

From: [Kristin Nichols](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Albany Bowl Project An Albany Monstrosity
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 1:18:54 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Greetings,

I looked over the proposal for the Albany Bowl housing project and what an ugly monstrosity it is. It is far larger than it should be and will intensify an already congested area of San Pablo Ave. There should be no more than 30 units allowed to be built in this area to ensure Albany remains charming, community focused, and accessible to all residents. Projects like this are common in Berkeley on San Pablo and are huge, sterile, limit parking for businesses, increase noise, and create loads of traffic. It is nearly impassible along San Pablo and more housing will only make this situation worse.

I understand this likely is financially desirable to the city, but this project is far too big to be supported by the community.

Thank you,
Kristin Nichols

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Marsha Skinner](#)
To: [Anne Hersch](#); [Jeff Bond](#); [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Comments _ San Pablo plan and 540 San Pablo project
Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 3:36:51 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Ms Hersch
cc Bond

I am not able to find a spot on your web site to comment on the proposed development at the Albany Bowl site

> I oppose the proposed size of this project

The City's own consultants , in their recent presentation, said " Let's bring our height limits into consistency with neighboring cities"

(paraphrased) while showing in an illustration that neighboring cities were in the 40, 50, 55 foot range

There is nothing 8 stories tall anywhere close The largest project that I see while doing errands is the housing in Berkeley at the former McNevin car lot,

> This proposed project would be roughly DOUBLE that size

You will also note that your own survey indicated very little support for an increase to 7 or 8 stories.

Elsewhere in Albany there are many 2 story apartment buildings, with a ground floor for parking or other uses. Some projects are 3 stories. 8 stories is like dropping a UC dorm into the neighborhood.

The homes in the neighborhood around the project are one and 2 story, with some apartment buildings

Affordable takes many forms, and the approximately 800 sq ft. homes on Madison provide an entry point to home ownership for young families. Other families, particularly if they have pets, choose the homes and apartments in that area, generally older housing stock, or a duplex with a yard.

Albany Hill already creates a situation in that area where sunset comes early

Someone should mock up the proposed mass of this building and really look at its shadow.

(Spoiler alert - moss, mold, and termites eagerly await this construction)

> I oppose the allowance of one half parking space per unit

You are going to think this is too long, but I am going to provide you some specifics about what it is really like here in the real world.

Right near this project, you approved the addition of an ADU to a back yard. What you failed to note was - the homeowners have 2 cars. The house had already been subdivided into 2 units, and the tenants have 3 cars. The ADU was for grandparents to move in. While current fables might have you believe that " old granny" would not be driving, they added another car. The driveway is gated, and cannot hold a car. Their small lot size means limited street frontage. So 6 cars are generated by that one lot.

I have neighbors, nice people, firm supporters of " Strollers and Rollers" They would tell you that they often bicycle. Yup, that's true. And when they do , one car is parked in their driveway, and the other one is out on the street. Then their dog walker comes, in a car, and parks briefly to pick up and return the dog. They share a nanny, the other parent drives here, then takes public transportation, leaving her car. The grandparents are frequent visitors, and always drive.

Next door, a similar young family has one car. Their nanny arrives by car. (as do co-workers for one of the adults)

Both households receive multiple deliveries each day, FedEx, Amazon, DoorDash, etc All are in vehicles.

Next door on the other side - 3 cars for 2 drivers. A remodel is in progress there with a claim that they have 3 off street parking places. Over the years' it's been rare that even ONE car parks in the driveway,

and certainly three could not .

Recently replaced by a family with only 2 cars, other neighbors had a collector car in the driveway, and parked their other 2 cars on the street.

Three grad students had 3 cars. Yes, they took Uber to campus - but the cars were parked out front. Being young and social, they had frequent gatherings for both school and pleasure. More cars

You approved construction of an ADU Again, one of these families would tell you that they often bicycle Yes, they do, and then their cars are sitting on the street, with 1 able to park in the driveway.

Divorce and family members moving on have reduced the number of cars for that one lot from 9 to 3 or 4

Their next door neighbor, an elderly man in his 80s, was reduced to placing a traffic pylon in the parking place in front of his home to save his spot. That problem was solved only because the car parked on the street was stolen, so now he has only 1 car which he can park in his garage

There's more, but I'll stop

Note that we are a block and a half from Solano, so there is transportation available.

It is already impossible to park in the 600 block of Adams. The residents of your proposed project will make a bad situation worse.

Merchants and restaurants in the area will have to depend on the residents who live right there.

The current proposal is a mistake. Please do not be so eager to build more affordable housing that you fail to consider the impact on that section of the city.

From: [Tom Newton](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Where?
Date: Saturday, March 20, 2021 1:48:27 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

As many Albanians likely did, I read with great interest in Friday's e-news about a planned development...a big one by Albany standards...at 540 San Pablo Ave.

It sure would have been helpful in the e-news, AND in the on line p&z agenda, if a little bit of information about the site was included...like where the hell 540 San Pablo Ave.is. My wife and I have lived here for nearly 50 years and neither of us could figure it out. I wouldn't have had to Google the address to find out that it is the Albany Bowl site.

The usual items up for discussion/consideration on the p&z agendas offer maps, diagrams, pictures of the project under consideration. They are very much appreciated.

It is the bowling alley, isn't it? And it looks like an unimaginative Lego builder has claimed the site.

Can I get a pair of 9 1/2 shoes, please. kidding.

thanks,

tom newton

From: [Bryan Marten](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Item 8-1 Study Session - Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Saturday, March 20, 2021 5:16:49 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

I'm asking questions and providing input about item 8-1 on Wednesday's agenda, the Albany Bowl development. I don't need an emailed response. I request staff address/answer as many of these questions during staff's intro to the item as possible and the commission discuss them afterwards when deciding on what guidance to provide to staff.

Thanks,

Bryan Marten
Resident, 600 Block of Adams

- a) Please explain in plain language for people who do not regularly follow P&Z meetings what is meant on pg 6 of the staff report by "Waivers" and "Concessions" and what impact these have on what say, if any, the city has on the design of the development.
- b) I hear some Albany residents wishing the developer could incorporate a bowling alley or a grocery store or other specific kinds of retail on the property. What say, if any, does the city or the public have in the commercial portions of the plan?
- c) What are the 24 commercial parking spaces for and how was that number determined?
- d) As a neighbor to the property I am relieved there are no driveways shown onto Adams or Clay. This will help minimize traffic on those side streets and focus traffic onto state highway 123. I am curious why the plans show a connection to the parking lot for the property to the north? If the reason for that connection is known, please explain.
- e) As much as I recognize the negative environmental and health impacts of a car-centered society, and as much as I, a neighbor to the development, recognize this site is located next to some of the best transit in the East Bay (3 #72 bus lines on SP Ave, short walk to #18 and #52 bus to downtown Berkeley/UC Berkeley, a short walk to 2 trans-Bay bus lines, 10 min walk to ECP BART) I also recognize that my family needs at least 1 car, sometimes 2 for a lot of what we do. Given that in the plans for the development there are fewer designated parking spaces for residents than there are units, does the city expect many residents of the development to sell all of their

cars to move there? Or does the commission expect the residents will flood the side streets with their parked cars, side streets that are already full of parked cars?

f) To facilitate people living with fewer or no cars, can the city require the developer to set aside several parking spaces for ZipCar, City Car Share, Gig Car Share or other car sharing services as is done in University Village?

g) To facilitate people living with fewer or no cars, can the city require the developer to set aside some kind of space for ride share pick-up/drop-off (eg. Uber, Lyft, etc.), food delivery (eg. DoorDash, Uber Eats, Instacart, etc., or farm box), bike or scooter share services (eg. Lime)?

h) To facilitate people living with fewer or no cars, can the city require the developer to facilitate and fund the city's long-planned bike/ped bridge across Cerrito Creek at the north end of Adams next to the development thereby connecting its residents to north-bound bike paths that avoid San Pablo Ave and connect the development via a 5 min walk to Pacific East Mall with 99 Ranch supermarket, Bridges Rock Gym, a creek-side playground (the only playground anywhere near the development), etc.?

i) I see the attachments to the agenda include the Active Transportation Plan for Adams St from 2012/2014 which includes goals of 2-way bike traffic and a bridge across the Cerrito Creek. Why does it not also include the more recent decision by the city council to implement 2-way bike traffic on Adams and Kains?

j) To facilitate people living with fewer or no cars, given that the property is across town from Marin elementary school and due to its location requires crossing busy streets to get to any of Albany's K-12 schools (SP Ave or Buchanan, Solano Ave) can the city require the developer to facilitate a "walking school bus" service - where adults walk with kids to school or to the YMCA's before-school care which itself walks kids to school or similar service?

k) To help ensure the neighboring community is not flooded with parked cars, can the city enact parking permits, ticketed street sweeping or other measures that would disincentivize on-street car parking?

l) Can the city require a sheltered bike path on SP Ave as implemented in front of Sprouts and Belmont Village?

m) Is this project for owned condos or for rented apartments and if it's one or the other how easy would it be for the owner to switch it later?

n) The plans say 21 affordable units. The staff report clarifies that that is for Very Low Income residents which means "50% of Area Median Income". Please put that into context for people using concrete examples and how that would work for people to secure one of those units.

o) The design resembles a gated community. In what ways can the city help ensure residents experience a connection to the neighborhood and surrounding community?

p) Given the number of proposed units and their number of bedrooms, how many people are anticipated to live on the property once fully occupied?

From: [Roberta Smith](#)
To: planning@albanyca.org; kimsunnyus@yahoo.com
Subject: Proposed Mix Use Development of 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Sunday, March 21, 2021 1:47:16 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

I am opposed to proposed Mix Use Development of 540 San Pablo Avenue on grounds that such changes will have a deleterious impact on the surrounding environment by increasing population, impacting the current infrastructure, and altering the present beloved small town atmosphere.

Sun Yung Kim
412 Kains Avenue
Albany, CA 94706

480-289-9266

From: [Bryan Marten](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Item 8-1 **Study Session** Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 12:35:46 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

This is a public comment for Item 8-1 **Study Session** Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue on Wednesdays' agenda. I see from the posted public comments that there is a lot of concern in the neighborhood about parking - about the existing situation for parking and the proposed future at Albany Bowl where up to 500 people may move into a space that currently has no people and there are fewer parking spaces planned than units.

I am for building more housing in Albany, housing that is affordable. I think most adults with kids want their kids when grown to have the option to live near them. A current home for sale on the 500 block of Adams, on the same block as this planned development, illustrates the affordability dilemma - it is a tiny 2BR/1BA at only 783 sq ft among the smallest single family homes in Albany yet is listed for \$750,000 which would typically require a 20% cash down payment of \$150,000 to qualify for a loan to purchase it. So Albany already has a large stock of million dollar homes and 3/4 million dollar homes - every single house in town. We need affordable housing that will allow current families to stay and grown children to have the option to raise their own children in Albany near grandparents.

In the neighborhood right now there are homes which for years have had twice as many cars as drivers. What's keeping residents of the new development from doing the same? Nothing. If they all did that, that would mean hundreds of additional cars parked on the street in the neighborhood. So we need the housing but we also need the city to help ensure that when the state requires so few parking spaces for a big development that those new residents and the existing residents in the neighborhood have sufficient incentives and supports to live with fewer cars or no cars. As more developments like this one come to the city the call for those incentives and supports will only grow louder so the city needs to think all of this through.

I'm seeing some concerns about ADUs in some of the early public comments for this item and as someone who recently put in an ADU I wanted to clear up some misconceptions. 1) The state says cities need 0 or 1 off-street parking space per ADU and Albany has chosen to require 0. 2) The city does check how many units (single family, duplex, triplex, etc.) are already on a property and what the zoning is for that parcel and decides if an ADU of whatever size can be approved or not. 3) The city does not ask if a relative is going to move into the ADU or how many cars any occupants of the ADU will have or how many cars people in the primary residence already have or plan to have in the future. 4) The ADU approval process has been streamlined by the city and state so that the approval process is typically

handled at the counter in city hall, without public input, if the design meets all the criteria so if there was no public hearing then the ADU met all the requirements.

My understanding is that the number of ADUs in Albany has gone up substantially since the city and state relaxed the ADU restrictions including eliminating the requirement for off-street parking. But it's still only a few units each year. On the city website I count 18 ADU plans submitted in Albany in 2019. While each one potentially impacts parking near it a little, it is nothing like the shock to the system the neighborhood around Albany Bowl is anticipating when the new development goes in. So we need the city to help ensure that when the state requires so few parking spaces for a big development that those new residents and the existing residents in the neighborhood have sufficient incentives and supports to live with fewer cars or no cars.

Some incentives the city could implement for residents to own fewer cars or park fewer cars on the street: Require parking permits for all of Albany or just for neighborhoods with these kinds of developments or near commercial corridors where parking for residents is tight so that residents pay an annual fee to keep each vehicle on the street - even a small fee will cause some residents to re-evaluate their vehicle choices. Enforce street sweeping with parking tickets on all Albany streets - even if everyone successfully moves their cars from side to side so that no one ever gets a parking ticket, the hassle alone of having to move the cars will impact people with the most cars parked on the street the most.

Some supports the city could provide for residents to own fewer cars or park fewer cars on the street: Enact bike/ped-friendly policies and infrastructure including the long-planned bike/ped bridge over Cerrito creek, bike boulevards on Adams/Kains and elsewhere around town, require dedicated parking in the development for car-share vehicles like ZipCar, require areas at the perimeter or interior of the development for ride share pick-up/drop off and food delivery, support safe routes to schools so families will let their children walk or ride bikes to school, require dedicated space for bike/scooter-share services, require charging stations for electric bikes, require bus stops near the development be improved.

Bryan Marten
Resident, 600 block of Adams

From: [ann.jennings](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Albany Bowl Proposed Development
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 11:21:50 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Greetings

Upon reading an article on SF Gate about the proposed development at the Albany Bowl site several concerns and questions arose

What type of commercial space do the developers envision. PLEASE no more nail shops or Massage Spas. Albany is saturated with these businesses. Perhaps Sutter Health could expand.

The size of the development. There is a large new apartment complex at Cedar and San Pablo in Berkeley. It appears that many of the units are still empty. I've noticed the same in El Cerrito. We need more affordable units for individuals earning \$45,000 to \$80,000 yearly. Paying \$2,800 to \$3,000 monthly rent does not make sense. I would support the size only if the number of below market rate units were tripled.

Regards

Ann Jennings

Albany resident and renter

ajalbany@yahoo.com

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Britt Tanner](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: support development at Albany Bowl
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 11:24:08 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Hello,

I just wanted to voice my support for dense development at the Albany Bowl site, as long as it is designed with alternative modes in mind, for example with ample bike parking, minimizing parking per unit, supporting car sharing / electric cars, designing to support transit by thoughtful placement of driveway to reduce impacts to buses on San pablo, etc.

Thank you.

Britt

resident on San Gabriel near Brighton

From: sun.yung.kim
To: planning@albanyca.org
Subject: Fw: Proposed Mix Use Development of 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 1:53:19 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

----- Forwarded Message -----

To: "planning@albanyca.org" <planning@albanyca.org>; "kimsunnyus@yahoo.com" <kimsunnyus@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sunday, March 21, 2021, 01:47:11 PM MST

Subject: Proposed Mix Use Development of 540 San Pablo Avenue

I am opposed to proposed Mix Use Development of 540 San Pablo Avenue on grounds that such changes will have a deleterious impact on the surrounding environment by increasing population, impacting the current infrastructure, and altering the present beloved small town atmosphere.

Sun Yung Kim
412 Kains Avenue
Albany, CA 94706

480-289-9266

March 22, 2021

Concerns Regarding Proposed 5 and 6 story Mixed-Use Apartments
at 540 San Pablo Ave, Albany California

Submitted by: Janice Butts, property owner of 506 Adams Street, Albany CA

Most architects and city planners are familiar with the design planning concepts of the renowned book, "[A Pattern Language](#)," written by Christopher Alexander with Sara Ishikawa, Murray Silverstein, Max Jacobson, Ingrid Fiksdahl-King and Shlomo Angel.

The book proposes that specific design choices serve us by helping to build better relationships and communities. Prospective design choices can be queried as how well they offer quality, human scale solutions to questions such as:

What is the human interaction I'm trying to facilitate with this structure?

Will the design contribute to building or creating a better environment?

Does the proposed design make sense in relation to the people it will impact?

I would propose that the design for 540 San Pablo Ave be evaluated against those criteria.

In particular, I have the following concerns and questions about the project.

1. Building Heights

The proposed buildings are too tall and will be a stark contrast to the existing single story homes on Adams Street. Other than the apartment towers on the west face of Albany Hill, I am not aware of any Albany buildings in commercial zones or adjacent to residential zones, that are more than 4 stories.

While there are 2 small apartment complexes on the 500 block of Adams, the remaining homes on the 500 block of Adams are small single story family homes.

The proposed buildings vary too much from the predominant height of these surrounding buildings. The taller buildings will loom over the single story home neighborhood, affecting privacy, and making the street feel dark, constricted, and narrow.

2. Access to Sunlight

The height of the proposed building will block sunlight from the east, and with the slope of Albany Hill already blocking full sun from the west earlier in the day than in flat elevations, the 500 block of Adams will become a canyon of shadow, especially in the winter months.

I quote the City of Sarasota, for its straight forward statement regarding this issue.

"Per the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County, the daylight plane:

Establishes a balance between nonresidential and residential zones "by a gradual increase in height between developments."

1. Maintains an appropriate building scale in the area.
2. Protects yours and your neighbors' privacy.

In other words, this makes sure that your two-story residence isn't dwarfed by a skyscraper next to it, allowing people on the fifth floor to see into your home."

3. Entrances and Exits

How many vehicle entrances and/or exits are there to the site?

Do they all connect to San Pablo Ave vs. Adams Street?

Does the north end of the parking lot connect to the adjacent parking at Sutter East Bay Medical Foundation? Has this project negotiated the right to pass through and/or use the Sutter East Bay Medical Foundation's parking lot for additional parking sites?

4. Parking

I understand that there will be a total of 197 parking sites allocated for the 207 living units and the commercial units. That is 10 fewer spaces than living units.

Will commercial parking spaces be available for residents' use? If not, how many spaces are reserved for commercial use? What are the parking provisions for delivery services, maintenance service providers, and commercial unit customers?

Assuming residents or their visitors, service providers, etc. cannot find parking available on the site, what measures will be taken to prevent overflow parking on Adams Street?

Will the perimeter wall around the property remain and be extended to prevent pedestrian access from the site to Adams Street?

5. Waste water and Sewage

The 500 block of Adams has had chronic issues with sewage disposal. There have been multiple projects over the years to address these issues, but the aging infrastructure continues to present problems.

Where will the waste water and sewage from the 540 San Pablo Ave project be directed?

How is the city holding the developers responsible for the additional capacity the project will require on Albany's existing utility and sewage infrastructure?

6. Outdoor Common Spaces

Does the design include any outdoor gathering spaces residents can use?

Are there any outdoor play areas for children of residents?

Thank you for addressing these issues in your evaluation of the design proposal for 540 San Pablo Ave. I would like to see design proposals that promote a better environment and a sense of community with the existing neighborhood on the 500 block of Adams Street.

Janice Butts

jb.ecomail@gmail.com

650 520 9901

From: [Kara Vuicich](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: March 24, 2021 Item 8-1 Study Session Proposed MU Development at 540 San Pablo Ave
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 8:30:07 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Dear Commissioners,

While my family will miss Albany Bowl, we are thrilled that new housing (including affordable housing) that is so desperately needed by our city and region is being proposed for 540 San Pablo Avenue. This site's location in close proximity to BART, AC Transit service, schools, grocery stores, and other services and amenities makes it an ideal location for multi-family housing that will enable its residents to be significantly less car-dependent. I have several questions about the project that I hope Commissioners will ask during their study session on March 24th:

1. Under state density bonus law, the city cannot legally require the developer to provide more than 0.5 parking spaces per unit (p.9 of the staff report). I don't think the city is prohibited from requiring the developer to develop and implement a transportation demand management plan, however, and having a robust TDM plan for the project could address many of the neighborhood concerns regarding spillover parking impacts. Can the city require the developer to prepare and implement a TDM plan that includes the following measures:

- a) Financial incentives for carsharing and transit provided to residents upon move-in; this could be a preloaded Clipper card for each resident, and a discounted GIG or Zip carshare rate for the first 6-12 months of residency (or a reimbursement if it's not possible to set up a discount). Research has shown that people are more likely to change their travel behavior in conjunction with major life changes, such as moving or taking a new job. Financial incentives combined with robust marketing of non-auto modes at move-in and during the first months of residency could significantly affect project residents' travel behavior in the long term.
- b) Robust marketing and information for residents regarding carsharing, transit, and other non-auto modes upon move-in and in building common areas, including nearby services and amenities that can be accessed by walking, bicycling, and transit.
- c) Installation of real-time transit information in the building lobby (e.g. transitscreen or a similar product).
- d) Unbundling of parking (along with measures that prevent project residents from storing their cars in the public right-of-way to avoid paying for resident parking in the building).

2. Can the city require that the project provide a certain number of electric vehicle charging spaces (if not already included in the project)?

3. Can the city require additional secure bicycle parking that also includes charging facilities for electric bicycles and spaces that accommodate cargo bikes? I would like to see at least 1.5 secure bicycle parking spaces per unit for a total of 311 or more secure bicycle parking spaces. Providing adequate, secure bicycle parking for residents is critical in terms of facilitating their use of bicycles for multiple types of trips.

4. Zoning only requires 19 off-street parking spaces for the commercial portion of the project. Depending on the nature of the commercial uses, little to no off-street parking may be needed given that project residents and those already living nearby will be able to easily walk and bike to the site. Can the Commission request that the developer only provide the required number of off-street spaces (or fewer, if possible)? This space could instead be utilized to provide additional secure bicycle parking.

5. Can the city require the developer to make commercial parking spaces within the project available to residents during evenings and other times when the commercial uses are closed? Providing some additional flexible parking could prevent parking spillover in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Could there be a similar agreement/arrangement for the off-street surface parking that will remain just north of the site, which could also help alleviate any concerns about spillover parking? There is an opportunity for shared parking both within the project and immediately adjacent to it that would enable residents to use these spaces when not being used by businesses.

6. There is currently a bus stop in front of the proposed project on San Pablo Ave. How will the project enhance this stop with lighting and street furniture (bench, shelter, etc)? Will the developer be required to consult with AC Transit regarding bus stop and curb design to facilitate safe and efficient bus operations and encourage bus use?

7. Will the proposed project be brought to the Transportation Commission for their feedback on project design elements that affect pedestrian, bicycle, bus transit, and vehicular movement and access?

Thank you for considering my questions.

Sincerely,
Kara Vuicich
1027 Peralta Avenue
Albany, CA 94706

From: [Nick Peterson](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Cc: [Acac](#); acac-core@googlegroups.com; albany-econ-dev@googlegroups.com
Subject: RE: PZC 3/24/21 Agenda item 8-1 540 San Pablo Ave Study Session
Date: Monday, March 22, 2021 11:27:06 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am writing you in support of the development at 540 San Pablo Avenue proposed by Tractenberg Architects representing the property owners. Although I regret the loss of a long time local business that factored fondly into my family's history and provided many Albany families with a fun place to go, I applaud the property owners for their vision in recognizing that their San Pablo Ave location provides an ideal site to launch the next era of this important thoroughfare's evolution in Albany. As the first major development along San Pablo Ave in over a decade, this project will set a precedent for our city's response to critical and urgent issues that impact not only Albany but the entire Bay Area.

Albany can choose to go in two directions:

We can creatively and innovatively address the issues of housing, wealth disparity, diversity, and climate change with bold and carefully crafted development that increases affordable housing, opens the possibility of an Albany address for a diverse group of new residents, and directly addresses climate change by providing sustainable housing not dependant on fossil fuels for living or commuting,

OR

We can oppose change and the crisis plaguing our larger community and devote ourselves to keeping Albany as a remnant of restrictive planning regulations and unmet potential with a primary business artery that struggles to attract shoppers and is little more than a drive-through district that one travels on while going to other more vibrant urban areas in adjacent towns.

Albany must embrace the first option which is essential if we wish to have any reasonable explanation to future generations of how we rose to the challenge of our time and created an urban village that provides affordable sustainable housing located near transit options and shopping to enable residents to lead healthy and green house gas emissions free lives.

Albany is destined to change, the past can not be restored and the vision of suburban living that our country embraced from the 40s through the 90s needs to be replaced. Every city, even an "urban village", needs urban areas where people can live close to businesses and transit and elect to use active transportation and other alternatives to single passenger vehicles to lead their lives. That this type of housing is currently sparse in Albany does not mean Albany can not accommodate it. Will this have impacts on the current residents? Most likely. Are there ways to mitigate the negative impacts? Yes, if we work together towards a more inclusive goal and with well conceived requirements that encourage good design and effective mitigating measures.

Albany needs new citizens and businesses to stay vital and vibrant. The areas of Albany with the highest potential for creative and sustainable development that will provide for the future

of Albany for the next few generations are along San Pablo Ave. This project realizes this potential and makes reasonable efforts to do this in a way that provides buffers, visual interest and sustainability while still providing affordability to those who cannot pay a million dollars for a single family home in our city.

Could the project have features that made it blend more on a visual level with the surrounding urban environment? Possibly, but the current state of San Pablo Ave is from an era where car lots, one and two story retail, and car oriented services lined the street and do not represent the future of a vibrant urban village.

We can debate what looks attractive or not but state law now requires that we allow a certain level of density in locations that can support it best. If we attempt to obstruct this project on the basis of size and density, not only will the city be legally challenged and expend resources battling State mandated housing density bonuses, but, by not doing our fair share to address California's housing shortage, we stand to lose critical state funding for infrastructure and street improvements that are critical to keeping Albany safe and functioning.

We will also fail to rise to the moment and use our better judgement, progressive spirit, and ingenuity to embrace change and work together to create a future Albany that is more inclusive, more sustainable, more affordable, and more human.

I look forward to seeing this project completed and welcoming the 207 new households it will bring to our community. I also look forward to seeing careful and considerate requirements for addressing the reasonable concerns of the projects immediate neighbors. But I respectfully disagree that this necessarily requires fewer units and lower building heights. Albany is more visionary than just imposing limits that consider only a very small number of adjacent property owners or the knee jerk reactions of no growth nay sayers. This is the time for a bold vision and the basics of the proposed project with it's high number of very low income housing units, it's landscape buffer features, it's light courts, it's apparent embracing of 100% electrical power with potential solar rooftop panels, and it's inclusion of secure bike storage rooms is a vision of the future along San Pablo Avenue that all of Albany should endorse.

As a thirty year resident of Albany, long time environmentalist, and founding member of the Albany Climate Action Coalition, I will continue to support the project wholly if it also uses 100% electrical power (no gas connection), provides half the residential parking with EV level 2 charge points, includes the rooftop solar system in the initial project, and installs trees no smaller than 48 inch box size along the surrounding three streets. These are measures that are in direct alignment with Albany's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and would make this project virtually a net zero building (net zero carbon emissions) with a very high possibility that most of the vehicles associated with the residences would be EVs. This project would then be a clear and appropriate symbol of where Albany wants to be in the near future. It would show that Albany truly is a forward thinking community that cares about our residents and welcomes them to a sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive urban village by the bay.

Thank you very much,

Nick Peterson
Albany Climate Action Coalition

March 23, 2021

Albany Planning and Zoning Commission (via email)

RE: Support for Urban Infill projects like 540 San Pablo Avenue

Dear Albany Planning and Zoning Commission,

For over 60 years, Greenbelt Alliance has helped create cities and neighborhoods that make the Bay Area a better place to live—healthy places where people can walk and bike; communities with parks, shops, transportation options; homes that are affordable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Greenbelt Alliance encourages Climate SMART—Sustainable, Mixed, Affordable, Resilient, Transit-Oriented—Development that advance the right kind of development in the right places. By promoting climate-smart development we can create thriving, resilient neighborhoods with ready access to transit and housing choices for all of the Bay Area's people.

Greenbelt Alliance applauds the city of Albany for considering climate SMART infill projects like 540 San Pablo Avenue.

I grew up in El Cerrito a few blocks away and spent many Saturday afternoons at Albany Bowl. While I am sad to see it gone, this is the perfect opportunity to utilize the state density bonus law and increase the housing opportunities in this area. This is a perfect location for dense, infill housing. This stretch of San Pablo avenue is close to BART, AC Transit lines and has a myriad of retail options.

This year has demonstrated that the long-predicted impacts of climate change are already becoming our daily reality. One of the best ways to address our climate crisis is to build more dense, infill housing in existing communities close to transit. According to research from the CoolClimate Network out of UC Berkeley, allowing more people to live in cities like Berkeley could be the most impactful ways of reducing climate pollution.

540 San Pablo Avenue is the kind of climate-smart development that we need in the Bay Area to meet our housing goals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and make sure that local residents are able to grow and thrive in their own communities. In closing, this is another smart step for the City Albany to ensure the creation of homes and vibrant communities near jobs, retail, and transit. We hope its approval will inspire communities around the Bay Area to redouble their efforts to grow smartly.

Sincerely,



Zoe Siegel
Director of Climate Resilience, Greenbelt Alliance
zsiegel@greenbelt.org

From: david.wemmer12@gmail.com
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Cc: ["Acac"; albany-econ-dev@googlegroups.com; acac-core@googlegroups.com](#)
Subject: RE: PZC 3/24/21 Agenda item 8-1 540 San Pablo Ave Study Session
Date: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 12:22:21 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am writing you in support of the development at 540 San Pablo Avenue proposed by Tractenberg Architects representing the property owners. I find the new use at this location to be exactly what the community needs moving into the green future. Hopefully other similar projects will join them in the future.

The only comment I would like to offer on the proposed project is that we should provide a variance so that both buildings are 6 stories high. It doesn't make sense to me to allow one at 6 stories and the other at 5 due to what I see as somewhat minor development regulations. I think it is more important to fully take advantage of this site and the opportunity and increase the density just a little. A little more density will further support Albany businesses and our local and regional transit. Also from a visual and architectural point of view I don't see a difference.

I would appreciate your further consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
David Wemmer
726 Pomona Ave.
Albany

From: [Clay Larson](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Comment on Item 8.1, Study Session, Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 1:24:52 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Chair Watty and Commission Members;

I am writing to comment on Item 8.1, Study Session, Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue, on the agenda of Wednesday night's commission meeting. In particular, I would like to comment on: The exemption of the project from CEQA review; The consistency with the General Plan; and the inadequate justification for the requested concessions.

-
Project's Exemption from CEQA Review

-
In the staff report under the section, Environmental Review, staff "recommends" that the proposed project should be considered categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15332, "In-Fill Development" of the CEQA Guidelines. This section exempts in-fill development projects, provided that they meet several specified conditions. The first condition requires that "the project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations." In this instance and actually as a general rule in all State Density Bonus Law (SDBL) projects, City staff make the finding that compliance with the General Plan or the zoning ordinance ("site regulations") can be based on SDBL waivers and concessions. It is not clear that staff is interpreting the law correctly here. The plain English language interpretation of the regulation [14 CCR §15332 (a)] would appear to require that the project meets the base site regulations not including any waivers or concessions exempting the project from the base requirements.

The City Council is ultimately responsible for determining the CEQA requirements for the project. Staff is responsible for providing the Council with the best available information. Staff should ask the City Attorney to research the interpretation of the law as it applies to this project to make sure that we get it right.

General Plan Consistency

In the staff report, the consultant included an "analysis" of the project's consistency with Albany's General Plan by cherry picking several General Plan policies, which at least in part appear to support this project. The consultant's analysis was incomplete. This is a very large development that is certainly inconsistent with many aspects of the General Plan. Obviously, the project exceeds all of the specific metrics (FAR, height, housing density) which are spelled out in the General Plan. The project is also inconsistent with many goals, policies, and actions described in the plan. For example, the plan seeks to "Maintain Neighborhood Character" and requires that "home additions, infill development, second units, and other alterations should be

sensitive to their surroundings and contribute positively to the quality of the neighborhood.” [Chapter 2, Framework, Section F.1., p 12-2]. The General Plan does note that “most of the City’s future residential and mixed-use development opportunities are located along San Pablo Avenue”, but then empathizes that, “Sensitive transitions to lower density development east and west of the Avenue are critical.” [Chapter 3, Land Use Element, Section D., p 13-19]. Again, regarding development on SPA, the plan states that, “New buildings should be sited close to the front property line, and should step down in height toward the rear property lines to respect the scale of development along Kains Avenue and Adams Street.” [Chapter 3, Land Use Element, Section D., p 13-20]. Also, “The massing and design of development should reinforce the urban character of San Pablo Avenue while retaining compatibility with lower scale buildings along Kains Avenue to the east.” [Chapter 3, Land Use Element, Section D., p 13-20]. Finally, “buildings should be designed to protect privacy and sunlight on adjacent lower-scale properties along Adams Street and Kains Avenue” [Chapter 3, Land Use Element, Section D., p 13-21].

The clear intent of the General Plan to protect properties on Kains and Adams is stated as specific Policies:

Land Use Policy LU-2.1, Context-Sensitive Design, states, “Ensure that infill development in residential areas is compatible in density, scale and character with the established neighborhood context.

Traffic Policy T-5.2, Kains and Adams Access, states, “Ensure that development along the San Pablo Avenue corridor is designed to minimize adverse traffic, parking, and circulation impacts on Kains Avenue and Adams Street.”

The General Plan also includes policies that stress the importance open space. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element Policy PROS-1.4, states “Urban Open Space incorporate a variety of small open spaces, such as pocket parks, plazas, courtyards, rooftop gardens, tot lots, and landscaped areas, into new development.” and Action PROS-1.D, Private Open Space Standards requires the City to, “Maintain requirements for private open space, such as patios and balconies, for new residential units.”

The consultant missed most of this. Surprisingly, she did include Land Use Policy LU-2.2, Mixed Density Areas, which reads, “In areas designated for high and medium density residential uses, ensure that new development is designed to minimize sharp contrasts in height, consider the potential for loss of sunlight and privacy for adjacent homes, and provide buffering and screening from nearby lower density uses.” It is not clear how the project is consistent with this policy since the developer is seeking a waiver to remove the daylight plane requirements that are intended to “provide buffering and screening from nearby lower density uses.” Similarly, the consultant included Land Use Policy LU-3.12, Lot Consolidation, but apparently ignored the clause, “Development on larger sites should be designed to respect the fine-grained character of nearby properties...”

This is a very large, imposing project that is inconsistent with our current General Plan. Claiming otherwise is disingenuous.

-
Inadequate Justification for the Requested Concessions

As shown in the Albany document, “Affordable Housing Density Bonus Requirements Supplemental Form”, included in the packet, the developer is requesting a cost-reduction concession, the modification of the open space requirement so that additional open space does not have to be constructed up on roof decks above the buildings.

State planning law provides that the developer shall be granted concessions that “result in identifiable and actual cost reductions, to provide for affordable housing costs”. For this project, the developer provided only very brief justifications for the requested concessions:

For the open space requirement concession, the developer noted that, “The requested concession to reduce the required open space allows the additional roof decks and associated stair and elevator extensions to not have to be constructed, which, as is self-evident, results in the “identifiable and actual cost reductions” since the additional roof decks could not be constructed free of costs.” The developer basically notes here that the addition of roof gardens would not be totally free. This justification clearly does not show that elimination of open space will result in identifiable and actual cost reductions necessary to provide for affordable housing costs.

Interestingly, Albany’s supplemental form includes a “Project Pro-Forma” section in which the applicant is asked to “outline the financial justification for EACH specific incentive and concession requested for the Project.” The applicant is asked to “clearly demonstrate how and to what extent a grant of each incentive or concession will result in identifiable and actual cost reductions to provide for affordable housing costs.” For the subject project, the developer did not complete the Project Pro-Forma section. The developer has clearly not identified the actual cost reductions or shown that these are necessary to provide for the affordable housing costs.

Clay Larson

March 24, 2021

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Ed Fields

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am writing concerning the Study Session for the proposed residential development at the site of the bowling alley.

Nick Peterson has submitted a very well-written letter which makes many points with which it seems hard to disagree. I want to comment on the issue of “addressing the reasonable concerns of the projects immediate neighbors.” While I am not an immediate neighbor of this project, our single family home has a San Pablo Avenue business abutting our back yard.

Nick asks, “Will this [development] have impacts on the current residents? Most likely. Are there ways to mitigate the negative impacts? Yes, if we work together towards a more inclusive goal and with well conceived requirements that encourage good design and effective mitigating measures.”

He says, “I also look forward to seeing careful and considerate requirements for addressing the reasonable concerns of the projects immediate neighbors.”

Nick is an architect; I am not. I would welcome concrete suggestions from him or others as to how this could be accomplished. This proposed development is across Adams Street from existing homes. What happens when similar development is proposed for only the lots on San Pablo Avenue and there are existing homes immediately behind them?

Our General Plan provides some policy guidance, and I have written multiple times to both the Commission and the City Council providing some citations to the General Plan, which in most cases seem to have been ignored in the Staff Report section on “General Plan Consistency.”

Albany 2035 General Plan, Chapter 3, Land Use Element

D. Focus Areas

San Pablo Avenue Corridor

Most of the City’s future residential and mixed use development opportunities are located along San Pablo Avenue. The corridor is envisioned as a vibrant mixed use street, with architecture that reflects the high quality of the neighborhoods to the east and west. Sensitive transitions to lower density development east and west of the Avenue is critical.

....New buildings should to be sited close to the front property line, and should step down in height toward the rear property lines to respect the scale of development along Kains Avenue and Adams Street.

....The blocks between Solano Avenue and Clay Street / Brighton Avenue provide additional opportunities for new commercial, residential, and mixed use development. Several Housing Opportunity Sites have been identified along this section of the corridor, including the former Sizzler Restaurant and Mechanics Bank. Where feasible, new buildings should incorporate amenities such as small plazas, public art, and outdoor dining areas. Again, buildings should be

designed to protect privacy and sunlight on adjacent lower-scale properties along Adams Street and Kains Avenue.

Policy LU-2.1: Context-Sensitive Design

Ensure that infill development in residential areas is compatible in density, scale and character with the established neighborhood context.

Policy LU-2.2: Mixed Density Areas

In areas designated for high and medium density residential uses, ensure that new development is designed to minimize sharp contrasts in height, consider the potential for loss of sunlight and privacy for adjacent homes, and provide buffering and screening from nearby lower density uses. (Quoted in the Staff Report.)

I take issue with Nick's statement that: "Albany is more visionary than just imposing limits that consider only a very small number of adjacent property owners." Here it seems to me that without concrete proposals, he is contradicting his previous statements I quoted above.

I know there are not "only a small number of residents" both in single family and multi-family housing living on Kains Avenue and Adams Street in Albany. On occasion, I have left flyers on doorsteps on Kains Avenue. 300 flyers was not nearly enough. And what about the "issues of housing, wealth disparity." We bought a house on Kains Avenue, not because we thought it was the nicest street in Albany, but because it was where we could afford to buy at the time. Couldn't afford the Sonoma Avenue neighborhood, nor Nielson Street, nor Pomona Avenue, not even Cornell Avenue, all R-1 zoned. So in the name of bringing a small percentage of more affordable housing to Albany (a laudable goal which I support) we will consider the Kains and Adams (and Stannage and Madison) neighbors more or less expendable. It's not OK if we lose all our privacy and sunlight behind a 6 story or higher building, have our solar panels made useless, our homes less desirable and devalued.

From: [Fred Neal](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Cc: [citycouncil](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 8-1 - Proposed Mixed Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 11:28:13 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

It is unfortunate that this proposal for a mixed use development has been submitted under the State Density Bonus Law(SDBL) prior to the completion of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan(SPSP). It is my understanding of this law that any future planning requirements resulting from the SPSP cannot be imposed on this project because they were not in place at the time of its submittal. I would like to know if this is the understanding of the Planning Commission and its staff. If not, I would like to know if there is a way to delay action on this project until the SPSP has been finalized.

This site has been mentioned in ongoing work on the SPSP as a key parcel in the development of a Northern Gateway to Albany. This site is specifically mentioned in Policy LU-3.15 of the current General Plan which states that any future development of this area including the bowling alley must reflect its function as a northern gateway to the City. The currently proposed project does not meet this requirement. It is a typical mixed use development that you will find examples of all along San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley and Oakland. There are no architectural, landscape or signage features in the proposal that could be used in creating an identifiable gateway as required under Policy LU-3.15. In fact the proposal asks for a concession to reduce the open space requirements for the project by two thirds which could make adding any significant feature impossible.

In evaluating this proposed project I would also ask the commission to consider that "Smart City" design elements be considered as the guiding theme for this and all future developments in Albany and San Pablo Avenue.

Per Wikipedia:

"A smart city is a city that uses technology to provide services and solve city problems. A smart city does things like improve transportation and accessibility, improve social services, promote sustainability, and give its citizens a voice. A smart city is an urban area represented by the four pillars of comprehensive development - institutional, physical, social and economic infrastructure. In the long term, cities can work towards developing such comprehensive infrastructure incrementally, adding on layers of 'smartness'."

There are various elements to the Smart City concept that would work well for Albany. The

future development of San Pablo Avenue could be the first phase of their implementation in the city and 540 San Pablo Avenue could be the first project that incorporates some of these elements . A recent email article in Smart Cities Dive on current trends in smart city design highlights some of these elements that could be considered for Albany and San Pablo Avenue. These include:

- Use electricity as the sole energy source for new development along San Pablo Avenue.
 - Require solar panels with storage for all new construction and consider the concept of distributed power supplies using solar and batteries or hydrogen fuel cells.
 - Promote the use of electric vehicles by requiring accommodation of electric vehicles in new construction including charging stations that would be available to tenants and the public.
 - Design streets and parking to incorporate the charging of electric vehicles.
- Emphasize the health and safety of the places and buildings that will be added along San Pablo Avenue. Building designs and their environmental systems (HVAC, water, power) should be standardized to insure occupant health and safety. Indoor air quality is especially important as we have found out in the current covid pandemic. Creation of open areas suitable for safe outdoor activities both commercial and recreational should be a priority. Requiring such health and safety elements will make the new construction highly desirable in the eyes of the public and a selling point for future tenants.. Health and safety issues are also the only items that a city can use to reject a proposal under the SBDL. The lack of outdoor public space in the current proposal as it relates to the current pandemic and any future health concerns could trigger this issue.
- Continue digitalization of essential services for the benefit of all residents. This would include the incorporation of digital technology in all new construction and reducing the “digital divide” that exists between the low and middle/upper economic residents. The incorporation of low income housing also means providing a means for those residents to have affordable or free access to the internet. This could be done by selecting developers that are serious about this issue and are willing to work with the city and local internet providers to see that everyone is connected.

- Promote the use of public transit that serves the entire community and reduces the need for single owner passenger vehicles. Street designs that allow space for free shuttle buses to BART and local retail/commercial areas could be considered. Parking for the proposed project should be kept to the statutory minimum. Permit parking in surrounding neighborhoods could be implemented if this is deemed a problem by the local residents.
- Use the smart city plan to promote startup, corporate and nonprofit investment in the development of San Pablo Avenue. Adopting a smart city vision for San Pablo Avenue could be the means for the starting a collaboration between these investment groups and the city. Instead of commercial on the first floors of the proposed project, the city should consider the requirement for incorporating space for local non-profit or community activities such as a city art gallery and screening room.

Another aspect of a smart city is the comprehensive development of its physical infrastructure. The smart city will integrate sound sustainable infrastructure planning into the fabric of the land use and design standards elements.

To its credit Albany already has developed some key infrastructure planning elements that can be readily utilized as a first phase in implementing the smart city vision for the city and San Pablo Avenue. These elements include:

- **Albany Climate Action and Adaption Plan (CAAP)** The CAAP has many specific recommendations that incorporate smart city ideas. As a first step in adopting the smart city concept, the CAAP's energy, transportation, sustainable water management and other recommendations to lower our carbon footprint could be addressed in the design standards for San Pablo Avenue. There is no mention of any efforts to this goal in the current proposal for 540 San Pablo Avenue. The proposal drawings show roof areas designated for future solar panels, but who in the future is going to install them? Recent state court rulings have indicated that greenhouse gas emission can be considered as impacts under CEQA under certain conditions. CEQA still applies under SDBL and this could be further investigated in dealing with the proposed development.
- **Albany Green Stormwater Action Plan.** The stormwater action plan also has many recommendations that incorporate smart city ideas. Its recommendations on the use of Low Impact Design (LID) could be considered to maximize on-site stormwater management along San Pablo Avenue. For the 540 San Pablo Avenue project, streetscape design standards could consider the integration of rain gardens into parking strips along the avenue. These could be used with the proposed increased tree plantings and even a parklet here and there to make the street more pedestrian

friendly. The use of green roofs on the buildings should also be considered for incorporation into the design standards. None of these items are currently shown on the proposal's drawings.

- **Albany Water Recycling Efforts** The reduction in potable water use by the use of water conservation and water recycling are key elements of smart city infrastructure. Albany has been a leader in working with EBMUD on its purple pipe initiative, installing a purple irrigation pipe system along the BART right of way. This system currently uses potable water for irrigation, but is designed to be switched over to use recycled water when EBMUD completes its East Bayshore Recycled Water Project in 2030. Upto 2.6 million gallons per day of recycled water will become available for use by Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany and Richmond. EBMUD installed the main recycled water pipeline along the I-80 corridor and connection to this pipe along Buchanan Street has been installed. This could easily bring recycled water into the center of the San Pablo Avenue planning area. This would allow for the use recycled water for landscape irrigation. Provisions for its use in irrigation systems for the 540 San Pablo Avenue project should be considered.

As the city moves forward with the creation of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, the planning and design of the 540 San Pablo Avenue project could be used to start Albany on the path to become the first smart city along the East Shore of San Francisco Bay. As discussed herein, there are various elements of the smart city concept that would work well for the 540 San Pablo Avenue project. Failure to do so will in my opinion lead to just another unremarkable mixed use project along San Pablo Avenue just like the ones that already exist in Berkeley and Oakland.

Albany has been a leader in promoting a sustainable future for its citizens. Incorporating smart city concepts into the SPSP and the 540 San Pablo Avenue project furthers this goal of sustainability while creating the kind of community that it will need to become to be successful in our rapidly changing world.

Fred Neal - Albany resident since 1988
1008 Ramona Avenue

From: [Jenny Craik](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: PZ SR Study Session 540 San Pablo
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 9:46:42 AM

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Since I haven't yet heard anything from the P&Z committee on this project and haven't followed the discussions leading up to the new allowances of eight story tall building in Albany, my only feedback at this point is that I feel these buildings are too tall as planned. I understand the need for more housing but Albany is already one of the densest cities in the Bay Area and this lot is not the last one that will become available. Already, the former Goodwill site may be available soon. So, instead of a six story and five story building, these need to be four and five story at the most, or both four story.

Jenny Craik
1003 Clay St., Albany

From: [Dan Johnson](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Cc: [Ian MacLeod](#)
Subject: Agenda item 8-1, 540 San Pablo Avenue Homes, 3/24/21 P&Z meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 12:45:40 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Planning Commission,

Thank you for considering this public comment arriving after your 12pm deadline.

I am writing to communicate quickly **my support for the proposed project.**

I am an architect and energy efficiency engineer for building systems. My primary interest is reducing the ecological footprint of Albany. To this end, **the density increase of new neighbors is very welcome.**

In my informed view it is a **mistake to allow/require so much car storage.** Nearly the entire surface level of the site is devoted to storage of private automobiles. There is a tremendous opportunity cost and this is a retrograde planning move that goes against City goals (e.g. CAAP).

When the City requires this many cars be brought onto the site, this is only a negative for the community. **Car transportation is the dirtiest, most dangerous form of mobility.** If the City is forcing the developer to subsidize a mode of transportation, **it could be nearly anything else and this would result in a better outcome for health, safety and welfare for Albany:**

- Buy every new resident an e-cargo bike
- Provide lifetime transit passes (this is one of the most walkable and transit friendly sites in Albany)
- Host a car-share service

These are all likely **cheaper** for the developer than providing so much car storage. A win-win for everyone involved.

The very least the City could do is **waive car parking minimums.**

To the neighbors who are complaining about impact on street parking:

- Nearly every single family home in Albany is required to have two off-street parking spaces
- If you bought an existing non-conforming home without this space, then this was a **market choice** you made
- We ask that the new homes at 540 San Pablo be allowed to offer their residents the **same market choice that you took**

If you rely on publicly subsidized car storage in the public right-of-way because you have **avoided this cost on your own property**, then you are the problem

If parking in the public right of way is in such high demand, then the City of Albany should stop giving it away for free. Charge what it actually costs to provide it.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Kind regards.

Dan Johnson, AIA, Certified Energy Analyst
510-325-5672 mobile
907 Ramona Ave

Attachment: Greenhouse gas reduction potential of **Urban Infill building greatly surpasses other potential measures that cities can take**. Followed closely by All-Electric Building and vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) reduction, that is, **NO NEW PARKING SPACES!**

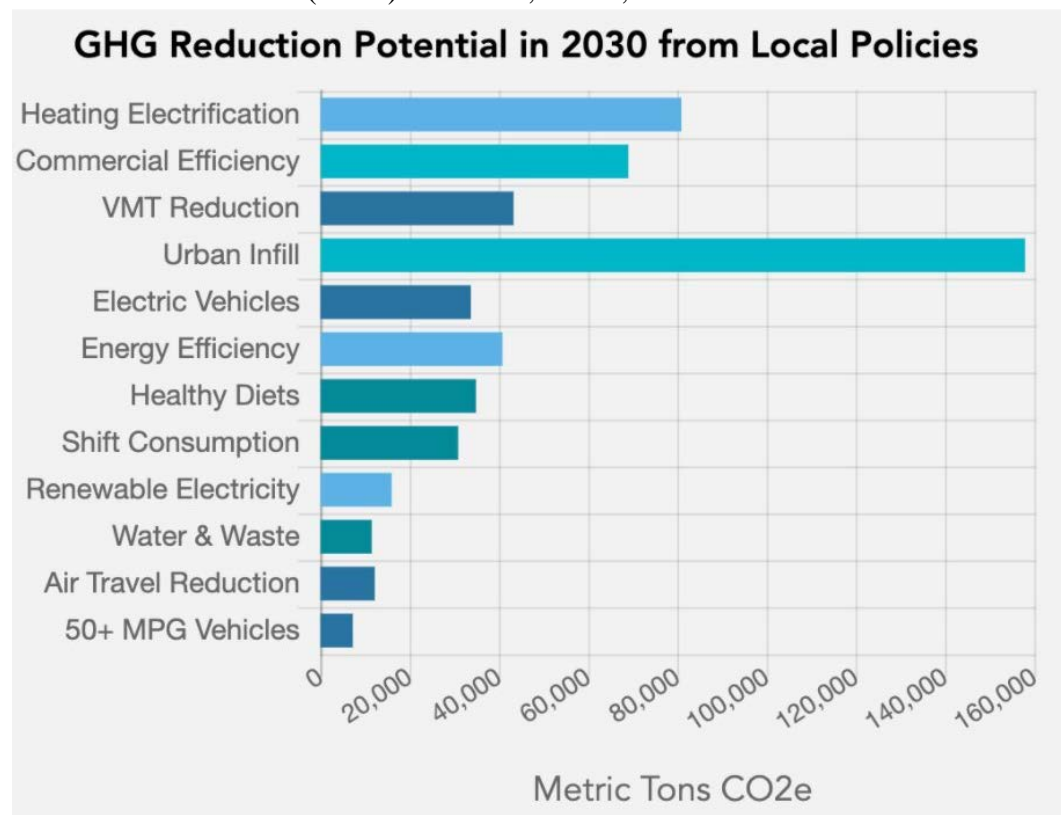


Figure 10: Cool Climate Network, 2018

From: [Douglas Donaldson](#)
To: [Anne Hersch](#)
Subject: Fwd: Albany Bowl Site Affordable Housing
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 12:33:05 PM

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I got this from Allan Maris. Could you please add it to the record for 540 San Pablo?

Begin forwarded message:

From: Allan <maris_allan@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: Albany Bowl Site Affordable Housing
Date: March 24, 2021 at 12:23:16 PM PDT
To: Doug Donaldson <dougdonaldson@me.com>

Hi Doug, I hope you can get this message to tonight's Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. I couldn't seem to connect to the pzc@albanyca.org site.
Thanks. Allan

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From: Allan
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 12:17:32 PM
To: Doug Donaldson <dougdonaldson@me.com>
Subject: Albany Bowl Site Affordable Housing

Please create a significant amount of very low income housing at the Albany Bowl site. Our greatest need for housing in our General Plan Housing Element is for very low income housing.

Thanks for your community service. Allan Maris

Thanks

From: [Lauren Gradia](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Comment on Item 8-1
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 2:10:36 PM

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Comment as follows:

I support additional housing and retail at this location but the building needs do more for the community and future residents. I would strongly recommend the following changes:

- 1) Limit the height of the project to four stories to fit with the context of the surrounding buildings .
- 2) Increase the open space for residents. There are limited parks and gathering sites in Albany; and
- 3) Increase the public open space - the community is losing a huge indoor recreation site. At a minimum, retail sites that could be restaurants need to have outdoor seating locations.

Lastly it would be nice if they considered some 3 bedroom units.

Thank you
Lauren Gradia
Albany Hillside Resident

From: [Megan Jennings](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Cc: [Anne Hersch](#); [Jeff Bond](#); [Christopher Tan](#)
Subject: Support for Housing at 540 San Pablo Ave.
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 3:52:56 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Hello Commissioners - I'm hoping to "attend" the hearing tonight but in case I run out of steam, wanted to send a quick note expressing support for the high-density housing project at 540 San Pablo Ave. While there are certainly design issues that warrant your consideration (and while I will miss the bowling alley!), this is a great location for transit-oriented development in general, in particular, the developer's proposal to provide 21 units for Very Low Income households will make a substantial contribution toward supporting an underserved income level - especially in light of increasing RHNA obligations for below-market rate households.

One big-picture suggestion would be to explore seeking a higher portion of 2-bedroom units, and/or potentially even include some 3-bedroom units, to help meet the needs of families.

At the end of the day, the state Density Bonus Law, Housing Accountability Act etc. limit the City's ability to downsize the project or require significant revisions, but even if that weren't the case, I hope this project would have the Commission's support. I look forward to seeing how the design progresses with Commission and community feedback.

Thanks, Megan
956 Madison St., Albany

From: [Cathy Mattison](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item: 8-1. PA21-002 Proposed Mixed-Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:05:16 AM

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I have three concerns addressed in my comments as follows.

1. This project is going to generate both vehicular traffic and create traffic congestion at the Brighton Ave. and San Pablo intersection. During rush hour, traffic already backs up on San Pablo at this intersection in both directions. The increased congestion will drive cut through traffic on the narrow side streets that are ill equipped to handle aggressive drivers in a hurry to get to home and/or to the EC Plaza. Also, please consider the safety of pedestrians using the San Pablo and Brighton crosswalks as more traffic flows into this busy intersection. The Brighton corner is narrow and can barely accommodate 3 lanes of traffic. Also, there is no left turn signal onto Brighton for vehicles traveling south on San Pablo.

To minimize the cut through traffic and congestion on San Pablo, the Planning & Zoning Commission along with the Transportation Commission and City Council need to do comprehensive traffic flow and parking studies to have the facts BEFORE this project begins. As Council Member McQuaid stated on Jan. 19, 2021 when the council approved a 14 unit project at 423 Evelyn St., "This is a good time to think about how we're going to manage all of this."

2. If the city of Albany believes that North Albany is the perfect location for high density housing and is determined to pack in large developments along San Pablo, it needs to make the surrounding areas more conducive and safer for pedestrians.

- Brighton Ave needs additional traffic calming measures, including speed limit & flashing slow down signs, to slow down traffic that will inevitably flow from this new commercial and residential development.
- Brighton Ave needs well-marked, raised cross walks for school children and families to cross the street. Also, improved signage alerting drivers to children walking to school.
- Brighton Ave needs 4-way stop signs at the intersection of Brighton and Cornell Ave, a narrow street with 4-large apartment complexes that bears continuous, aggressive cut through traffic to Trader Joes and El Cerrito Plaza. This intersection is frequently the site of vehicular collisions between cars turning into and out of Cornell Ave.

3. Also, I believe this development should be required (at the very least incentivized) to include indoor and outdoor recreation space for the residents, such as a tot lot play area for the families along with a picnic area and a dog walk area.

Please act now to mitigate the impact that this major development will have on the safety and quality of life of North Albany residents and act proactively to plan for the additional stress this development will place on where we live.

Thank you,
Cathy Mattison
Albany resident

From: [Ruth Gjerde](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Mixed-Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 8:48:54 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

I live at 528 Kains Avenue and have been very happy in my little MacGregor bungalow for almost 36 years. I have taken an active role in many changes in the area over that time. When my husband and I bought the property in 1985, Kains Avenue was zoned as a “Commercial Expansion” area for the San Pablo corridor, but was rezoned to high density residential use (R3) as an outcome of the 1992 General Plan. That was a long and difficult process and was the result of many people attending multiple meetings, stating their views, standing their ground and working with City officials to come up with design elements (appropriate setbacks, daylight planes, FAR and height limits among other things) that met the City’s needs as well as the needs of the residents living in the immediate area and beyond. It was a negotiation that maintained a quality of life for current residents, yet allowed for growth and inclusion of new residents into the area.

And the area **has** grown and changed since then! Multi-family condos, townhouses and apartment buildings have been designed and built within the framework of the General Plan. Young families have found homes, renovation and expansion is happening on almost every block and ADUs are filling in many backyards. Change is happening and, for the most part, it fits with the City’s mission statement of “...*maintaining its small-town ambience, responding to the needs of a diverse community, and providing a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.*” Albany truly is an urban village!

I don’t believe the proposed development on the Albany Bowl site aligns with that mission. I am not against change or progress. I am in favor of more housing and know that piece of property is uniquely qualified for such a project. But the exceptions, concessions and waivers the developer is requesting are beyond what should be approved. It is not **healthy** to give up required open space, especially in light of the current global pandemic when being outdoors is the only place people can safely gather collectively. It is not **sustainable** to have the new residents circling the neighborhood streets in search of parking that is not sufficiently supplied by developer. It is not **safe** to add to the aging and overburdened infrastructure in the area without requiring mitigation. The development could be a real asset to the City and a model for forward-thinking urban planning, but **not as currently proposed**. I urge the City to stay true to its mission statement, to consider the real-world consequences of such a huge development, to demand quality design and livable space for the new (and old) residents and to create something we can all be proud of for years to come. More is not always better. Don’t sell us out to the highest bidder. Please maintain Albany’s small-town ambience, respond to the needs of its diverse community, and provide a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. I believe that together we can do that!

Ruth Gjerde

From: [C.W](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: comments for 08/04/21 public hearing about 540 San Pablo proposal
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 8:52:53 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Dear Planning & Zoning Commission,

Please submit the below comments for the record on tonight's hearing. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chris Weinberger

I think it's great to build affordable housing on this site and applaud the developers and anyone involved in bringing this project along this far. Thank you. However, this plan needs some revision. It asks for too much and its provided benefits are better on paper than at the site. As proposed I think this particular plan must be opposed. Still, I'd like to encourage the developers to scale back the proposal and create something that can still exceed current max density regulations to provide retail and housing, but does not cram quite so many units into a space that cannot sustain it.

1. This project is not consistent with Albany General Plan

1. Use Designation

i. The general plan envisions a "transformation" of this zone "to more attractive, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development. Retail, office, service, and other commercial uses are accommodated by this designation." The building unequivocally fails in this regard: of the 475' stretching along San Pablo, it seems from the plans that a grand total of around 75' have been designated commercial—not even 1/6 of the space meets any category identified in this plan.

2. Aesthetics

i. The high-rise is designed in the shape of extremely tall bricks and with similar density. It is terribly out of proportion and style with anything else in its visible vicinity. This is in no way "attractive & pedestrian-oriented" - it is a housing machine with some token nods to, and mostly requests to wave, our guidelines for the space.

ii. The project does not simply ask for minor concessions to the open-space requirements; it asks to ignore those requirements almost entirely, creating the feeling of crammed slabs of

concrete. A more attractive building—or at least one that provides the open space that people and cities need to breathe and feel human-- that accommodates 135 or more units could easily be constructed (and I hope one is).

3. Density

i. It is a great idea to offer incentives to build affordable housing, and it is important for the growth of our city and for the health of the bay area to offer more housing. But the problems cannot be solved by cramming units into a single space that cannot sustain that density. We need a distributed solution throughout the city. Certainly, the Albany Bowl site should be a vibrant part of that. But it can't be made into a one-stop, on-paper solution to a housing problem. Build some higher density housing on this site? Please do! Above the max density? Absolutely – but ***in proportion to the benefits provided, and within the limits of what the space and plans reasonably sustain.***

1. This plan laudably offers 10.15% of its units for very low-income renters but wants to be allowed to overbuild the max height to the tune of 186% in return. In addition, it wants to exceed the max density of 135 units by over 50%. It asks to overshadow solar shading requirements and wants more concessions on top of that; in short, it is asking to receive far more than it provides. Scale back these requests, and the proposal will make much more sense.

4. Local Impact

1. It seems great for local businesses and for Bay Area residents who need housing. Projects like this need to be supported. However, the details matter and this one overbuilds.
2. Parking & Traffic. Commissioner Pilch and Chair Watty noted in March that the aesthetics of the building could usefully be enhanced by reducing the parking provided. I agree with them and applaud the spirit of the suggestions in two ways: (1) the aesthetics certainly need improvement, and their suggestions would work well to that end and (2) it is a great idea in theory to try to shift people from cars to more sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation. However, reducing parking will have dire consequences for residents in the area and those who visit or travel through it; it will also impact the future tenants. Although the plan does go over the minimum basic requirement for parking, it does not do so by nearly enough to deal with the problem of scaling that the size of the project presents.
 - i. Our current requirement to provide only 0.5 parking places

per unit makes sense for Albany. This is because we have not constructed buildings with the distorted proportions of this project relative to its space and location. As a ratio, our parking requirement is fine for the scale of almost all Albany projects until now. If 10 occupants of a building need street parking, they can find it. However, when it comes to 207 units in a single block, this simply does not work.

1. This proposal may be short well over a hundred parking spaces--literally by 200 if you go by the average 1.74 cars per household in Alameda County (156~173 residential spots, half of which are double-decker machines, for 207 units). That's just bad for everyone. The local streets aren't scaled for that parking or traffic--they are impacted already. I live within a stone's throw of the bowling alley and it is often hard to find parking.
2. A very large number of the insufficient parking spots provided are mechanical "double-decker" parking spots. Their longevity and practicality is in some question; they seem more like on-paper solutions for the sake of meeting requirements and cramming more units into the site than it can really sustain.
3. The bicycle parking seems great and I hope this is maintained in a revision.
4. Traffic studies are essential and we need to insist on them. Madison and Adams, etc., may not be ready to see a hundred extra cars heading to and from the freeway each day. We'd love to taut BART and potential AC Transit changes as the solution but please look at the proportionate number of personal vs. public transit commuters in the last two years. We need expert opinions to let us know what numbers & density make sense.
 1. Perhaps partnership with car shares might be helpful? There just aren't any good solutions or evidence of creative thinking provided by the planners (other than an admirable emphasis on cycling) yet. I hope better ideas arise as we insist that these matters be considered.
3. Solar occlusion. Adams street behind the building is going to be badly impacted, already sitting in the shadow of the hill. Scaling back would probably help with this, as well.
4. **The developers must be asked to put up story poles to alert residents to the dramatic change they are seeking to make to the physical profile of the area.**

5. Waiver & Concession Requests

1. The developers argue that “without additional height, the density bonus could not be built.” While perhaps true that some additional height is necessary to make the project profitable, it is demonstrably false that the developers need to go to 186% of the max height allowance to sustain the 21 density-bonus units, which would not cover one-half of one story of their complex. The waiver should be denied on these grounds. (Of course, taking two stories—or perhaps even one—off the building would make this a much more reasonable request; developers should provide more persuasive evidence and reasoning in their waiver request.)
2. The developers request waivers of parts of the application process. However, due public process is essential for proper review, oversight, and decision-making. Many people who will be impacted by this enormous project are uninformed. The 300-ft radius notifications that went out are a one-size fits all solution that does not scale well with project as drastic as this one. It is essential that such a large and transformative, city-profile-changing undertaking go through due process and with time and opportunities for more residents to weigh in and more of the implications to be considered. This waiver should also be denied.

Conclusion: This is an excellent site for both affordable housing and commercial space, and the proposed project has good potential. An improved version of this plan or one similar but better scaled for the space and aligned with the Albany General Plan would be very welcome. **I sincerely hope the developers can scale back to something closer to 150 units and re-propose. As proposed, however, this plan should be opposed and requests for waivers denied.** We should not try to cram as much as possible into it and make it a one-stop cure-all for much-needed housing. **Let’s build affordable housing here, and let’s even go over the max density for the zone to incentivize it, but this needs to be done in better proportion with the space, more planning for impact, and better keeping with the Albany General Plan.**

From: [Clay Larson](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Comment on Item 8.1 on P&Z Commission Agenda
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 10:19:06 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

Chair Watty and fellow Commissioners,

I would like to comment on Item 8.1, the Study Session on the proposed mixed-use development at [540 San Pablo Avenue](#), on the agenda of tonight's meeting. The project, despite some small changes, is still massive and incompatible with the lower scale development in the neighborhood on Adams St. I have commented on this in the past.

I would like to comment now specifically on the developer's proposal to unbundle parking for the project. As described in the staff report, this means that "that tenants who choose to park on-site will pay a separate fee." The obvious corollary here would read something like "tenants who choose to park in the surrounding neighborhoods will not have pay a separate fee." This obviously will create a problem.

Our zoning ordinance authorizes the Commission to consider unbundled parking as factor justifying a reduction in parking requirements [[§ 20.28.040 \(A\)](#)]. Albany staff often refer to unbundled parking as a "mitigation", but a mitigation should lessen the impact. That's not the case here. At best unbundling parking provides a mechanism for the developer to distribute an inadequate off-street parking supply; at worst it could result in unused off-street parking.

I think that the references to unbundling parking in our zoning ordinance are wrong headed and should be removed. The basic purpose of the Albany's off-street parking regulations as stated in Section 20.28.010 A. is to "ensure that off-street parking facilities... are provided for new land uses and... structures in proportion to the need for such facilities created by each use." The code and Albany's General Plan recognize that parking is an on-gong problem in Albany and the code states the City's intent "that all off-street parking requirements be observed to the maximum extent feasible" ([§ 20.28.040](#)). Protections for the Kains and Adams neighborhoods are specifically called for in the General Plan. Traffic Policy T-5.2, Kains and Adams Access, requires the City to "Ensure that development along the San Pablo Avenue corridor is designed to minimize adverse traffic, parking, and circulation impacts on Kains Avenue and Adams Street."

The absolute minimum parking ratio for the Albany Bowl project should be one space per unit. If parking is unbundled, then the amount of the fee must be set so that the available off street is fully utilized. The City should state this as a condition for approval.

Clay Larson
628 Adams St.
Sent from my iPhone

From: [M.W](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: PA21-002 Proposed Mixed-Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue (public discussion)
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 11:31:04 AM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

I support building pedestrian-friendly commercial buildings here and think it is important to offer low-income housing as well. This proposal is too big for the space. The buildings are drastic and sudden. The plan puts too many units in one block and does not plan at all for how the area and traffic will be impacted. It seems like something designed without any thought about Albany or the space around it. The height exceeds anything nearby far too abruptly and it feels like they are trying to squeeze every unit out of the space. It's a good idea but goes too far and too high in too concentrated an area. Maybe the same proposal with fewer floors and more open design would be good.

-Sebastian

August 4, 2021

Albany Planning and Zoning Commission (via email)

RE: Support for Urban Infill projects like 540 San Pablo Avenue

Dear Albany Planning and Zoning Commission,

For over 60 years, Greenbelt Alliance has helped create cities and neighborhoods that make the Bay Area a better place to live—healthy places where people can walk and bike; communities with parks, shops, transportation options; homes that are affordable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Greenbelt Alliance encourages Climate SMART—Sustainable, Mixed, Affordable, Resilient, Transit-Oriented—Development that advance the right kind of development in the right places. By promoting climate-smart development we can create thriving, resilient neighborhoods with ready access to transit and housing choices for all of the Bay Area's people.

Greenbelt Alliance applauds the city of Albany for considering climate SMART infill projects like 540 San Pablo Avenue.

I grew up in El Cerrito a few blocks away and spent many Saturday afternoons at Albany Bowl. While I am sad to see it gone, this is the perfect opportunity to utilize the state density bonus law and increase the housing opportunities in this area. This is a perfect location for dense, infill housing. This stretch of San Pablo avenue is close to BART, AC Transit lines and has a myriad of retail options.

This year has demonstrated that the long-predicted impacts of climate change are already becoming our daily reality. One of the best ways to address our climate crisis is to build more dense, infill housing in existing communities close to transit. According to research from the CoolClimate Network out of UC Berkeley, allowing more people to live in cities like Berkeley could be the most impactful ways of reducing climate pollution.

540 San Pablo Avenue is the kind of climate-smart development that we need in the Bay Area to meet our housing goals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and make sure that local residents are able to grow and thrive in their own communities. In closing, this is another smart step for the City Albany to ensure the creation of homes and vibrant communities near jobs, retail, and transit. We hope its approval will inspire communities around the Bay Area to redouble their efforts to grow smartly.

Sincerely,



Zoe Siegel
Director of Climate Resilience, Greenbelt Alliance
zsiegel@greenbelt.org

From: [Bryan Marten](#)
To: [PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION](#)
Subject: public comment for Item 7-1 Design Review & Density Bonus for a New Mixed-Use Development at 540 San Pablo Avenue
Date: Tuesday, September 28, 2021 11:27:54 PM

Warning: This email originated from outside the City of Albany. Think before you click!

I recognize that dense housing has many benefits for the environment, for local businesses, for public health, for progress towards relieving a housing crisis and making housing more affordable, etc. I also recognize the city does not have a lot of say in the overall nature of the project, that state law dictates much of what must happen here. And I hope we all recognize that dense housing has its negative impacts for which the city should plan.

I am writing to express my approval of the project as a whole. Specifically I approve of the following:

No car access to the property from Adams or Clay. I was distressed to hear at the August meeting that it appeared some commissioners were calling for driveways to Adams & Clay. By having no car access to Adams and Clay the impact from this development on car traffic will be minimized. The spillover parking still promises to be a major challenge for all who live near it but at least the street traffic will be minimized if there is no car access to/from the site and Clay & Adams.

Ground-level improvements like the play area and path on Adams, the wide sidewalk on Clay, and wider sidewalk on SPA. The sidewalk on Clay is very narrow right now particularly where street signs eat up part of it and pipes stick out of the existing building which appears to have been built on the property line.

Massing kept away from the quiet residential street Adams. Massing kept closer to Clay to the south and SPA to the east where shadows will not be cast onto residences.

This property is well buffered from other residences given that it has streets on 3 sides and businesses to the north. It should stand as a model for the tallest buildings that we should require on SPA given it's optimal distance from neighboring residences.

I am concerned about the following:

The site not meeting outdoor space requirements.

The site likely charging thousands of dollars for unbundled parking which might be reassessed in the future for removal for development while neighboring streets have free parking. This provides strong incentives to residents to park off site in the neighborhood and for the owner to likely declare there are lots of vacant on-site spaces so they should have the right to remove them when in reality they have more likely over-charged for the spaces exacerbated if the city has taken a "market forces" "survival of the fittest" approach to on-street parking.

As I said in a previous message, the city attorney has told me that "With regard to the

proposed project, it is reasonably foreseeable that the development of new high-density housing would impact the character of your property by altering traffic levels and parking availability in the area, as well as potentially affecting the market value of your residence."

I will end by saying I see the benefits of high density developments in Albany but a) there is a serious legal and ethical concern if the city focuses the vast majority of these developments and their negative impacts on 1 strip of town to the exclusion of so many other parts of town that are also within 0.5 miles of shops and a transit stop, b) dense housing has its negative impacts for which the city should plan.

I appreciate the work the commission and the developer have already done to support non-car transportation and hope the city and developer can work on even more ways to support alternative transportation and outdoor spaces as this project will set the bar for future high density developments in the city to base their designs and expectations on.

Bryan Marten
Resident 600 block of Adams

September 29, 2021

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Ed Fields

Re: 540 San Pablo Avenue

I want to comment on the CEQA Class 32 Categorical Exemption Report.

The Consistency Analysis on Page 9 contains a number of errors. Table 2 states a 15% density bonus and the text below refers to “an additional 35 percent density bonus.” There is only one density bonus of 50% based on the 15% very low-income units per the table at Government Code 65915 (f) (2).

Footnote 4 to Table 2 (“the applicant shall receive a height increase of up to three additional stories, or 33 feet”) does not apply, as it only applies to projects meeting 65915 (b) (1) (G) which are 100% affordable units. The text states “both front and rear setbacks would be 15 feet.” Only the rear setback is 15 feet.

As for “the proposed project’s consistency with applicable General Plan policies”, the project is sure to be consistent if only the consistent policies are cited, and the General Plan policies with which the project is not consistent are omitted.

Page 30, 3.5 Criterion (e) “The project site is adequately served by all required utilities and public services.” An analysis of the adequacy of existing EBMUD water mains and City of Albany sanitary sewer lines would be helpful.