

Late Correspondence

Received before Noon Tuesday, June 2, 2026

Planning Commission June 3, 2026



Lack of important details

From Sarah Pedemonte <sarahpedemonte@gmail.com>
Date Tue 5/26/2026 6:40 PM
To Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

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Hello Mr Homer,

While I can see the value in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Zoning and Plan Amendments for smoother transport and needed housing, I am concerned about the increase in both particulate and noise pollution.

Over the last 10 years increased traffic and paused traffic at stop lights has significantly increased pollution for those of us in residences close to San Pablo Avenue. Some of my neighbors have also suffered from the construction of large multi-storied residences being built and decreasing the natural light they receive in their homes.

How will the City of Berkeley protect us from these unwelcome, unhealthy side effects of their plans?
Why are these important details not addressed publically?

Thank you,

Sarah Pedemonte



Support for Berkeley taking bold action to allow more housing along its commercial corridors

From Ren Zaro Fitzgerald <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Date Wed 5/27/2026 5:42 PM
To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

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 Planning Commissioners,

My name is Ren Zaro Fitzgerald, I am the Chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission, but writing on my own behalf. I live two blocks from College Avenue in the Elmwood area. I am writing to strongly support the City Council's direction to set seven-story base zoning for North Shattuck, College, and Solano Avenues. I commend Council for taking a real stand on housing and urge you to fully implement this vision. I support at least seven stories' base zoning and ask you not to water down the proposal with setbacks, stepdowns, and other requirements that would reduce the number of homes that could get built on any parcel. Many of these parcels are oddly shaped or present other obstacles to development, so they need whatever flexibility we can provide.

Seven-story zoning could contribute meaningful amounts of housing to address affordability and create mixed-income neighborhoods where teachers, service workers, young families, and long-time residents can live. Seven stories is transit-appropriate for corridors with AC Transit service and is standard in successful transit-oriented neighborhoods throughout the Bay Area.

Seven-story base zoning will also support local businesses with more foot traffic, reduce car dependency to support our climate commitments, and open Berkeley's opportunity-rich neighborhoods to everyone. We have a legal and a moral duty to affirmatively further fair housing.

I urge you to support the Council's clear direction without reduction or compromise. What's at stake is having people in our commercial districts to keep our businesses alive and thriving.

And frankly, the city that invented the deeply racist practice of single-family zoning is far behind. All this zoning change will do is legalize us catching up. It's a small, but necessary step in the right direction.

Respectfully,
Ren Zaro Fitzgerald
District 7 resident

Ren Zaro Fitzgerald
Imfitz07@icloud.com
2424 Haste Street
Berkeley, California 94704



Support for Berkeley taking bold action to allow more housing along its commercial corridors

From William Baab <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Date Wed 5/27/2026 6:39 PM
To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

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 Planning Commissioners,

We are writing to strongly support the City Council's direction to set seven-story base zoning for North Shattuck, College, and Solano Avenues. We commend Council for taking a real stand on housing and urge you to fully implement this vision. We support at least seven stories' base zoning and ask you not to water down the proposal with setbacks, stepdowns, and other requirements that would reduce the number of homes that could get built on any parcel. Many of these parcels are oddly shaped or present other obstacles to development, so they need whatever flexibility we can provide.

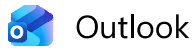
Seven-story zoning could contribute meaningful amounts of housing to address affordability and create mixed-income neighborhoods where teachers, service workers, young families, and long-time residents can live. Seven stories is transit-appropriate for corridors with AC Transit service and is standard in successful transit-oriented neighborhoods throughout the Bay Area.

Seven-story base zoning will also support local businesses with more foot traffic, reduce car dependency to support our climate commitments, and open Berkeley's opportunity-rich neighborhoods to everyone. We have a legal and a moral duty to affirmatively further fair housing.

We urge you to support the Council's clear direction without reduction or compromise. What's at stake is having people in our commercial districts to keep our businesses alive and thriving.

Respectfully,
Will Baab

William Baab
willbbaab@gmail.com
600 William Street #411
Oakland, California 94612



San Pablo Ave Development

From Gael Alcock <gael@glotrans.com>

Date Fri 5/29/2026 9:21 AM

To Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc All Council <council@berkeleyca.gov>; Taplin, Terry <ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <Mayor@berkeleyca.gov>

 3 attachments (442 KB)

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Dear Commissioners, Mayor, and Councilmembers,

I hope you will consider how new apartments on San Pablo will impact parking on side streets. Compare the number of cars on tree shaded Parker St one block from San Pablo, to the number of cars reaching several blocks east from the recently built six -story apartment built at Blake and San Pablo. The apartment residents use the street instead of their building's garage. The car provides an extra room, and the street becomes a place to socialize with their apartment neighbors and their dogs.



Also consider how heights of apartments will impact the buildings beside and behind, and advise leaving at least a driveway's distance between properties, like these nearby houses.

Sincerely,
Gael Alcock,
Blake Street resident



San Pablo Upzoning decision

From Peggy Radel <peggy@paradel.org>

Date Mon 6/1/2026 8:54 PM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>; mayor@berkeleyca.gov <mayor@berkeleyca.gov>; rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov <rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>; ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov <ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov <bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov>; itregub@berkeleyca.gov <itregub@berkeleyca.gov>; sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov <sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov>; bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov <bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov>; clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov <clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov>; mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov <mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov>

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 Council and City Staff,

Do not vote to codify the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan as currently proposed. It is treating our district, once again, with discriminatory density giveaways. North Shattuck Ave is not to be treated this way, so we are being burdened discriminatorily compared to Shattuck. You cannot possibly say that San Pablo is “richer” in resources than North Shattuck.

Do not kill legacy businesses by codifying the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan currently proposed; this city government has shown it is incapable to encouraging small businesses. Retain sufficient parking to permit businesses to survive both for their stock deliveries AND for customer traffic. Do not discriminate against people who are unable to use your pet form of transport.

You all have been advocating for a total development free-for all, while mouthing the word “equity”. That linkage is nothing further than propagandistic lies. You do not have the majority of your constituents’ best interests in mind- none of you were elected with a resounding “mandate” for this scale of development.

Please retain sanity in development and do not trash our town. No in-lieu payments and no 20 story buildings. Do not pass the San Pablo Specific plan as currently proposed.

Peggy Radel

District 1 resident



SPASP

From Joel Myerson <joelcob@casahopkins.com>

Date Mon 6/1/2026 9:51 PM

To Planningpc <planningpc@berkeleyca.gov>

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 Commissioners,

I am writing to you about the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. A 75-foot height limit on San Pablo will either result in:

1. Buildings of 7-8 stories with no affordable housing, or
2. Buildings of 23 stories or higher with 15% very low income and 15% moderate income provided for "affordable" housing.

By changing the San Pablo zoning to 75 feet, developers will be able to build to that height— with no affordable housing! Why would you ever be in favor of that? Buildings of 7- 8 stories can be built already, if they include a specific amount of affordable housing in their buildings. This is precisely that happened at Virginia and Shattuck, where an 8-story building was recently approved even though it was zoned for only 3 stories. In order to build that high, the developer was forced by the state density bonus law to provide some inclusive affordable housing.

Regarding 23-story buildings, that is exactly what has happened at 2029 University Avenue, where a 23-story building was approved in an area zoned for 75 feet using the state density bonus law. Certainly, the community around San Pablo would not consider a street full of 23-story buildings part of the "vibrant, pedestrian-friendly area" that was promised. If you are truly in favor of creating 75-foot height limits on San Pablo Avenue, you should be discussing the implications as I have laid them out— rather than pretending they will not happen.

Regards.
Joel Myerson
District 1



Affordable Housing San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

From Yvette Hudson <yvette@hudsonfish.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 8:51 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

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Dear Commissioners,

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Fw: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

From Horner, Justin <JHorner@berkeleyca.gov>
Date Tue 6/2/2026 8:54 AM
To Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

 **Justin Horner**
Principal Planner
Planning and Development, Land Use Division
1947 Center St., 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
Phone: (510) 981-7476
Email: jhorner@berkeleyca.gov
In Office Days: Monday – Thursday

Remote Day: Friday

*The Permit Service Center (PSC), including the zoning counter, is open between 8:30 am – 2:30 pm (final check in at 2:00 pm).
Monday through Thursday.*

All permit-related and Zoning services are available online. Please visit us [online](#) for more information.

From: Planning Dept. Mailbox <Planning@berkeleyca.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 8:49 AM
To: Horner, Justin <JHorner@berkeleyca.gov>; Shen, Alisa <AShen@berkeleyca.gov>
Cc: Klein, Jordan <JKlein@berkeleyca.gov>; Hersch, Anne <AHersch@berkeleyca.gov>
Subject: FW: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Hi Justin and Alisa, forwarding public comment, cc Jordan and Anne since the sender copied the Councilmembers.

Jim Bondi, Associate Management Analyst
City of Berkeley, Department of Planning & Development
1947 Center St., 5th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 981-7428
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. Report fraud attempts to Berkeley Police at (510) 981-5900

-----Original Message-----

From: lauren parsons <laurengae@hotmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2026 8:13 PM

To: Planning Dept. Mailbox <Planning@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc: Kesarwani, Rashi <RKesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>; Taplin, Terry <ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; Bartlett, Ben <BBartlett@berkeleyca.gov>; Tregub, Igor <ITregub@berkeleyca.gov>; O'Keefe, Shoshana <SOKeefe@berkeleyca.gov>; Blackaby, Brent <BBlackaby@berkeleyca.gov>; Lunaparra, Cecilia <CLunaparra@berkeleyca.gov>; Humbert, Mark <MHumbert@berkeleyca.gov>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <Mayor@berkeleyca.gov>

Subject: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

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1. I support 5 story zoning on San Pablo with specific sites designated for 7-stories. Such zoning would better integrate new construction with existing structures.
2. If the city can create a special Berkeley TOD for San Pablo Ave. that follows AB 79 to include affordable and low income housing as part of upzoning height to 7 stories, that would be an acceptable compromise. My concern is height of buildings exceeding 7 stories, and the confusion many of us have about the work arounds that can add building height. We should not be confused about what to expect in our neighborhood.
3. With the trend allowing developers to offer very limited or no parking on site, this places the burden on surrounding residential neighborhoods unfairly and only benefits developers.
4. West Berkeley residents want safe, walkable neighborhoods with local amenities. There are many new young families with children who have moved into the area. We do not want to be the designated area for things unpleasant or controversial that other Berkeley districts do not want.

Sincerely,

Lauren Parsons

Sent from my iPhone



San Pablo Specific Plan needs improvements

From Matt O'Brien <mattobosino@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 9:57 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>; mayor@berkeleyca.gov <mayor@berkeleyca.gov>; rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov <rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>; Taplin, Terry <ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov <bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov>; Tregub, Igor <itregub@berkeleyca.gov>; O'Keefe, Shoshana <sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov>; bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov <bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov>; Lunaparra, Cecilia <clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov>; mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov <mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov>

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 and City Council:

I am writing to you to explain why the current proposal to upzone San Pablo Avenue is problematic and not in the interests of the residents and businesses on and around San Pablo and to urge you to come up with a better proposal.

First, we need inclusionary housing, rather than **ghettoization and segregation** and putting all low income units in buildings for low income people. To that end, upzoning to seven stories is a bad idea as it does not require affordable inclusionary housing, and the in-lieu fee should be abolished and developers should be required to build low income units rather than pay buyouts to the City, which does not build housing and which consumes in-lieu fees with administrative costs and delays, and by the time units get built, costs have increased and the value of the fees decreases, matching funds notwithstanding.

Second, **businesses on San Pablo need to be protected** from the building frenzy that has forced businesses out of the downtown. Businesses depend on there being **parking**. You must ensure lots of parking or you will bring about the demise of San Pablo small businesses, for which the City should offer **protections**. We don't want a repeat of what happened downtown where due to City policies which foster real estate speculation have led to many businesses being forced out and blocks of empty storefronts.

Third, there should be **no residential on the ground floor**. Ground floor needs to be retail and/or community-oriented public spaces to ensure a lively neighborhood and healthy commerce in the area.

Finally, there should be **parks and open spaces and landscaping that promote community vibrancy and health**. Study after study have shown that trees and beautiful landscaping are conducive to health. The residents along San Pablo deserve to have community amenities.

Please do better than lazy, blanket upzoning that will have many adverse effects on local businesses and residents. Why not adopt a spot zoning plan as the Planning Commission has proposed for North Shattuck, Solano, and the Elmwood? It seems **discriminatory** that those neighborhoods can have spot zoning while forcing blanket upzoning on West Berkeley.

Yours for a better, inclusive Berkeley,
Matt O'Brien

Item 12 - Late Correspondence
Planning Commission
June 3, 2026



Item 12 - Late Correspondence
Planning Commission
June 3, 2026



Item 12 - Late Correspondence
Planning Commission
June 3, 2026





Outlook

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

From kelly hammargren <kellyhammargren@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 10:19 AM

To planningPC@berkeleyca.gov <planningPC@berkeleyca.gov>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <mayor@berkeleyca.gov>; Taplin, Terry <tmaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov <rkesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>; Brent Blackaby <bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov>; bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov <bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov>; Tregub, Igor <itregub@berkeleyca.gov>; sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov <sokeefe@berkeleyca.gov>; clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov <clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov>; mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov <mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov>

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Dear Planning Commissioners, Mayor Ishii, Councilmembers and Planning Department Staff.

As I review the rewritten and in someways gutted San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, I am left with what happened to all the community work to make San Pablo a great walkable neighborhood with mixed income housing, inclusionary affordable housing?

Community input is thrown out while as per the document introduction the developers take over the planning and design. The planner who worked with the community was removed and replaced. This kind of action is not unexpected, but clearly unfortunate and regrettable as whatever decisions are made will impact the community in the decades to come.

San Pablo Avenue community has been treated like the unwanted stepchild to be dismissed and diminished to be replaced by bland gentrification and elimination of lower income households with 100% affordable housing blocks held out as some kind of segregation promise that may or may not ever come while property is scooped up for investing.

November 6, 2025 was exemplative of the disdain for community input when the City Council spent hours on the Corridors Zoning Update and declined to give the San Pablo Avenue community equal time, taking up the presentation after 10:30 pm when the public had tired and left.

San Pablo Avenue is a 2.35 mile long corridor from city boarder to city border. And while months and years has been spent on this the last minute changes in leadership without explanation has left the community with disappointment and distrust.

Despite the pretty dressed up plan in the thick document What happened to all the community input to support the diversity that makes San Pablo unique? The plan is feeling like a blandification (the process of making something uninteresting).

Changing the zoning to seven stories across the board means developers reach the construction sweet spot without even one unit of affordable housing in the building. That pushes all the affordable housing into segregated 100% affordable buildings in that somewhere place.

Offering an alternative to the state density program which provides for a buyout of affordable inclusionary housing is a gift to developers that leaves the community without affordable inclusionary housing and the nonprofit as always scraping together the 90% that is left to build that 100% affordable housing that segregates low income households into some unknown location with whatever property is leftover after development has scooped up what can turn the 20% - 30% profit that developers and investors now seek.

The SPASP needs requirements to meet "visions" for family housing and that deserves more attention than a reconfigured plan slapped down for evening approval.

The impact of potential corridors of high-rises on the existing tree survival and tree canopy requires further review. And while some pages are devoted to trees they do not get to the basic questions of supporting biodiversity in corridors of shadow. This is really a problem. Gingko trees do not support any native birds or insects, not one! They are a terrible biodiversity choice.

Why is only live theater allowed and motion picture theaters prohibited?

A multi-use theater like The New Parkway in Oakland would be perfect for this neighborhood.

<https://www.thenewparkway.com/about-2/>

kelly hammargren



Planning Commission packet

From Toni Mester <tonimester@sonic.net>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 10:22 AM

To Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>; City Clerk <clerk@berkeleyca.gov>; All Council <council@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc Klein, Jordan <JKlein@berkeleyca.gov>; Horner, Justin <JHorner@berkeleyca.gov>

 1 attachment (17 KB)

Upzoning threat to affordable.docx;

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To: Berkeley Planning Commission, Mayor Ishii and the City Council

From: Toni Mester D2

June 2, 2026

The Up-Zoning Threat to Affordable Housing in Berkeley

In the discussion of zoning changes to three corridors and San Pablo Avenue, officials and the community have failed to adequately consider how upzoning will undermine the city's efforts to encourage development of affordable housing.

According to the last housing element [update](#), Berkeley is far below our RHNA goals in providing low income housing. Many have been created in [density bonus projects](#), while others comprise 100% affordable projects such as The Maudelle Shirek apartments (2001 Ashby) and The Grinnell (2527 San Pablo Avenue).

The need for affordable units is demonstrated by the huge application rate whenever a lottery for a new project opens. 2001Ashby got over 9,000 applications, and no doubt the BUSD workforce housing project at 1717 San Pablo Avenue, now accepting applications, will be flooded with submissions.

The current height standards that have produced these apartments are mostly 3 and 4 stories, incentivizing the use of the density bonus to achieve an **optimum height of 6 or 7 stories**, which is the limit of wood frame construction over a concrete podium. A taller building requires more expensive materials and components.

In practice, most developers use the density bonus to satisfy the state required BMRs and "fee out" (pay the affordable housing mitigation fee) on the difference between those and the city's 20% inclusionary mandate.

Allowing a base project of 5-7 stories encourages developers to build 100% market rate projects and pay the mitigation fee on the entirety to the housing trust fund to

subsidize affordable projects elsewhere.

This option is problematic for social, ethical, and legal reasons, including violation of the state mandate to affirmatively further fair housing or to achieve equity among neighborhoods with a heavy handed up-zoning of all of San Pablo Avenue.

A higher base also welcomes projects of excessive mass and height (via the density bonus and [AB 1287](#)) that can overwhelm fragile business districts, transportation infrastructure, and ability of first responders to ensure health and safety of residents. These allowances are the result of political pressure from developers to provide maximum flexibility and deregulation to overcome negative, transient market conditions, which is a poor substitute for long-term planning.

Up-zoning increases capacity but also **raises the price of land**, which puts non-profit affordable housing developers at a disadvantage in competing for available parcels.

Affordable housing developers have been further hurt by the removal of rent control exemptions in Measure BB (2024) that could cost affordable housing projects in excess of [\\$100K](#) a year

A Compromise Solution

The City can use the ready-made standards of the State's new TOD (transit oriented development) law [SB79](#), which requires affordable units with increased heights. Although these allowances are available to developers in limited areas, there is no prohibition against a city adopting them elsewhere. Since these standards have been reviewed and passed by the legislature, they should meet approval in a state mandated review.

In addition, the Council should put a revision of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance on the ballot to re-instate the registration exemption for non-profit developers and expand exemptions to all owner occupied duplex parcels to encourage home divisions and other new units that might not meet the Measure Q exemptions, which have successfully incentivized the building of hundreds of new ADUs.

A [new study](#) has found that ADUs are not only expanding housing opportunities but are also surprisingly affordable.



Please keep SPA buildings human-scale!

From Nancy Rader <nraderrhome@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 10:33 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc Brent Blackaby <BBlackaby@berkeleyca.gov>

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 Commissioners,

Please promote human-scale buildings and affordable housing in the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan – do not raise the current height limit!

Buildings of 7- 8 stories can be built now **IF** they include affordable housing on-site, thanks to the state density bonus law. If the height limit is raised to 75 feet, developers will likely build 7-8 stories with **no** affordable housing. Should developers choose to use the state density bonus law, they could build 23 stories or more, which is simply out-of-scale outside of downtown and is not necessary to meet our housing requirements. Should the height limit be raised, the impacts should be carefully evaluated and addressed prior to such action.

Please keep Berkeley a **mixed-income, livable** city!

Nancy Rader
1198 Keith Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708



Please keep SPA buildings human-scale!

From Nancy Rader <nraderhome@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 10:33 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc Brent Blackaby <BBlackaby@berkeleyca.gov>

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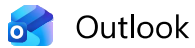
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Please keep Berkeley a **mixed-income, livable** city!

Nancy Rader
1198 Keith Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708



My opposition to SPA corridor plan

From Jeanne Schuman <schumanj4@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 11:01 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

 1 attachment (17 KB)

June 3 Planning Commision opposition letter.docx;

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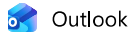
Please include my letter in opposition to the SPA corridor plan in the agenda packet for the Planning Commission's June 3rd meeting.

Thank you

Jeanne Schuman

schumanj4@gmail.com

please excuse any typos



Comments on the San Pablo Plan Revision for June 3

From meryl siegal <merylsiegal@gmail.com>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 11:16 AM

To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc mayor@berkeleyca.gov <mayor@berkeleyca.gov>; Kesarwani, Rashi <RKesarwani@berkeleyca.gov>; Taplin, Terry <ttaplin@berkeleyca.gov>; Blackaby, Brent <bblackaby@berkeleyca.gov>; Tregub, Igor <itregub@berkeleyca.gov>; Bartlett, Ben <bbartlett@berkeleyca.gov>; Shoshana O'Keefe <shoshana@shoshana4berkeley.com>; Humbert, Mark <mhumbert@berkeleyca.gov>; Lunaparra, Cecilia <clunaparra@berkeleyca.gov>

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TO: The Planning Commission

CC: Berkeley City Council

1- The proposed heights for San Pablo Avenue are problematic as the result could be 23 stories. We need to have a limit, a maximum. One way to do this would be to invent a Berkeley TOD plan like SB79 that would keep the heights to 75 feet at MAX and would provide inclusive, integrated housing. Through integrated housing, real equity --- and real positive change happen.

If the City does not do this, we are in danger of creating a thoroughfare that is massive, and destructive in West Berkeley, without the proper amenities to fulfill the promise of AFFH (AB 686).

Affordable and low income housing is needed now and we should not wait for projects built by non-profits. Inclusive housing will benefit all.

2- The plan proposes 8,000 units of new housing which could result in 20,000. Meanwhile, the current plan is to reduce the commercial area by about 300,000 square feet from 1.5 million sq feet to 1.2 million. If we are considering a vibrant, healthy San Pablo, will reduction in commercial space, public space, and amenities for those who live on San Pablo to make San Pablo walkable and vibrant be helpful?

3- Provide protection for small businesses; City sponsored assistance and created BIDS to work with small businesses is necessary on SPA. Ensure the Office of Economic Development will be involved, please as was originally in Consultant Robert Rivera's plan.

4- ENSURE LIVELY FIRST FLOOR commercial, community oriented, public places. These can happen on the nodes. But importantly, there must be breaks in the massing on San Pablo Avenue and inviting, privately owned public spaces is the smartest way to do this. PLEASE reconsider.

5- LANDSCAPING / PARKS AND PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACE (POPOS) AS PROMISED TO OUR COMMUNITY ! COMMUNITY AMENITIES! and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

We want a new vision for San Pablo Avenue, not the Manhattanization of West Berkeley.

We have included Aimee Baldwin's letter below with sound references regarding why inclusionary housing is the best approach for future generations. And isn't that what we all want is a Berkeley that can provide for equity in future generations?

Sincerely,

Meryl Siegal

Co-Founder, Beautiful San Pablo

Re-Segregation of Berkeley: is it on purpose or just being lazy?

by Aimee Baldwin (sent to the City Council in April 2026)

The San Pablo Plan in-lieu affordable housing "Local Density Bonus", or direct upzoning to 7 stories will effectively re-segregate our city, because these would undermine the use of the State Density Bonus, which is our best mechanism to *ensure affordable housing units* directly **integrated** with market rate housing, and get affordable units dispersed across the city.

A national study, [HOPE VI](#), showed that fully integrated housing that supported social connections across socioeconomic backgrounds resulted in measurable significant increased education levels, increased employment, increased pay, and decreased incarceration for the disadvantaged children who grew up in the integrated housing. This is not just access to higher resources from living in a nicer neighborhood, the key is direct social ties to the people of different socioeconomic backgrounds. This can not happen when people are segregated into different isolating buildings, into different neighborhoods, or if neighborhoods aren't designed to

foster human interaction. It is particularly bad when buildings are allowed to have internal amenities that prevent residents from ever leaving their buildings, which our community asked to prevent in the SP Plan, but we haven't seen any such policy.

People incorrectly assume that vibrancy is an automatic result of population density alone. Please visit the base of MacArthur BART housing, or walk south from Pete's coffee on 4th street, past University to the new high-density housing, and observe where the most pedestrian and social activity is. Residential density alone doesn't create vibrancy or social interaction.

The city also allows segregation by default by having *no geographic equity guardrails* to prevent all the city's in-lieu funded affordable housing from being concentrated in the cheapest land in the city, which is of course the formerly redlined, struggling, often more toxic, and disinvested neighborhoods, where the poor have always been kept in their place. This Plan suggests rezoning some MULI sites for 100% affordable housing, but where is the plan for multiple major 100% affordable housing sites in the CZU districts? Just because concentrating Berkeley's affordable housing in redlined districts is cheap, easy, or profitable, doesn't make it right.

The city is legally obligated under [AB 686 to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing](#), to fight patterns of segregation and concentration of poverty, and, importantly, *to invest in transforming disinvested areas into highly resourced areas of opportunity*. The city bludgeons us with social justice defending the middle housing ordinance as anti-racist, but now promotes "separate but equal" segregation in larger developments and citywide plans; separate, as we all know, has never been equal.

The San Pablo Ave Specific Plan focuses on giving cheap buy-outs to developers in the name of increasing residential unit numbers, but at what cost: it undermines integration and the long term future success of our children and entire community. The plan mentions vibrancy, but avoids implementing robust small business support and retention plans for legacy minority businesses, or design standards to support and integrate a strong diverse community across socioeconomic lines. We see the same patterns of segregation and disinvestment that have always been in place. We deserve better.

The SPASP should be more than just a means to increase housing stock, instead it is a once in a lifetime an opportunity to lift up this disinvested commercial corridor, and transform entire districts that suffer from injustices of decades of segregation, commercial disinvestment, and neglect from the city, into a thriving example of a successful diverse, well integrated, vibrant 15-minute city, where everyone of us would want to raise our children and live out the rest of our lives.

-Aimee Baldwin
Beautiful San Pablo

Things you should know:

Hope VI: integrated and well designed housing leads to positive outcomes fighting poverty of future generations:

- Harvard Paper on Hope VI: https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HopeVI_Paper.pdf
- Phila news (easier to digest than the academic paper): <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/hope-iv-affordable-housing/>
- NYT news (easier to digest than the academic paper): <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/28/opinion/american-dream-poverty.html>

California Law AB 686 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

•

CA code:

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=8899.50

•

AB 686 Guidelines:

https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/affh/docs/AFFH_Document_Final_4-27-2021.pdf

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: *Objective Design Standards* that create a supportive community requiring less policing to create a safe environment for everyone:

•

What is CPTED: especially read 2nd Generation:

<https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>

Some recent local examples of 100% affordable housing complexes that have been mismanaged to the detriment of the low income communities that live there, where the affordable units aren't mixed in with the market rate units within the same building. Going back in history, this is almost always the case, and we still have not resolved this problem of segregated low income housing.

•

<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2023/03/07/south-berkeley-seniors-live-with-lack-of-heat-shoddy-repairs-under-new-management>

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<https://sfist.com/2025/05/08/tenants-of-fillmore-district-housing-complex/>

•

<https://www.sfpublicpress.org/city-state-records-reveal-history-of-disrepair-neglected-problems-at-plaza-east-public-housing/>

•

<https://missionlocal.org/2025/04/bayview-residents-decry-neglect-in-public-housing-and-supervisor-walton-warns-of-consequences/>

•

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2024/03/01/problems-persist-at-oakleys-largest-affordable-housing-complex/>



SPASP Comments

From Donna DeDiemar <dediemar@sbcglobal.net>
Date Tue 6/2/2026 11:44 AM
To PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>
Cc council@berkeleyca.gov <council@berkeleyca.gov>

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Commissioners,

With more and more data being produced showing that there is no nexus between building market rate housing resulting in more affordable housing, I am writing to encourage you to tread carefully on recommending zoning for San Pablo Avenue that will allow developers to avoid providing inclusionary housing.

Any policy we put in place now that will end up serving only high income earners will cause two problems at a minimum: (1) too much money chasing whatever we can produce in the short term, thus raising the cost of housing for everyone, and (2) will increase the need for lower wage workers to be able to provide services for the newcomers, thus exacerbating the need for low income housing.

Please resist the urge and the momentum foisted upon us by people like Ezra Klein (Abundance), Scott Wiener, Buffy Wicks, and the YIMBY movement. It is not regulation in the public interest. It is not a panacea for entry into home ownership for anyone but the wealthy. It will not correct for prior racial discrimination, since it is illegal to use race as a qualifier for renting or purchasing housing.

Many people have written to remind you that we have an historical opportunity here to do *actual* long range planning. Please take advantage of the moment and create a vibrant San Pablo for everyone, not an economic opportunity primarily catered to developers.

Donna DeDiemar
Berkeley

June 2, 2026

From: Jeanne Schuman
PO Box 708
Berkeley, CA 94701

To: Planning Commission and the City of Berkeley, Planning Department

Re: Opposition to current San Pablo Corridor plan

Planning Commissioners and the City of Berkeley, Planning Commission,

As a longtime District 1 resident who would like to see Berkeley actually improve affordable housing, I am opposed to the current proposal to upzone San Pablo Avenue to 7 stories as outlined in the proposal in your agenda package for the following reasons:

Berkeley is becoming less and less inclusive. By allowing market rate housing to be built to the developer's sweet spot of 7 stories as claimed by the city, it prevents inclusionary housing and results in less or even no affordable housing being built. Building heights should limit developers to build to a maximum of 7 or 8 stories and with a maximum of 75 feet, on the San Pablo corridor. This and the current state laws would force them to use the state density bonus to build to their sweet spot. I agree with the statement that non inclusive housing is segregated housing

The proposal lacks sufficient parking requirements for businesses or actual protection for small businesses and lacks specific details on what City sponsored assistance should be included. First floors must include commercial, community oriented, public spaces or you will create another wasteland such as the downtown area.

More and more data is coming out to show that the YIMBY agenda and city housing direction has it wrong in their stats that falsely promise more affordable housing if market rate housing is built.

YIMBYs tout Austin as an example city of rents going down by building market rate housing. It's a false comparison to Berkeley. The reason is that, unlike Berkeley, Austin has the open space to build. Berkeley is only 10.5 square miles of land; Austin is 319 square miles of land. Both have approximately the same number of enrolled students at their universities. However, the density of Berkeley is 12,813 per square miles. The density of Austin is 3,025.

Emeryville, another city touted as the most Yimby city because of the high number of rental developments, now has the highest rents in the East Bay per Zumper.com

At the last planning commission meeting, one of your commissioners pointed out what I believe to be a number of incorrect data points about building in Berkeley. Apparently, the correct number of how long the permit process takes in Berkeley is an average of 15 months, not 3 years and rents are not significantly coming down, if at all. Additionally, it appears that the completed & approved building permits that count towards recent Berkeley's RHNA requirement is over half completed in just a couple years. That doesn't even take into consideration the large number of permits that for whatever reason are not going forward. Developers have no incentive to build if housing prices do not rise. It is foolish to believe that the financial market is the only bar to building affordable housing.

I believe that the current San Pablo corridor plan is poorly written and I ask that you reject it.

Jeanne Schuman




Fw: Planning Commission packet

From Horner, Justin <JHorner@berkeleyca.gov>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 11:06 AM

To Tatarevic, Branka <BTatarevic@berkeleyca.gov>; Muller, Joshua <JMuller@berkeleyca.gov>

 1 attachment (17 KB)

Upzoning threat to affordable.docx;

Another email



Justin Horner

Principal Planner

Planning and Development, Land Use Division

1947 Center St., 2nd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704

Phone: (510) 981-7476

Email: jhorner@berkeleyca.gov

In Office Days: Monday – Thursday

Remote Day: Friday

The Permit Service Center (PSC), including the zoning counter, is open between 8:30 am – 2:30 pm (final check in at 2:00 pm), Monday through Thursday.

All permit-related and Zoning services are available online. Please visit us [online](#) for more information.

From: Toni Mester <tonimester@sonic.net>

Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 10:22 AM

To: Planning Commission <PlanningPC@berkeleyca.gov>; City Clerk <clerk@berkeleyca.gov>; All Council <council@berkeleyca.gov>

Cc: Klein, Jordan <JKlein@berkeleyca.gov>; Horner, Justin <JHorner@berkeleyca.gov>

Subject: Planning Commission packet

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To: Berkeley Planning Commission, Mayor Ishii and the City Council

From: Toni Mester D2

June 2, 2026

The Up-Zoning Threat to Affordable Housing in Berkeley

In the discussion of zoning changes to three corridors and San Pablo Avenue, officials and the community have failed to adequately consider how upzoning will undermine the city's efforts to encourage development of affordable housing.

According to the last housing element [update](#), Berkeley is far below our RHNA goals in providing low income housing. Many have been created in [density bonus projects](#), while others comprise 100% affordable projects such as The Maudelle Shirek apartments (2001 Ashby) and The Grinnell (2527 San Pablo Avenue).

The need for affordable units is demonstrated by the huge application rate whenever a lottery for a new project opens. 2001Ashby got over 9,000 applications, and no doubt the BUSD workforce housing project at 1717 San Pablo Avenue, now accepting applications, will be flooded with submissions.

The current height standards that have produced these apartments are mostly 3 and 4 stories, incentivizing the use of the density bonus to achieve an **optimum height of 6 or 7 stories**, which is the limit of wood frame construction over a concrete podium. A taller building requires more expensive materials and components.

In practice, most developers use the density bonus to satisfy the state required BMRs and "fee out" (pay the affordable housing mitigation fee) on the difference between those and the city's 20% inclusionary mandate.

Allowing a base project of 5-7 stories encourages developers to build 100% market rate projects and pay the mitigation fee on the entirety to the housing trust fund to subsidize affordable projects elsewhere.

This option is problematic for social, ethical, and legal reasons, including violation of the state mandate to affirmatively further fair housing or to achieve equity among neighborhoods with a heavy handed up-zoning of all of San Pablo Avenue.

A higher base also welcomes projects of excessive mass and height (via the density bonus and [AB 1287](#)) that can overwhelm fragile business districts, transportation infrastructure, and ability of first responders to ensure health and safety of residents. These allowances are the result of political pressure from developers to provide maximum flexibility and deregulation to overcome negative, transient market conditions, which is a poor substitute for long-term planning.

Up-zoning increases capacity but also **raises the price of land**, which puts non-profit affordable housing developers at a disadvantage in competing for available parcels.

Affordable housing developers have been further hurt by the removal of rent control exemptions in Measure BB (2024) that could cost affordable housing projects in excess of [\\$100K](#) a year

A Compromise Solution

The City can use the ready-made standards of the State's new TOD (transit oriented development) law [SB79](#), which requires affordable units with increased heights.

Although these allowances are available to developers in limited areas, there is no prohibition against a city adopting them elsewhere. Since these standards have been reviewed and passed by the legislature, they should meet approval in a state mandated review.

In addition, the Council should put a revision of the Rent Stabilization Ordinance on the ballot to re-instate the registration exemption for non-profit developers and expand exemptions to all owner occupied duplex parcels to encourage home divisions and other new units that might not meet the Measure Q exemptions, which have successfully incentivized the building of hundreds of new ADUs.

A new study has found that ADUs are not only expanding housing opportunities but are also surprisingly affordable.

To: Berkeley Planning Commission, Mayor Ishii and the City Council
From: Toni Mester D2
June 2, 2026

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