Plan "which identifies goals, policies, and programs that support both citywide and regional goals for housing production and affordability"

Here are my questions:

Do we have separate citywide and regional goals?  
Have we fulfilled the state mandate for 4000 affordable units and 5000 market rate units?

I have heard planners and councilmembers declare increasing supply of housing will make housing affordable. I've heard them claim that this has already happened for renters, that upzoning has been a success. Will the presenters verify these claims ?

According to the City of Berkeley Strategic Plan , January 2018, the city's top priority in a list of 10 goals is to "Create affordable housing and housing support services for our most vulnerable community members"

My question is, how will the San Pablo Specific plan serve this goal?

Sincerely,  
Gael Alcock  
D2 resident

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 15, 2026 10:38 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission; All Council; Berkeley Mayor's Office  
**Subject:** AB 686 Affirmatively Furthring Fair Housing and SPASP

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Dear Council, Mayor, and Planning Commission,

As a reminder to your obligations to fulfill the requirements of AB 686, I am sending California State Law AB 686, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, adopted in 2018.

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=8899.50](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&sectionNum=8899.50).

(1) “Affirmatively furthering fair housing” means taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all of a public agency’s activities and programs relating to housing and community development.

(2) “Public agency” means all of the following:

(A) The state, including every state office, officer, department, division, bureau, board, and commission, including the California State University.

(B) A city, including a charter city, county, including a charter county, city and county, and a redevelopment successor agency.

(C) A public housing authority created pursuant to the Housing Authorities Law (Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 34200) of Part 2 of Division 24 of the Health and Safety Code).

(D) A public housing agency, as defined in the United States Housing Act of 1937 (codified at 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1437 et seq.), as amended.

(E) Any other political subdivision of the state that is a grantee or subgrantee receiving funds provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Community Development Block Grant program, the Emergency Solutions Grants program, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, or the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS program.

(b) (1) A public agency shall administer its programs and activities relating to housing and community development in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing, and take no action that is materially inconsistent with its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing.

(2) A public agency shall have a mandatory duty to comply with paragraph (1). This paragraph is a clarification of existing law and shall not be deemed a change in previous law enacted by Chapter 958 of the Statutes of 2018.

(c) This section shall be interpreted consistent with the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Final Rule and accompanying commentary published by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development contained in Volume 80 of the Federal Register, Number 136, pages 42272 to 42371, inclusive, dated July 16, 2015. Subsequent amendment, suspension, or revocation of this Final Rule or its accompanying commentary by the federal government shall not impact the interpretation of this section.

(d) In selecting meaningful actions to fulfill the obligation to affirmatively further fair housing, this section does not require a public agency to take, or prohibit a public agency from taking, any one particular action.

*(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 357, Sec. 1. (AB 1304) Effective January 1, 2022.)*

Our community members of Beautiful San Pablo expect the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan's rezoning for housing and community development on San Pablo Ave (SPA) will ultimately fight segregation and transform our historically disinvested avenue into thriving areas of opportunity, to make SPA full of successful, welcoming, walkable commercial districts like the ones the CZU intends to rezone.

-Aimee Baldwin  
Beautiful San Pablo

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** Yerasi Maeda <maedayerasi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 15, 2026 8:40 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission; All Council  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Elmwood Homeowner in Support of Commercial Corridor Zoning Update

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Good afternoon,

I am a multigenerational, long-time resident of Berkeley and a homeowner in the Elmwood neighborhood (near Piedmont Ave. and Russell St.). I am writing to the City Planning Commission and City Council to express my strong support for the Commercial Corridor Zoning Update.

I believe this initiative is an important step toward advancing fair housing, addressing long-standing development barriers along Solano, North Shattuck, and College Avenues, and revitalizing these commercial corridors. Thoughtful growth can strengthen high-resource neighborhoods by increasing foot traffic, supporting small businesses, and improving the long-term vibrancy and sustainability of these areas. Many residents in my community see this as a positive opportunity for Berkeley to grow more vibrantly, responsibly, and inclusively.

If approved, I would also encourage the City to prioritize excellence in architectural design. New development should reflect high standards of modern, world-class architecture—projects that contribute positively to the public realm and elevate Berkeley’s built environment. Too many recent projects have felt like missed opportunities. This update provides a chance to ensure that future development is not only functional and equitable, but also beautiful, enduring, and worthy of Berkeley’s reputation. I encourage the City to look to the beautiful and thoughtful projects being built in leading cities around the world as inspiration for the level of design excellence Berkeley should expect.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our city.

Concerned Resident  
Elmwood homeowner

## Late Correspondence

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**From:** Robert Prinz <robert@bikeeastbay.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2026 11:28 AM  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**Cc:** Ben Gerhardstein  
**Subject:** public comment - March 18, 2026, Berkeley Planning Commission meeting  
**Attachments:** 03.13.2026 Bike East Bay comment letter - Berkeley San Pablo Ave Specific Plan.pdf

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Hello, please accept and distribute the attached correspondence from Bike East Bay and Walk Bike Berkeley, as a public comment for the March 18, 2026, Berkeley Planning Commission agenda item "10 B. San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan".

Thank you,



**Robert Prinz | Advocacy Director**

Pronouns: he/him

Mail: PO Box 1736 Oakland, CA 94604

Office: 466 Water Street Oakland, CA 94607

P: (510) 845-7433 x5 | E: Robert@BikeEastBay.org

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March 13, 2026

Re: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

This is a public comment on behalf of Bike East Bay and Walk Bike Berkeley for the following March 18, 2026, Berkeley Planning Commission meeting item:

10 B. San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

We appreciate the work that has gone into this planning effort, and we support the goal of enabling up to 6,750 new housing units within this Specific Plan Area, almost double the baseline. Denser and infill housing development has the potential to foster a more walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly environment, providing people with more options to get around without a car.

However, people make transportation lifestyle decisions based on the infrastructure and facilities available to them when they move in. As such, it is highly important for Berkeley to move quickly on transportation plans for San Pablo Ave, ahead of development construction. Otherwise, many more of the new residents will bring cars with them, exacerbating the existing traffic congestion and safety issues on San Pablo Ave.

For this reason, we are extremely concerned that the Specific Plan recommendation T-P.2 (“Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue”) suggests holding off on even studying potential bicycle and bus lane opportunities on San Pablo Ave until fully after the Alameda CTC corridor project from Oakland to South Berkeley is complete and has been analyzed.

#### T-P.2 Future Transportation Study Needs for San Pablo Avenue

The Alameda CTC Bus and Bike Lanes Project currently ends at Heinz Street and San Pablo Avenue. Through previous planning and engagement efforts, the community expressed concerns regarding feasibility and the significant roadway changes that would be required to extend dedicated bus or bicycle facilities through Berkeley along San Pablo Avenue. These challenges include removal of all or some portions of the medians which hold mature street trees. With a growing population and reduced off-street parking requirements for mixed-use developments, the demand for alternative transportation options is likely to increase. This suggests that the City may need to revisit the design of San Pablo Avenue in the future.

This Specific Plan recommends that the City, in partnership with Alameda CTC and Caltrans, explore a potential follow-up planning and design process to evaluate multimodal conceptual design options for San Pablo Avenue. This study would serve as a follow-on to, and performance evaluation of the investments already planned as part of the Alameda CTC San Pablo Avenue corridor projects and would make additional recommendations based on that analysis. This potential future process could study a range of potential bike and bus improvements, including bus rapid transit, bus only lanes, and separated bike lanes. Depending on development activity in Berkeley and other San Pablo Avenue communities there may also be some future interest in studying the potential for streetcar service.

This Alameda CTC project was originally estimated for construction in 2022-24, then was delayed to a 2026 construction start, but most recently as of Summer 2026 was delayed again with a current construction estimate of 2030-2033. However, we believe that even this long timeline is optimistic given the quarter billion-dollar cost estimate, the current federal funding climate, and the fact that no construction funding has been raised so far.

SAN PABLO AVENUE CORRIDOR BUS-BIKE LANES PROJECT

FUNDING SOURCES (\$ x 1,000)		COST ESTIMATE BY PHASE (\$ x 1,000)	
Local - Measure BB	\$8,076	Scoping	\$657
Federal (OBAG) <sup>1</sup>	\$15,900	PE/Environmental	\$3,400
Regional	\$200	Final Design	\$15,100
TBD	\$230,631	Right-of-Way	\$5,650
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$254,807</b>	Construction	\$230,000
		<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$254,807</b>

<sup>1</sup> One Bay Area Grant 3

  

SCHEDULE BY PHASE		
	Begin	End
Scoping	Spring 2022	Fall 2025
Environmental	Winter 2025	Winter 2027
Design/Right-of-Way	Winter 2027	Summer 2030
Construction	Spring 2030	Spring 2033

Note: Public outreach occurs at each phase of the project.

  


AC Transit bus along San Pablo Avenue.

**STATUS**

It is very possible that it may take another 10 years or more before construction on this Alameda CTC project is complete. We have been in communication with staff in Oakland and Emeryville to encourage near-term design upgrades ahead of the county project, especially given that this stretch of San Pablo Ave sees on average at least one traffic fatality every year.

*If Berkeley waits for this process to be finished and analyzed before initiating a transportation study for San Pablo Ave, it will reasonably be two decades before any major design updates are completed.*

**Instead, we suggest that the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan recommend for Berkeley staff to begin seeking funding for a study of a potential bikeway and bus lanes, as a high priority starting in 2027 after the plan is adopted, and not wait for the Alameda CTC project completion.** Some relevant grant opportunities such as the Caltrans Sustainable Planning Grant program are available every year. San Pablo Ave would likely be very competitive for this program, given its inclusion in Berkeley’s current bicycle plan update draft as a “Low Stress Bikeway – Complete Street Corridor Study” recommendation. Albany’s Active Transportation Plan update currently underway also had a San Pablo Ave bikeway study ranked as the highest priority project citywide, based on public survey results.

Thank you for receiving these comments, and for prioritizing this update to the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan draft.

Robert Prinz  
Advocacy Director, Bike East Bay  
robert@BikeEastBay.org

Ben Gerhardstein  
Walk Bike Berkeley

*[Walk Bike Berkeley](#), an all-volunteer group founded by Berkeley residents, advocates to make walking and biking in Berkeley safe, low-stress, and fun for people of all ages and abilities. We want a healthy, just, and sustainable transportation system in Berkeley.*

*[Bike East Bay](#), is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that mobilizes by bike to build thriving communities across Contra Costa and Alameda Counties that are joyful, safe, and inclusive. We are building a movement for safe streets and connected, thriving communities where people come first, not cars.*