

ACTION CALENDAR  
May 21, 2020

To: Honorable Members of the Berkeley Rent Board

From: Commissioners Igor Tregub, Chair Laverde, Vice Chair Simon-Weisberg,  
and Commissioner Alpert

Subject: Letter to UC on 1921 Walnut

RECOMMENDATION

The Berkeley Rent Board shall send a letter to the University of California (UC) urging it to preserve the rent-controlled units at the 1921 Walnut or replace it, on a one-for-one basis, with permanently affordable units, in accordance with applicable state and local policy.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Minimal staff time to transmit letter.

BACKGROUND

UC Berkeley is currently negotiating to purchase and possibly demolish a 111-year-old apartment building with eight rent-stabilized units at 1921 Walnut Street. 12 residents occupy the eight units, with some having lived there for more than 25 years.<sup>1</sup> According to *Berkeleyside*, "UC Berkeley is planning to build a new 850-bed apartment complex for transfer and upper-division students on land it owns bounded by University Avenue, Oxford Street, Walnut Street, and Berkeley Way."<sup>2</sup> While UC Berkeley is a state institution and does not have to abide by Berkeley laws. Berkeley requires the reconstruction of rent-controlled apartments if any rent-stabilized apartments are demolished, or their replacement, on a one-for-one basis, with permanently affordable units.<sup>3</sup> In addition, certain provisions of SB 330, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, may apply, regardless of UC's possible exemption of City of Berkeley ordinances.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2020/05/04/uc-berkeley-is-in-negotiations-to-purchase-and-potentially-tear-down-a-111-year-old-rent-controlled-apartment-building>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> 23C.08.020 Elimination of Dwelling Units through Demolition;  
<https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/Berkeley/html/Berkeley23C/Berkeley23C08/Berkeley23C08020.html#23C.08.020>

<sup>4</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200SB330](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200SB330)

A letter from the Rent Stabilization Board to UC Berkeley and UC Regents is proposed, which will communicate the elected Rent Board's position that the eight rent-stabilized units on 1921 Walnut St. should be preserved or replaced on a one-for-one basis with permanently affordable housing units; that the sitting tenants of the building shall be relocated into units of comparable respective sizes and rents (particularly if the tenant households are income-qualified); and that, in general, the UC should – either per requirement or voluntarily – honor applicable state and local ordinances.

CONTACT

Igor Tregub

RSBTregub@cityofberkeley.info