

Supplemental Communications (1)

(The following are communications received after packet was published on **November 22**, by noon, **December 1**.)

Communication

From: Dorothy.Walker@comcast.net <Dorothy.Walker@comcast.net>

Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 7:04 PM

To: Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: RESPONSE TO ELMWOOD PARKING STUDY AND OTHER PROPOSALS FOR HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

DOROTHY WALKER

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510 843 5994 or 510 853 1960

TO CITY OF BERKELEY STAFF WORKING ON TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING

Response to Elmwood Parking Study and Recommendations About Housing

I lived in the Elmwood for 20 years and appreciated very much it's walkability, it's easy access to commercial uses, and its proximity to the best A/C Transit line in town.

As a retired planner and very long time resident I have comments below about the proposed parking study and also more extensive comments about the possible future development of both the Elmwood and the Claremont districts.

First- regarding the MTC funded study:

This study is living in the past. With global warming we must greatly curtail auto uses. We can no longer be facilitating auto use as this study intends. It is a bad idea to park more cars in residential areas and it is a bad idea facilitating driving and parking anywhere. MTC should be funding studies of how existing low density neighborhoods can be served by public transit and also studying new forms of public transit of all kinds for many different locations . When walking is not feasible, we must have innovative transit solutions to connect neighborhoods to their commercial districts as well as to BART and the Downtown.

Second- The Future of Neighborhood Commercial Districts in the Elmwood and Claremont as well as elsewhere in Berkeley:

Every part of Berkeley must play its part in meeting housing needs. A good start has been made by getting rid of single- family zoning, but having some 3 and 4 plexes on existing developed lots is not nearly enough to achieve the amount of housing that we need to make up for Berkeley residents' unwillingness to accept new housing for over 50 years.

During those 50 years almost every vacant lot in Berkeley was filled with a single family house, and now those houses are so valuable because of the scarcity of housing that it will be very costly to remove enough of them to create vacant spaces to build a lot of new, more dense housing. . Most parts of

Berkeley must create other places for a lot of new housing. Much of this housing should be in our neighborhood commercial areas.

In addition to College Avenue, a number of small commercial areas exist in the flatlands sections of the Claremont and Elmwood areas. Many of these commercial areas are under threat because of the changes in commerce and buying habits, primarily with Amazon easy ordering and delivering. We can help maintain and improve all of these commercial areas by adding lots of housing to them. Every neighborhood commercial area, large and small, should be rezoned to permit at least five stories, with four stories of housing permitted over ground floor retail /commercial. No new one story commercial buildings should be permitted anywhere. Many land owners of parcels in these commercial districts can be expected to take advantage of the rezoning in order to have much more income from their land as well as having many more potential customers for their retail spaces. This will be a win-win for everyone, including the residents of the surrounding areas.

Third- Integrating new transit services connecting low density neighborhoods with neighborhood commercial districts and creating new small neighborhood commercial areas at transit nodes in the low density hill areas.

Almost every resident of any of the hill areas now has to drive everywhere. There are no corner markets anywhere and little or no transit services. There will now be some added density in these areas because of the new regulations permitting up to four dwelling units on every parcel, but much more change in these areas is required to greatly reduce auto use that is a major contributor to climate change.

There must be new zoning regulations to permit small neighborhood markets throughout the hill areas. These small commercial areas should be located in relation to innovative neighborhood scale transit service throughout the area so that nodes of public activities are created. This will require close coordination of transit planning with the location of small scale convenience markets. New forms of transit, perhaps autonomous vehicles, should be considered for the sometimes narrow and winding streets of hill areas.

In closing, This must be a transformational time for all Berkeleyans. I believe that every neighborhood commercial area throughout the city should be rezoned for housing above retail. But the best place to start will be the Claremont Elmwood neighborhoods where long ago racial segregation by zoning was established. These neighborhoods need to be transformed, not only to respond to global warming and to provide a lot of new housing, but to begin to change their very long history of being white-only, single family areas.

Communication

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

From: Emily Marthinsen <emilymarthinsen@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 8:35 PM

To: Thomas, Beth A. <BAThomas@cityofberkeley.info>; Murray, Ryan P <RPMurray@cityofberkeley.info>; Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>

Cc: Sophie Hahn <sophie@sophiehahn.com>

Subject: Hopkins Corridor Traffic & Placemaking Study

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Hopkins Corridor Study. I have made additional comments using the on-line tool.

I live on Albina Avenue; and I am writing to oppose both current options (Option 1 and Option 2) for Hopkins Street. These options—and associated consultant “place-making” proposals—suggest a lack of understanding about this special place. The area is lively and attractive, appealing to both immediate neighbors and the wider community. People of all ages gather here to eat, talk, play sports, shop and more. Benches and seating areas are informal and idiosyncratic. The large sycamore trees that frame Hopkins Street east of Monterey provide imageable identity. People see each other unexpectedly as they do errands or drop-off children for school and sports. People get to know the business owners and workers where they shop. This is Berkeley at its small town/big city best. It is truly a multi-use environment that has developed over time to reflect community values. It has exactly what urbanists describe and what professional planners seek to achieve: a sense of place.

I urge staff and consultants to “think outside the binary box” and look for ways to improve bicycle safety AND to preserve the village-like character (albeit crowded with non-residents—a good thing for business) of our commercial and recreational hub. Neighbors have prepared an “Option 3,” and I support careful review of this option and the development of others instead of moving forward with a preferred option among the current choices.

Significantly, neither Option 1 nor Option 2 enhances our already rich pedestrian environment. Both create untenable access issues for many people, privileging bicycle transportation over other modes. The plans seem especially limiting for the many people who may not even have the choice to ride a bike. I note that among these are mobility-impaired people, slowly moving seniors, people with small children, the children themselves as well as others. Making parking more difficult—to make cycling more convenient—leaves these people out entirely and decreases, rather than increases, access to shopping and recreation in this area.

Not only will eliminating parking constrain access to many non-bike riders, but I do not believe that eliminating parking will convince people to use bicycles to do their errands on Hopkins Street or that children coming in carpools for sports

teams will suddenly all come by bike. People who need to drive will simply circle until they find a parking space. Eliminating parking thus seems unlikely to affect our community's carbon footprint. But it may well hurt the small businesses that rely on nearby parking for easy access to their stores.

Both options attempt to solve problems which need more comprehensive solutions (the Gilman Street freeway interchange and its impact, for example). Both options also seem strangely disconnected from common-sense actions that might address some of the specific traffic and safety issues. Why not consider simpler, more creative and less costly responses to help alleviate some of the problems here? Traffic calming measures, intersection pedestrian lights, creating shared streets and repaving uneven, potholed surfaces come to mind. All these would certainly improve both bicycle and pedestrian safety along Hopkins Street, enhancing rather than limiting access.

I am 70 years old, active and in good health. I walk almost everywhere I go in Berkeley. I believe that the two Hopkins corridor options will make this particular area, my own neighborhood, much less safe as pedestrians navigate across multiple vehicle lanes, cars open doors on both traffic and bicycle lane sides, and people, driving, circle adjacent streets looking for parking. This is a wonderful, walkable and urban neighborhood with many amenities shared by people of all ages and abilities throughout our community. It's so unfortunate that the proposed plans would undo what has been years in the community's making. Planning professionals—and I am one—know better.

Communication

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

From: Barbara Fritz <bfritz@sonic.net>

Sent: Monday, November 29, 2021 10:29 AM

To: Thomas, Beth A. <BAThomas@cityofberkeley.info>; Murray, Ryan P <RPMurray@cityofberkeley.info>; Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <mayor@cityofberkeley.info>; All Council <council@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: Hopkins/Monterey

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 City of Berkeley Planning, City Council and Mayor Arreguin:

I have lived at 1639 California St. for over 40 years. Living on a Bicycle Boulevard and in this neighborhood has added to my quality of life. In those 40 years, I have used my car to drive to Monterey Market, King Pool and N. Branch Berkeley Library possibly 10 times. I do most of my errands on foot (esp. since COVID restrictions) or on my bike.

I conducted a 'facelift' on my front yard about 1 year ago and my strictest instructions to the contractor was "I need to see all around me from the driveway. We get BART commuters, Totland visitors, bikes, skateboards, etc., walkers." I love living on a Bike Boulevard and used it to get to work in North Oakland for many years.

1) I would seriously like to know, if surveyed, how many residences within 2 miles of the proposed development are supportive, or even enthusiastic. I am not. I haven't met anyone who thinks this is a great idea. I have asked neighbors, random folks on the street. I don't believe due diligence has been done outside algorithmic work. I don't have a sense of 'street level' surveillance being conducted.

2) Bad idea because:

There is already a useful Bike Boulevard.

The impact on businesses during construction.

Where are the workers supposed to park? How does this impact shoppers, customers, school kids (especially the Monterey Market corner)?

The kids at King School - let's face it, they're young 'uns and particularly unattentive to their surroundings.

Visually confusing on existing reconfigured streets and intersections - when I do take my car and have to maneuver some intersections, e.g. Milvia and Hearst, I *still* think the cars are coming at me. I take extra precautions on bike or driving on those streets, or avoid them (I'm not even going to talk about Bancroft across from Campus. . .).

Drivers will be even more lunatic and aggressive than they are now while looking for parking at Monterey/Hopkins.

I treasure my walkable neighborhood and "my" Bike Boulevard for the quality of life I am privileged to enjoy. ***The behaviors of drivers, cyclists and some pedestrians are really the most troubling and dangerous. Reconfiguring streets will not force people to their feet or onto bicycles. Public transit, paved streets and smoother sidewalks may help.***

Thankyou,
Barbara Fritz/bfritz@sonic.net
1639 California St.

Communication

From: sikorakt@aol.com <sikorakt@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 12:37 PM

To: Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>; bartplanning <bartplanning@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: Comments on Ashby/North Berkeley BART Station TOD Draft EIR

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.

Attached are two documents, submitted on behalf of the East Bay Supportive Housing Collaborative (EBSHC) and Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP):

1. A letter to the City of Berkeley Planning Commission with comments re the DEIR for the Ashby/North Berkeley BART Station Transit Oriented Development zoning standards.
2. An attachment entitled "ARCH Overview" that describes our proposal for development on the East Lot at Ashby BART Station, adjacent to the Ed Roberts Campus.

Thank you for the Planning Commission's consideration of our requests.

Kathleen Sikora, Chair
EBSHC



*A Collaboration of EBSHC and BORP**

Date: November 30, 2021

To: City of Berkeley Planning Commission

We submit three comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Ashby and North Berkeley BART Station Transit Oriented Development zoning standards, on behalf of ARCH (Ashby Recreation & Community Housing), a housing and recreation project proposed by EBSHC and BORP. Envisioned on the East Lot of the Ashby station adjacent to the Ed Roberts Campus, the proposed ARCH project has been previously introduced to both the Planning Commission and the Berkeley CAG. It is described further in an attachment to this letter entitled "ARCH Overview." Our comments follow:

1. With regard to our proposed recreational facility, we request that the zoning language that is eventually developed explicitly allow adaptive, fully accessible recreation and fitness facilities for use by the disability, South Berkeley, and greater Bay Area communities. The FEIR should clarify that the project description includes health clubs and gyms.
2. With regard to the proposed housing component, we hope to build model housing that includes a percentage of units set aside for persons with mental health challenges. Within the larger structure, but separately managed with full-time staff, we hope to embed a desperately needed licensed, adult residential facility (ARF) for 12-16 residents. Both the larger, integrated component and the ARF will require allocation of space for onsite supportive services. We envision on the ground floor, space for a community room and kitchen, two bathrooms, and several offices in addition to commercial space. The ARF would also require congregate dining and office space. Therefore, we request that the zoning that is eventually developed explicitly allow such supportive facilities for on-site, integrated, supportive housing.
3. We recognize that any use of open space for non-housing purposes necessarily involves a trade-off between the community benefit of elements that support the quality of life and space for critically needed housing. But we believe that both needs can be served by building tall, high-density housing, above seven stories where appropriate. The FEIR should clearly specify that the seven-floor minimum zoning allowance is not intended as a maximum.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

Kathleen Sikora, EBSHC Chair

Rick Smith, BORP Executive Director

ARCH Overview

November 2021

Introduction—Ashby Recreation and Community Housing (ARCH) is a project of Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) and the East Bay Supportive Housing Collaborative (EBSHC). We have formed this collaboration to build a world-class, universally designed recreation facility coupled with urgently needed affordable housing on the east parking lot of the Ashby BART station (behind the Ed Roberts Campus). BORP has more than 45 years of providing adaptive sports, fitness, and recreation programming for people with disabilities in the East Bay. EBSHC advocates for permanent supportive housing for persons with mental illness.

The entire ARCH project will be built using universal/inclusive design and green building principles. The recreational facility will leverage public transit and existing services at the Ed Roberts Campus to provide broad recreational access to both the disability and greater communities. The housing component will be deeply affordable to the extent possible, 100% accessible, and offer the right of return to displaced South Berkeley residents to the extent allowed by law.

Recreation, Wellness, & Aquatics Center—For individuals without disabilities, there are numerous opportunities to engage in physical fitness and recreation activities every day. For people with disabilities, however, access to sports, fitness, and recreation is severely limited or non-existent, making it almost impossible for them to enjoy the well-documented health and quality-of-life benefits that come from these activities. The envisioned center will be more than an athletic facility; it will be a community hub, available for use by everyone, with widespread community benefit.

The Housing Component—There is a desperate need in Alameda County for housing at the extremely low-income (ELI) level. Most persons at this level of income who live with mental illness can live successfully in various settings, if they are provided with appropriate, on-site services. ARCH would set aside a significant number of units at ELI for persons with mental illness along with the on-site services necessary for their care and well-being. Other units, affordable at other levels of AMI, would accommodate residents who do not have mental illness. This integrated model has proven highly successful in other locations.

Overall—ARCH meets BART's five transit-oriented development goals: affordable housing, community benefit, sustainability, ridership, and open space. It also meets the goals set forth in the Vision and Priorities of Berkeley's Community Advisory Group.

ARCH is a truly visionary project that would expand and integrate resources for persons with disabilities, both physical or mental. Commitment to the disability community has already been established as a priority in our city by the nationally recognized work being done at the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC). But we believe that ARCH would not only further ERC's mission, it would be a model for inclusive community by showing that, with the right support, persons with mental illness can experience a quality of life that affords dignity, ongoing recovery, and meaningful participation in community.

Communication

From: David Brandon <davidbrandon@comcast.net>

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 4:37 PM

To: Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>

Cc: Berkeley Mayor's Office <mayor@cityofberkeley.info>; All Council <council@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: Comment for Planning Commission on DEIR

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 Ms. Pearson:

I appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIR for the Berkeley BART TOD, but note that it is 395 pages without all the supporting documents. There simply hasn't been sufficient time since its release for the citizenry to digest this report and make meaningful comments. I think that the December 1 deadline for acting on the DEIR is premature, and I urge you to extend the comment period.

Nonetheless, I pinpoint three topics that should be addressed prior to approval of the DRAFT.

- several recent major changes in the layout of crosswalks, bike paths, bus stop bulbs, and traffic lights near North Berkeley BART render out-of-date the assumptions and data used in the DEIR. I suspect that Sacramento Street would no longer be rated a "high-injury street" in the BART station area. Safety impacts of TOD and the calculation of numbers of trips and modes of transportation need to be updated.
- The Planners should thoroughly delineate the impact of potential building forms and heights on wind patterns that impact the neighborhoods surrounding both development areas. Small changes in wind patterns make large differences in the livability and walkability of both residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- At a recent meeting of the Berkeley Neighborhoods Council, concern was raised about the appearance of a conflict-of-interest between Mr. Wiblin's role on the Commission and his position as Executive Vice President of Bridge Housing, a developer of housing in Berkeley, among other cities. I would like assurance that a disinterested legal authority has reviewed the matter and rendered judgment.

With appreciation for your important work, I urge you to allow more time to broaden citizen input on the DEIR at hand.

David Brandon
Berkeley, CA

Communication

From: jdsmall@pacbell.net <jdsmall@pacbell.net>

Sent: Tuesday, November 30, 2021 10:37 PM

To: Klein, Jordan <JKlein@cityofberkeley.info>; Murray, Ryan P <RPMurray@cityofberkeley.info>; Thomas, Beth A. <BATHomas@cityofberkeley.info>; Pearson, Alene <apearson@cityofberkeley.info>; Hahn, Sophie <SHahn@cityofberkeley.info>; Berkeley Mayor's Office <mayor@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: Hopkins Corridor Plan/What about Mahmoud Hosseini?

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 long-time neighbor and frequent customer of the distinctive and varied Hopkins Street shops, which I usually access on foot. As you weigh the pros and cons of the various plans under consideration, I urge you to take into account a key figure in the neighborhood, Mahmoud Hosseini of Monterey Flowers. Whatever plan is finally agreed on, it must save space for Mahmoud's sidewalk cart, its glorious flowers and the uniquely generous presence of its owner.

Here is how I described Mahmoud in a 2015 Yelp post that is still highly relevant:

The best flowers in North Berkeley are sold at a stall with no sign, on the sidewalk next to Monterey Market, by a man known simply to his customers as Mahmoud. For over ten years Mahmoud has sold fresh, beautiful flowers at reasonable prices from his stand on Hopkins Street. You can find cheaper flowers at Monterey Market, but they will likely not last long. And you can find more expensive flowers at any number of places. What's unique about Mahmoud's selection is that his flowers are both carefully chosen and moderately priced. In addition, he has an artist's eye for color and design: when you ask Mahmoud to make you a bouquet, you get something strikingly beautiful and original, rather than a ready-made bunch jammed into a tub. Along with the flowers you may get -- on those days when you can spare a few minutes -- the pleasures of Mahmoud's conversation: by turns sweet, courtly, ironic, melancholy, boisterous... but always, starting and ending with a smile.

And here is a recent *Berkeleyside* report bearing witness to Mahmoud's deep and broad-based support in the Hopkins Street neighborhood:

In the spotlight



Mahmoud Hosseini, who sells flowers outside Monterey Market. Credit: Brandy Collins
Hosseini's Flower Cart

Mahmoud Hosseini has sold flowers from a cart on the Hopkins Avenue sidewalk outside Monterey Market for more than 15 years.

“He is truly a community fixture and is a very kind and generous person who makes tiny bouquets from flowers that have fallen from the stems, and gives them to little children,” one customer wrote in an email to Berkeleyside.

As an independent vendor, Hosseini has no health insurance and when he found out he needed dentures, he couldn't afford the \$7,100 expense. Hoping to help their local flower salesman, a group of neighbors led by Nick Morgan started a GoFundMe campaign that raised over \$12,000. In addition to paying for Hosseini's dental work, that was enough money to repair and upgrade his flower cart with new wood.

“I really appreciate your kindness; I hope I deserve it,” Hosseini told the organizers of the GoFundMe.

* * *

I realize that planning for the Hopkins Street Corridor involves weighing numerous, complex factors. I realize that, by some calculations, Mahmoud is just one man with a wooden cart. Yet he and his flowers live at the heart of this small, much-loved neighborhood. Whatever plan may be adopted, it must not sacrifice Mahmoud, his business and his livelihood.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Judith Small