

**Supplemental
Correspondence
(Received before 12 pm
September 17, 2025)**

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Ralda Lee <raldalee@berkeley.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:30 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Do not upzone the Elmwood shopping area

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.

PLEASE
DO NOT ADD TO THE CONGESTION ON AN ALREADY CONGESTED STREET BY ADDING THE PROPOSED
UPZONE.

WE DO NOT WANT A REPETITION OF WHAT HAPPENED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CENTER STREET.

FIX THAT!!!!

PLEASE CONSIDER THE PARKING PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT COLLEGE AVENUE AND THE SIDE
STREETS.

IT MAKES NO GOOD SENSE TO DISRUPT AND DESTROY, AS UPZONING WOULD, THIS THRIVING AREA.

GREED MUST NOT DOMINATE HERE
as it has been all over Berkeley.

With hope that you'll listen to the strong community reaction,
Ralda Lee
2809 Webster
Berkeley 94705

Supplemental Correspondence

From: David Browne <browned@pacbell.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:27 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elwood

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 Whom it may concern,

I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops. These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley. The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed. The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood by the City Planning Department.

Sincerely,
David Browne
2268 Cedar St
Berkeley, CA 94709

Supplemental Correspondence

From: William Tennant <williamtennant@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:17 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elmwood

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 whom it may concern: I am opposed to changes being proposed to Elmwood zoning. Please preserve this classic neighborhood shopping district as a historical site. William Tennant 2916 Russell St., 94705
Sent from my iPhone

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Scruggs, T M <tmscrugg@uiowa.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:10 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: don't destroy Elmwood area

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

Hi,

I was just in the Elmwood area yesterday, and was reminded what a treasure this area is. A neighbor told me of plans proposed that would so compromise the stores and historic architecture there. I am opposed to both Alternatives by the City Planning Department for the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood.

Go to Shattuck a few blocks south of BART – what a disaster. Tall buildings that do NOT help to bring community.

Please, if this is what your vision is, relocate to Manhattan or somewhere, you'll be happier, and so will we.

Sincerely,

T.M. Scruggs

T.M. Scruggs
1022 Keith Avenue
Berkeley CA 94708

cell: 510 684-2366

"A free press is like a free life --- it's always in danger."
Humphrey Bogart, *Deadline USA* (1952)

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Adriana & Carla <slash.vintage@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elmwood Corner U-Zoning

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

Hello Planning Commision Secretary,

We, the owners and employees of Slash Denim, oppose the plan to redevelop the neighborhood. Please help us defeat the planned zoning changes so that we help maintain the small businesses that have been in operation for decades! Thank you in advance for your support!

Best,
Adriana ans Carla

Carla Bell, Owner
Adriana Guerra, Owner
Slash Denim
2840 College Ave
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-665-5994/510-841-7803

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Larry Hartsough <ldhphd@netscape.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:28 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elmwood Upzoning

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

I am opposed to the upzoning of the historic business district near College and Ashby. So many of the sites proposed/presented as possible for tall apartment buildings would totally destroy the charm that makes this location so attractive to visit.

Larry Hartsough
3007 Benvenue

Supplemental Correspondence

From: James Lerager <jlerager@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:24 PM
To: Horner, Justin; Peralta; info@berkeleytogether.org
Subject: To: Planning Commission | Save the Elmwood Shopping District & Berkeley's Solano Ave

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 City Planning Commission

I live in Berkeley's Thousand Oaks neighborhood, near Solano Avenue. I and my neighbors are very concerned about Up-Zoning our section of Solano, with its many small, local businesses, allowing construction of tall apartment buildings - up to 10 stories high.

Our neighborhood has met together, and are in favor of in-fill apartment buildings up to 4 stories, with mostly affordable rents.

We are against 8 or 10 or 12 story apartment blocks with primarily market rate rents.

Berkeley's proposed up-zoning plans, allowing for apartment buildings up to 10 stories high, will severely degrade the historic two block Elmwood shopping district on College Ave and Ashby, and the Berkeley section of Solano Avenue, both with many small shops, cafes, restaurants, and businesses in historic buildings with architectural character.

These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley. Elmwood's 100 year old Historic architecture will be destroyed, unless protected from excessively large-scale development. On College Avenue, the 60' wide street will become a tunnel if excessively large apartment blocks line College.

The natural corridors for large apartment blocks - buildings over four stories - are Shattuck Avenue in downtown Berkeley; University Avenue; and San Pablo Avenue. Development is progressing on these corridors. And Shattuck-University-San Pablo Aves still have large areas for apartment building infill. And they are natural corridors for public transportation.

I am opposed to both current Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood and Solano shopping districts, by the City Planning Department.

Let us reason together!

Sincerely,
James Lerager
JLerager@yahoo.com

Supplemental Correspondence

From: MARY MONTALI <mimimary@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:12 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elmwood

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

I am opposed to both alternatives of the Corridor-Upzoning proposed in the Elmwood by the City planning department

Mary Montali
mimimary@comcast.net

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Patty Reidenbach <preidenbac@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 12:07 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Upzoning College

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

I am opposed to the zoning changes proposed for College Ave. Large scale building will disrupt traffic, kill the merchants, and turn it into a strip mall. There could be more housing in Berkeley very quickly if the rent board would work with homeowners instead of against them.

Patty Reidenbach 3032 Hillegass

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Drew Detsch <drewdetsch@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 8:46 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Comments for the 9/17 Planning Commission meeting on Elmwood Upzoning

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

I am writing to express my opposition to the Elmwood UpZoning. This proposal was brought forth without public input. The “Workshop” allowed no public questions or comments. As a professional with extensive experience in urban planning this is wrong. These are a few of my concerns:

The historic Elmwood shopping district is over 100 years old, it includes over 93 small independent businesses, all of which will be destroyed as a result of the upzoning.

Further, this plan is in violation of the Berkeley General Plan, Land Use Element: Objectives and Policies:

- Maintain and preserve the character of Berkeley.
- Protect Berkeley’s character by identifying, restoring, and preserving historic buildings

As an urban plan it is in direct conflict in character, scale and transportation planning:

- Character: A key goal in urban planning is walkable streets, with scale and texture and shops that serve the community and the city itself. The existing small shops that serve this purpose will be replaced by larger, more heavily capitalized businesses.
- Scale: College Ave. is a two lane road, only 60’ wide, including the narrow sidewalks. This proposal to build tall buildings to the lot lines on both sides of the street will create a tunnel, blocking light and air. Air, especially during commute time when traffic stays backed up for blocks.
- Transportation: College Ave, at two lanes, can never become a Transit Corridor to allow mass transit or dedicated bus lanes. Tall buildings need to be build where Transit Corridors can be created.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Drew Detsch

Supplemental Correspondence

From: henry_h@mac.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 8:26 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: YIMBY for up-zoning Elmwood

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

Dear Berkeley Planning Commission,

I am an advocate for the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will not destroy the Elmwood Shops. So many thousands of families struggling for homes and thousands commute for hours each day from far away - causing air pollution and time away from their families. Their voices are not heard at council meetings. NIMBY is not victimless!

It is claimed that 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed. There is nothing special about the 1920's architecture. Let's build the next architecture that will also last the next 100 years.

There are voices to 'keep things the same'. You can't. That's denial. We all grow old. Things change - hopefully for the better.

Henry Hieslmair
1708 Virginia St,
Berkeley, CA
henry_h@mac.com
Cell: 510-331-7995

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Patrick Randolph <randolph.patrick@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 8:09 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Against rezoning the elmwood

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Topics and Phases to consider:

SALUTATION:

Dear Planning Commission, please do not approve any up zoning on the College Avenue Corridor in Berkeley. The current three-story height-limits are sufficient.

Point 1

Utilities for apartments negatively impacting groundfloor retail

The required program elements of large apartment buildings, including utility boxes, electrical vaults, water stand pipes, make it impossible to maintain the continual ground floor retail spaces for which College Avenue is known. Destruction of the continual retail frontage will permanently negatively impact the business environment, pedestrian environment, and long-term retail business tax base.

Point 2

Groundfloor Retail is a must

The City is currently looking at two options in the current upzoning proposals: One without mandated ground floor retail; another without. It is necessary to make certain that groundfloor retail is mandated. Otherwise, the street frontage and much of the neighborhood will be taken up with private apartment lobbies, bike locker, utility boxes, ventilation screens, and other blank walls. As a community, we want ground floor retail.

Point 3

Displacement of Businesses

Upzoning will raise land values and rents, incentivizing redevelopment that will push out long-term mostly family run landlords, as well as pushing out small retail businesses. These local landlords will be replaced by corporate ownership and large real estate investment trusts (REITs) and investors such as Black Rock. The shops and retail, where ground floor retail remains available, will be replaced by chains and more generic stores such as Chipotle or Olive Garden.

Point 4

Neighborhood character

Many Berkeley neighborhoods have historic, human-scale architecture; taller buildings may alter sunlight, views, and the sense of place. The height of the 6 to 8 story buildings on the 60-foot wide College Avenue, will mean shadows cast on the sidewalks for much of the day, negatively impacting the retail environment and experience. Additionally, tall apartment buildings will impact the shade and shadows on, as well as the privacy of, adjacent residential properties on adjacent streets including Benvenue St., Cherry St., and Elmwood Avenue.

Point 5

Infrastructure strain

Taller, denser developments increase demand on already stressed utilities, transit, schools, and emergency services, which Berkeley has limited capacity to expand quickly.

Best Regards,

Patrick Randolph

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Robert Dorsett <robtddorsett@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 6:55 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: from Robert and Loretta Dorsett

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

Dear Planning Commission,

Please do not approve any buildings along College Avenue higher than three stories.

Please maintain the ground floor shops as they are today. It is crucial for a livable neighborhood.

Please keep any new construction in proportion to our walk spaces, so that our neighborhood remains walkable.

Thank you,

Robert H Dorsett
Loretta Dorsett

2817 Cherry Street

Supplemental Correspondence

From: dp_eas@yahoo.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 6:03 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Upzoning hearing

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

I cannot attend the hearing tonight, but I am very opposed to the upzoning, construction of apartment buildings with many stories, and increased densification of Berkeley. We are already at gridlock.

Thank you,

Emilie Strauss
Berkeley Ca

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Laurie Miller <batcactus@sonic.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 2:40 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Stop upzoning College Avenue

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.

Mr. Horner:

Sorry I am late, but I strongly object to the College Avenue upzoning proposal. Having experienced the situation in downtown, where I used to frequent shops, restaurants and movie theaters that are now vacant, or replaced by inaccessible in-house cafes and off-limits venues, I don't want the same thing to happen to the only other shopping district in my neighborhood. I don't want to see views of the hills and bay shadowed by the ugly, lifeless building blocks of odd, miss-matched colors going up all over town.

I vote no no no no on all of it.

Laurie Miller

94705

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Jan Volz-Kelly <jvolzkelly3@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 11:10 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Opposition to Up-Zoning the Elmwood

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 Members,

I live in the Elmwood district and strongly oppose both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning of this historic community.

Everyday I see people filling the restaurants, shopping at the local grocery stores, and buying from the merchants along College Avenue.

It's a vibrant community and I would hate to see it destroyed by a tunnel of apartment buildings along the way.

I don't think these proposals have been thought through to the end conclusion - Manhattanization of the Elmwood.

Hopefully you will reconsider these drastic measures.

Regards,
Jan Volz-Kelly
Elmwood resident

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Judy Hess <judyehess@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 10:54 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Please don't build up the Elmwood. I've lived here for 25 years and love the small town feel of the shops and only movie theater in Berkeley .amazing.

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.

Stop the new zoning. The Elmwood is unique. It would be a crime to get rid of these wonderful shops and the frequent celebrations that occur in these 2 blocks
PLEASE. Please PLEASE don't let this happen
Judy Hess, phd



Licensed psychologist, PSY5553

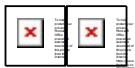
Families, Couples, Individuals

Berkeley, CA

(510) 843-5683

www.judyehess.com

Join Our Conversation!



Supplemental Correspondence

From: Martin Schwartz <martz@berkeley.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 10:51 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: against "upzoning" of Elmwood on College Ave.

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 Secretary Horner:

I'm writing in opposition to the planned upzoning of the Elwood area on College Avenue.

It will have a negative impact on the local businesses, much exacerbate the already difficult traffic problems, of the neighborhood and Berkeley in general, and will ruin a thriving, beautiful, architecturally historic area.

I am also opposed to the two Alternatives to the upzoning, as proposed by City Planning.

Sincerely,

Martin Schwartz

Supplemental Correspondence

From: ELLEN GOLDBLATT <ellengoldblatt@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 10:47 PM
To: Horner, Justin; Blackaby, Brent; Councilmember Brent Blackaby
Subject: Oppose college Avenue Upzoning

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

I've been a Berkeley residence since 1971 and I've been shopping and eating and attending book talks and purchasing glasses at the Focal Point along college Avenue since the 1970s. It is a wonderful neighborhood of unique businesses.

I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops.
These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

Please help preserve some of what we liked about living in Berkeley.

Thank you, Ellen Goldblatt

Sent from my iPhone

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Suzanne Ryan <sbryansell@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 10:36 PM
To: Horner, Justin

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

Dear Planning Commission, please do not approve any up zoning on the College Avenue Corridor in Berkeley. The current three-story height-limits are sufficient.

Point 1

Utilities for apartments negatively impacting groundfloor retail

The required program elements of large apartment buildings, including utility boxes, electrical vaults, water stand pipes, make it impossible to maintain the continual ground floor retail spaces for which College Avenue is known. Destruction of the continual retail frontage will permanently negatively impact the business environment, pedestrian environment, and long-term retail business tax base.

Point 2

Groundfloor Retail is a must

The City is currently looking at two options in the current upzoning proposals: One without mandated ground floor retail; another without. It is necessary to make certain that groundfloor retail is mandated. Otherwise, the street frontage and much of the neighborhood will be taken up with private apartment lobbies, bike locker, utility boxes, ventilation screens, and other blank walls. As a community, we want ground floor retail.

Point 3

Displacement of Businesses

Upzoning will raise land values and rents, incentivizing redevelopment that will push out long-term mostly family run landlords, as well as pushing out small retail businesses. These local landlords will be replaced by corporate ownership and large real estate investment trusts (REITs) and investors such as Black Rock. The shops and retail, where ground floor retail remains available, will be replaced by chains and more generic stores such as Chipotle or Olive Garden.

Point 4

Neighborhood character

Many Berkeley neighborhoods have historic, human-scale architecture; taller buildings may alter sunlight, views, and the sense of place. The height of the 6 to 8 story buildings on the 60-foot wide College Avenue, will mean shadows cast on the sidewalks for much of the day, negatively impacting the retail environment and experience. Additionally, tall apartment buildings will impact the shade and shadows on, as well as the privacy of, adjacent residential properties on adjacent streets including Benvenue St., Cherry St., and Elmwood Avenue.

Point 5

Infrastructure strain

Taller, denser developments increase demand on already stressed utilities, transit, schools, and emergency services, which Berkeley has limited capacity to expand quickly.

I am pissed: a bad idea.

Thank you!

Suzanne

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Nancy Facher <nancyfacher@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:39 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Re: In support of Solano Ave re-zoning - middle housing

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

Hi,

I am just seeing now that you my neighbor cc'd the neighborhood listserve when he emailed you, so I do not have to protect his privacy. In that email, he stated the whole neighborhood met. I believe you were misled: A small group of neighbors met and they were not authorized to speak for the whole street.

Have a great day and thanks for your service,

Nancy

On Sep 16, 2025, at 5:41 PM, Nancy Facher wrote:

Hello,

I am writing in support of the Solano Ave re-zoning.

I have lived on Peralta Ave for 31 years. I am thrilled to know that Planning is deciding between opportunities to build housing and support businesses on upper Solano. Over the decades, Solano has become old. Empty store fronts persist. Favorite venues have closed. I eagerly await more foot traffic that would sustain businesses and restore Solano to its previous vitality.

I recently observed one neighbor communicating her impressions to the neighborhood listserve, and her understanding was different than mine. Her understanding was brought to the neighbors, who then believed the misinformation, and wrote to you. One such neighbor shared the letter he wrote to you and I saw that he conveyed he is representing his neighbors.

Can you please confirm that when you (the city) receive an email from an individual, that you count it as representing that individual only, and not the others that are referenced although unnamed? I don't want my neighbors speaking for me.

I am very much in support of maximizing affordable housing. But, I would not stop the middle housing initiative for this reason.

Please count me as one Berkeley resident in favor of upzoning!

I am grateful to the city of Berkeley for taking on this important issue. We all need to show responsibility.

I will be there Wed night in support. I know there is a set purpose and agenda for the meeting, but I would like to share that,

I see many misunderstandings about the purpose and impact of middle housing from the discussion on the neighborhood listserve. While there are surveys and public forums, I fear they are not reaching enough people. My observation is that neighbors don't understand:

1. what is mandated by the state
2. how we need developers to build
3. how we need all types of housing
4. how no matter what, we will need to replace old building
5. how businesses need foot traffic

Many seem particularly concerned about traffic, parking and businesses being displaced.

Thank you,
Nancy Facher

734 Peralta Ave
Berkeley, CA
94707

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Peter Montgomery <peter.montgomery@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:33 PM
To: Horner, Justin; Peter Montgomery
Subject: Upzoning in the College Ave., Elmwood Commercial District

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Justin Horner
Berkeley Planning Commission
1947 Center Street, Third Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704
Subject: Upzoning in the College Ave., Elmwood Commercial District

Dear Mr. Horner,

I am writing in strong opposition to any zoning changes on College Avenue, including Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 as recently proposed.

As part of my opposition to the Berkeley Corridors Zoning Update Alternatives, are the following five points.

Point 1

Utilities for apartments negatively impacting ground-floor retail

The required program elements of large apartment buildings, including utility boxes, electrical vaults, water standpipes, make it impossible to maintain the continual ground floor retail spaces for which College Avenue is known. Destruction of the continual retail frontage will permanently negatively impact the business environment, pedestrian atmosphere, and long-term retail business tax base, as future owners will be incentivized to focus on apartments not retail.

Point 2

Groundfloor Retail is a must

The City is currently looking at two options in the current upzoning proposals: One without mandated ground-floor retail; another with. It is necessary to make certain that ground-floor retail is mandated. Otherwise, the street frontage and much of the neighborhood will be taken up with private apartment lobbies, bike locker, utility boxes, ventilation screens, and other blank walls. As a community, we want ground floor retail.

Point 3

Displacement of Businesses

Upzoning will raise land values and rents, incentivizing redevelopment that will push out long-term mostly family run landlords, as well as pushing out small retail businesses. These local landlords will be replaced by corporate ownership and large real estate investment trusts (REITs) and investors such as Black Rock. The shops and retail, where ground floor retail remains available, will be replaced by chains and more generic stores such as Chipotle or Forever 21.

Point 4

Neighborhood character

Many Berkeley neighborhoods have historic, human-scale architecture; taller buildings may alter sunlight, views, and the sense of place. The height of the 6 to 8 story buildings on the 60-foot wide College Avenue, will mean shadows cast on the sidewalks for much of the day, negatively impacting the retail environment and experience. Additionally, tall apartment buildings will impact the shade and shadows on, as well as the privacy of, adjacent residential properties on adjacent streets including Benvenue St., Cherry St., and Elmwood Avenue.

Point 5

Infrastructure strain

Taller, denser developments increase demand on already stressed utilities, transit, schools, and emergency services, which Berkeley has limited capacity to expand quickly. Additionally, in the proposed College Avenue zone is the current firehouse, which should not be sold or redeveloped as apartments.

Point 6

Erosion of Trust via Community Workshop

The meetings held with the local community did not allow for meaningful dialogue or input. Instead, the community corralled into forced scenarios of placing colored dots and Post-It notes on boards that had pre-determined topics and answer grouping. This predetermined funnelled process was not actual community input, and seemed to be mostly interested in checking off a step toward a predetermined increase in zoning density and height limits.

I urge the Planning Commission, and ultimately the City Council, to reject the College Avenue Corridor up zoning plans.

Peter Montgomery
2824 Cherry Street
Berkeley, CA 9705

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Snehal Murthy <snehalgmurthy@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:29 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: College Upzoning

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 Commissioner,

Please do NOT approve upzoning on the College Avenue corridor in Berkeley. The current three-story height-limits are sufficient.

1. Utilities for apartments negatively impacting groundfloor retail

The required program elements of large apartment buildings, including utility boxes, electrical vaults, water stand pipes, make it impossible to maintain the continual ground floor retail spaces that College Ave is known for.

2. Groundfloor retail is a must

The City is currently looking at two options in the current upzoning proposals: One without mandated ground floor retail; another without. It is necessary to make certain that groundfloor retail is mandated. Otherwise, the street frontage and much of the neighborhood will be taken up with private apartment lobbies, bike lockers, utility boxes, ventilation screens, and other blank walls. As a community, we value and want ground floor retail.

3. Displacement of Businesses

Upzoning will raise land values and rents, incentivizing redevelopment that will push out long-term mostly family run landlords, as well as pushing out small retail businesses, some of whom have been in the community for decades. These local landlords will be replaced by corporate ownership and large real estate investment trusts (REITs) and investors such as Black Rock. The shops and retail, where ground floor retail remains available, will be replaced by chains and more generic stores.

4. Infrastructure strain

Taller, denser developments increase demand on already stressed utilities, transit, schools, emergency services, which Berkeley has limited capacity to expand quickly. Parking in the neighborhood for existing residents is already limited, and many people do not have driveways.

5. Neighborhood character

Many Berkeley neighborhoods have historic, human-scale architecture; taller buildings may alter sunlight, views, and the sense of place. The height of the 6 to 8 story buildings on the 60-foot wide College Avenue, will mean shadows cast on the sidewalks for much of the day, negatively impacting the retail environment and experience. Additionally, tall apartment buildings will impact the shade and shadows on, as well as the privacy of, adjacent residential properties on adjacent streets including Benvenue St., Cherry St., and Elmwood Avenue.

Thank you,

Item 12 - Supplemental Correspondence Packet 2
Planning Commission
September 17, 2025

Snehal Murthy
Resident at 2804 Cherry St.

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Barbara Fisher <barbara.fisher2000@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:21 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: the Elmwood

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 Mr. Horner,

I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District:

*The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops. These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

*The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

*The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

Barbara Fisher
Berkeley

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Madeleine Shearer <madeleineshearer@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:14 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Please do NOT up-zone

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the Elmwood neighborhood in Berkeley.

Who will benefit from up-zoning? Not the residents!

Only the building trades. Are you taking money from the building trades?

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Elizabeth Strain <elizabethmosesstrain@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 9:00 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: College Ave. Up-zoning

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,

First, I really appreciate the thought and planning the city has put into considering how to upscale the three areas of the city being proposed including College Ave. I've been very impressed with the educational information you've made available and your requests for community input.

I live on Russell St., a half block up from College and would be happy to see the 7-11 site developed as housing. I think it would be most in keeping with the immediate area if the building were kept to three stories, but there's a four story building across College and a little north, so a four story building wouldn't feel out of place. It would be good to keep a laundromat on the ground floor, ideally facing College rather than Russell. Stepping back buildings over two stories would greatly help maintain the current friendly scale of surrounding storefronts.

Another named potential site, the parking lot behind the Wells Fargo on Ashby, makes a lot of sense to develop because it would not disrupt the stores and storefronts along College and it is adjacent to very few existing one and two story homes.

I recognize that our city is required to comply with state mandates and California is very short on housing. Every neighborhood will need to absorb some change.

Thanks for your work with the community!

Elizabeth Strain
2718 Russell St.

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Larry Strain <lstrain@siegelstrain.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 8:50 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: College Avenue Corridor zoning report

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,

I am a long time resident of Berkeley - 45 years, and a recent resident of the Elmwood.
I am writing in support of Alt 1, medium Density up to 4 - 5 stories, on the College avenue corridor with the following caveats:
Encourage, incentivize keeping existing buildings along the College Corridor intact. Build new above - maintains character of the street and reduces carbon footprint of construction.
Accommodate and support retail, by keeping utilities off the ground floor along College.
I support Alt 3 for stepbacks
I support Alternative 2 for retail.

Even more important in my opinion than building height, would be to require design standards that would support the existing character of the College Avenue Corridor - varying materials, including bays, balconies, sunshades, detailing around windows and doors, basically respect the detail and character of what is already there. It doesn't need to, nor should we copy historic details, but new development should include the same level of texture and colors and details that currently exist along college.

I would also encourage similar upzoning along Ashby near College.

Thank you for your work on this important, and contentious subject.

Larry Strain
2718 Russell Street
Berkeley CA, 94705

--

Larry Strain, FAIA
Principal Emeritus
SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Anne Bernstein <anneberns@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 8:37 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Upzoning the Elmwood

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 Berkeley Planning Commission:

As a resident of the neighborhood for almost 50 years, I am opposed to the proposed up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops.
These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

While I recognize and support the need for more housing, the Elmwood is not the most suitable for the kinds of changes in the Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

That is not to say more modest changes are not workable—there can be a middle ground.

Thank you,

Anne Bernstein

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Olga Louchakova-Schwartz <olouchakova@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 7:30 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: opposed to upzoning of Elmwood

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

I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops.
These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

--

Olga Louchakova-Schwartz,
2405 Derby Street

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Cal7380 <cal7380@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 6:50 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: No up-zoning in the Elmwood commercial district

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Justin--

I am a Berkeley resident. I recently attended the city's introductory presentation on up-zoning in the Elmwood commercial district.

I AM OPPOSED TO UP-ZONING IN THE ELMWOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT.

Thank you.

Calvin Wong
89 Alvarado Road
Berkeley, CA 94705

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Arlene Baxter <eastbay.bungalows@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 5:48 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: writing to oppose upzoning in the Elmwood

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

TO: Justin Horner
Berkeley Planning Commission Secretary

As a Berkeley resident for more than 50 years, including all of my adult life, I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District. The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops, and the unusually vibrant shopping "village" which attracts many out-of-town visitors, as well as the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed. These buildings cannot be replicated, and are a vital part of the Berkeley fabric.

The 60' wide street would become a shade tunnel if 5-6 story apartments line College Ave. Change is necessary, but this plan is not well thought out, and the results will hurt, not benefit Berkeley!

I am also opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed for the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

PLEASE reconsider such unnecessary changes to a key Berkeley neighborhood!

Arlene Baxter

M: 510.717.1799

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Henry Siegel <hsiegel@siegelstrain.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 5:26 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Cc: Kyra Subbotin; Humbert, Mark
Subject: Upcoming the elmwood

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

I am a 34-year resident of the Elmwood and am writing to express my support for upzoning in the Elmwood along College Avenue to 3 stories. There are 3 story buildings up and down College Avenue , including very near Ashby and they are in keeping with the scale of the street. 2 or 3 floors above our retail space would provide space for new housing which would in turn increase street life and retail along college. Encouraging setbacks above the third floor would be helpful. A few of the buildings have historic merit, but most do not. I also believe that existing retail deserves some measure of protection as part of this upzoning.

Henry Siegel, FAIA LEED AP

SIEGEL & STRAIN Architects
6201 Doyle Street, Suite B, Emeryville, CA 94608
hsiegel@siegelstrain.com www.siegelstrain.com

2743 Prince St.
Berkeley

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Robert Godes <reg@brillouinenergy.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 5:07 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

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.

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops.
These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood by the City Planning Department.

This is the same problem as the middle housing that was forced on the city by big developers under the guise that what we have now is racist. No, it has nothing to do with race. We moved to Berkeley because we wanted more open space with trees, greenery, and light. Big developers are driving the narrative that we are causing high housing prices because of scarcity. Middle housing will bring lots of new housing. Prices will drop because Berkeley will not be a standout place to live anymore

Best regards,
Robert E. Godes
President and Chief Technology Officer
Brillouin Energy Corp.
(510)821-1432
brillouinenergy.com



Clean Energy for a Clean World™

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Supplemental Correspondence

From: Nancy Facher <nancyfacher@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 5:42 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: In support of Solano Ave re-zoning - middle housing

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

Hello,

I am writing in support of the Solano Ave re-zoning.

I have lived on Peralta Ave for 31 years. I am thrilled to know that Planning is deciding between opportunities to build housing and support businesses on upper Solano. Over the decades, Solano has become old. Empty store fronts persist. Favorite venues have closed. I eagerly await more foot traffic that would sustain businesses and restore Solano to its previous vitality.

I recently observed one neighbor communicating her impressions to the neighborhood listserve, and her understanding was different than mine. Her understanding was brought to the neighbors, who then believed the misinformation, and wrote to you. One such neighbor shared the letter he wrote to you and I saw that he conveyed he is representing his neighbors.

Can you please confirm that when you (the city) receive an email from an individual, that you count it as representing that individual only, and not the others that are referenced although unnamed? I don't want my neighbors speaking for me.

I am very much in support of maximizing affordable housing. But, I would not stop the middle housing initiative for this reason.

Please count me as one Berkeley resident in favor of upzoning!

I am grateful to the city of Berkeley for taking on this important issue. We all need to show responsibility.

I will be there Wed night in support. I know there is a set purpose and agenda for the meeting, but I would like to share that,

I see many misunderstandings about the purpose and impact of middle housing from the discussion on the neighborhood listserve. While there are surveys and public forums, I fear they are not reaching enough people. My observation is that neighbors don't understand:

1. what is mandated by the state
2. how we need developers to build
3. how we need all types of housing
4. how no matter what, we will need to replace old building
5. how businesses need foot traffic

Many seem particularly concerned about traffic, parking and businesses being displaced.

Thank you,
Nancy Facher

734 Peralta Ave
Berkeley, CA
94707

Supplemental Correspondence

From: ecreanmft@yahoo.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 5:12 PM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: Elmwood Corridor Up-Zoning proposal

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

I am a 45-year resident of the Elmwood neighborhood, and I am opposed to the up-zoning of Berkeley's Historic Shopping District

The proposed up-zoning will destroy the Elmwood Shops. These small businesses serve the local neighborhood and all of Berkeley. The construction will put those small shops and restaurants out of business.

The 100 yr old Historic architecture will be destroyed.

The 60' wide street will become a tunnel when 5-6 story apartments line College Ave.

I am opposed to both Alternatives of the Corridor Up-Zoning proposed in the Elmwood, by the City Planning Department.

Eileen Crean
3029 Benvenue Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705

ecreanmft@yahoo.com
510-520-1843

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Irene Elmer <ielmer@lmi.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: up-zoning the Elmwood

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.

Another very strong vote against this ill-conceived plan.

Irene Elmer (homeowner)
2806 Cherry Street
Berkeley, CA 94705

Supplemental Correspondence

From: Katelyn Randolph <cowan.km@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 11:13 AM
To: Horner, Justin
Subject: College Avenue Corridor

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

Dear Planning Committee,

My name is Katelyn Randolph and I am a home owner on Benvenue Avenue in the Elmwood district of Berkeley. Please do not approve the project that would allow up zoning along College Avenue.

The Elmwood is named after its abundance of elm trees and greenery. Taller buildings on our tree-lined street will cast shadows, block sunlight, and obliterate the personality of the neighborhood as a whole. This personality is the reason my husband and I decided to invest our life savings on a home in this neighborhood and raise our children here.

I also have concerns about how the infrastructure would possibly support this level of up zoning in our historical neighborhood. What are the implications of providing sufficient energy, electricity and water to the tenants of these proposed buildings? Where will these residents park?

I also don't see a scenario in which the local businesses along College Avenue could survive such destruction of character. The retail environment and experience of the Elmwood is the life force of the neighborhood. We do NOT want to drive away these renters and long-time family property owners and usher in a wave of chain restaurants and corporations. We should be focusing on how to better support them.

Thank you for your consideration of these serious concerns about the College Avenue corridor project.

Best,
Katelyn Randolph

Supplemental Correspondence

From: aimee baldwin <junk.menagerie@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2025 11:46 AM
To: Planning Commission
Cc: Rivera, Robert
Subject: vision of San Pablo Ave Specific Plan from Beautiful San Pablo

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 wanted to refresh, or introduce, you to our outline of ideas for the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan, from our community group, Beautiful San Pablo. We have been able to voice these ideas repeatedly to the project planner, Rivera, at several venues. This outline is a result of months of our group working on ideas together.
We understand that the plan will be finalized this fall.

Thank you,
Aimee Baldwin, Beautiful San Pablo
Meryl Siegal, Beautiful San Pablo
Heike Helmer
Kat Vello

Beautiful San Pablo vision for the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Sept 2025

The Primary focus of the SPASP should be to guide all new developments to facilitate and support a **thriving community**. SPASP should adopt measures that ensure ongoing long term Diversity, Integration, and Vibrant Active Streetscape on San Pablo Ave. Below is a rough outline of what the plan should include to achieve these goals.

- 1.
- 2.
3. Base Zoning:
4. Outside commercial nodes: Increase from the current zoning of 40 feet/ 4 stories
5. residential to 45 feet/4-story with live-work ground floor (consideration of a sleeping loft/restroom in the back) or 55 feet/5-story with commercial ground floor.
6. No exclusively residential on the ground floor
7. anywhere.
- 8.

In Commercial Nodes: Increase base zoning to 55 feet/5 story with commercial ground floor only: NO RESIDENTIAL or LIVE-WORK on ground floor inside of commercial nodes.

- 2.
- 3.
4. Commercial Zoning Flexibility:
5. allow for variety of non-toxic uses in all commercial spaces, especially encourage artisan uses; (Encourage spaces to be open to multiple uses during different times of the day - i.e. retail/commercial in the day, classes/events in the evening).
- 6.
- 3.
- 4.
5. Diversity and Social Integration:
6. Limit the number and proximity of same housing type or same demographic/income levels. [i.e. prevent all rentals and no condos/ownership; prevent multiple GLAs or 100% low-income or more senior facilities on SPA, etc. within 1/3 mile of each other, especially
7. if not enough other types of housing in that area have been completed and occupied].
- 8.
- 4.
- 5.
6. **Incentivize all increased height:**
7. Any additional height (i.e the density bonus) can only be added in exchange for desired additional community benefits.
8.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. Maximize demographic integration
 - d. by utilizing the State Density Bonus (SDB) for affordable housing as the primary means of additional height along the corridor;
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h. Incentivize
 - i. widening sidewalks
 - j. throughout;
 - k.
 - l.
 - m.
 - n. Focus

- o. commercial improvement to nodes:
- p. establish height/design incentives that can be in
- q. addition to SDB, primarily at Gateway Nodes: Ashby, University, Gilman, less
- r. at neighborhood nodes: Dwight, Cedar
 - s.
 - i.
 - ii.
- iii.Plaza/Park Space
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
- vii.Shared Commercial Interior Parking
 - viii.
 - ix.
 - x.
- xi.Limit size of non-commercial sidewalk adjacent spaces (lobbies, driveways...etc)
 - xii.
- d.
- e.
- f. Limit height outside of nodes by allowing developments to implement community benefit
- g. incentives OR SDB, not both
- h.
- d.
- e.
- f. Be creative in permanent community benefit options; especially incentivize
- g. integration
- h. (building residents to co-mingle with community residents) and discourage private amenity "fortress" buildings
- i.
 - i.
 - ii.
- iii.community gym membership
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
- vii.community room use for meetings, theater, concerts, social gatherings, other arts
 - viii.
 - ix.
 - x.

- xi. electric shuttle buses for people on SPA , North Berkeley BART, train station, marina.
 - xii.
 - xiii.
 - xiv.
- xv. Discounted commercial rent to essential community businesses
 - xvi.
 - xvii.
 - xviii.
- xix. Community electric vehicle charging
 - xx.

5.

6.

7. **Implement Design Standards**

8.

- a.
- b.
- c. Adopt Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards throughout
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g. Green landscaping and art to be experienced throughout from sidewalk at street level
- h. and avoid building massing; [require art or greenery on any stretch of blank wall longer than 30ft
 - i.
 - j.
 - k.
 - l. Design courtyards to face San Pablo (or at least partially H instead of U, T instead
- m. of L -shaped buildings)
 - n.
 - o.
 - p.
- q. Create step down to single family/ two story bordering residential neighborhoods
 - r.
 - s.
 - t.
- u. Activate sidewalk adjacent spaces and prevent empty blank space/walls
 - v.
 - i.
 - ii.

iii. Live-Work spaces must have street activation component

iv.

v.

vi.

vii. Tax street level store front vacancies starting 14 days after the building's units are

viii. officially open for rent/sale; and incentivize business development on SPA (i.e. lower rents for a year).

ix.

x.

xi.

xii. Establish mandatory creative use of commercial real estate that has been vacant for more

xiii. that 5 months. Storefronts that stay vacant for 180 days will automatically enter a Community Activation Program which allows local non-profits to receive a free 6-month lease to the space for the purpose of providing activities and offerings that are open

xiv. to the general public.

xv.

xvi.

xvii.

9.

10.

11. Additional funding mechanisms

12. (like affordable housing fee) to purchase permanent open space on SPA – see

[13. Doyle](#)

14. [Hollis Park](#))

15.

16.

17.

18. Allow Future Adjustments:

19.

a.

b.

c. If West Berkeley Arts District is approved for affordable housing for artists: use live-work

d. ground floor for affordable artist housing, in exchange the resident artist must have a couple hours per week (or month?) open to the public/sidewalk, show artwork in front windows, or other “activation” of groundfloor space or streetscape

e.

f.

g.

- h. If the rezoning of Berkeley's three higher resourced corridors turns up design standards
- i. or systems that keep local businesses, street vibrancy, aesthetics, additional open/green space, then San Pablo Ave Specific Plan should be allowed to adopt these standards as well.

j.

k.