



Lori Droste  
Berkeley City Council, District 8

ACTION CALENDAR  
November 28, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmembers Lori Droste and Ben Bartlett  
Subject: Ministerial Approval of Zoning-Compliant Affordable Housing

#### RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to amend the zoning ordinance to allow ministerial approval of zoning-compliant affordable housing with design review conducted by staff. "Affordable housing" should be defined as a project provided by one of the region's nonprofit affordable housing developers (SAHA, Bridge, RCD, etc.).

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time and the potential costs associated with any necessary consultants.

#### BACKGROUND

If Council approves this recommendation, it will be easier and faster to create affordable housing in Berkeley since the project review process can take significant time. Like most cities across California, Berkeley struggles to create enough below market rate units. In particular, the City has not produced its fair share of the goals set by the Association of Bay Area Government's Regional Housing Needs Allocation for below market units. The City of Berkeley needs to make it much easier to create those units.

According to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, "researchers have linked additional review time to higher housing costs. A study of jurisdictions in the Bay Area found that each layer of independent review was associated with a 4% increase in a jurisdiction's home prices ([California's High Housing Costs: Causes and Consequences, 2015](#))." Excessive regulation also lowers the elasticity of new housing supply by increasing delays in the permit process (Paciorek, 2013). UC Berkeley Professor Enrico Moretti also has [written extensively](#) about how burdensome land use regulations contribute to high housing costs and worsening environmental conditions. Rising rents are the [main culprit](#) in the Bay Area's exploding homeless population. Reducing barriers to construction can have large effects on homelessness ([PPIC, 2001](#)).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This recommendation is consistent with Berkeley's environmental sustainability goals. Transportation emissions are the predominant source of California's greenhouse gas emissions. By building affordable housing in areas well-served by transit, the City of Berkeley can positively impact the environment by reducing commute times and disincentivizing urban sprawl.

CONTACT PERSON

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