

City Policies and Citizen Visions Relative to Development at Ashby BART by Ed Church

Council Policy

On February 13, 2001 the following was approved by the Berkeley City Council as a matter of policy:

“16. Housing Policy for Development of Ashby BART West Parking Lot. From: Vice Mayor Shirek Recommendation: Adopt policy guidelines that the west parking lot at the Ashby BART Station be developed with housing as a top priority. To the extent possible, housing should be affordable and available to public sector workers. If necessary, replacement parking and movement of Berkeley Flea Market to another site should be considered.”

South Berkeley Area Plan, Draft Final January, 1990

VII. Current Economic Development Programs

D. Ashby BART Development Project (p. 35)

“Office of Economic Development Staff has recently studied the feasibility of Ashby BART development, and found it infeasible due to current market conditions. The South Berkeley community has expressed an interest in mixed commercial and residential development on the site, with some degree of community oversight and non-profit participation. It is expected that the project will be reconsidered when market conditions improve.”

South Berkeley Area Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report, November, 1989

3. Other Potential Future Projects

“The Ashby BART station presents opportunities for residential or commercial development. The South Berkeley community has expressed an interest in mixed commercial and residential development on the site, with some degree of community oversight and nonprofit participation. No development proposals have been put forward at this time due to current market conditions, and development costs. Because future use of the site cannot be predicted, this project has not been considered to be ‘reasonably foreseeable’ for the purposes of this cumulative impact assessment.” (page 16).

Berkeley General Plan Ashby BART-related sections, December, 2001

On July 11, 2001, after an intensive two year public planning process, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council certify the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and adopt the draft General Plan. The Planning Commission's efforts included six public hearings on the General Plan, three public hearings on the EIR, and over 50 public meetings at which public comment and discussion of the General Plan policies took place.

On December 18, 2001, the City Council certified the EIR and approved the Housing, Land Use and Transportation Elements.

Policy LU-32 Ashby BART Station

Encourage affordable housing or mixed-use development including housing on the air rights above the Ashby BART station and parking lot west of Adeline Street.

Actions:

- A. Consider a joint City/BART development plan for the Ashby BART site to encourage and ensure appropriate development design, density, and parking to accommodate the BART station and transit-oriented development. Development at the Ashby BART station should include multi-family, transit-oriented housing and ground-floor commercial space. If feasible, at least 50% of the housing units should be affordable to low- and very-low-income households. *(Also see Housing Policy H-18.)*
- B. Consider revising the zoning for the site to reduce the on-site parking requirements for new housing above the BART station. *(Also see Transportation Policy T-16.)*

Policy H-18 City-Owned Sites

When appropriate and feasible, use City-owned or -controlled sites for affordable housing and/or mixed-use residential projects with a substantial portion of affordable units. *(Also see Land Use Policy LU-32.)*

Action:

- A. Require development on the City-owned Oxford Street parking lot Downtown and the Ashby BART air rights (west of Adeline Street) to be residential mixed-use developments. If feasible, 50 percent or more of the housing units on these sites should be affordable for households with low or very low incomes.

Policy T-16 Access by Proximity

Improve access by increasing proximity of residents to services, goods, and employment centers. *(Also see Land Use Policies LU-13 and LU-23, Housing Policy H-16, and Environmental Management Policy EM-41 Action B.)*

Actions:

- A. Locate essential commercial and other services in transit-oriented locations to reduce the need for cars and enable people living near transit and services to reduce auto trips.
- B. Encourage higher density housing and commercial infill development that is consistent with General Plan and zoning standards in areas adjacent to existing public transportation services.
- C. Encourage the University of California to provide additional housing within walking distance of campus to reduce University-related traffic.
- D. Encourage siting of child-care facilities and other services in large residential or commercial facilities to reduce traffic impacts associated with child-care drop-off and pick-up.
- E. In locations served by transit, consider reduction or elimination of parking requirements for residential development.

Policy H-16 Transit-Oriented New Construction

Encourage construction of new medium and high density housing on major transit corridors and in the Downtown consistent with zoning and compatible with the scale and character of these areas. *(Also see Land Use Policies LU-18, LU-23, and LU-25, and Transportation Policy T-16.)*

Actions:

- A. Ensure that new multi-family housing developments include a significant below-market-rate component.
- B. Consider a variety of incentives such as waiver or partial waiver of parking requirements in areas heavily served by transit or expansion of lot coverage in addition to height bonuses.
- C. Consider revisions to the zoning ordinance to establish a minimum height limit of two, and where feasible, three stories, and to require or encourage residential development above the ground floor on transit corridors.

Policy LU-23 Transit-Oriented Development

Encourage and maintain zoning that allows greater commercial and residential density and reduced residential parking requirements in areas with above-average transit service such as Downtown Berkeley.

(Also see Transportation Policy T-16.)

Actions:

- A. Consider revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to establish a minimum height limit of two, and where feasible three, stories, and to require or encourage residential development above the ground floor on transit corridors.
- B. Consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to establish a four-story minimum building height in the Core area and two or three stories in the other subareas of the Downtown.

Policy LU-25 Affordable Housing Development

Encourage development of affordable housing in the Downtown Plan area, the Southside Plan area, and other transit-oriented locations. *(Also see Housing Policy H-16.)*

Actions:

- A. Consider revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to require and/or encourage inclusion of a greater percentage of affordable housing units and a greater percentage of units restricted to households with low or very low income in multi-family housing projects, than currently required under the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.
- B. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to clarify and improve administration of the state density bonus for affordable housing for multi-family housing projects that will encourage development of affordable housing and minimize potential impacts of new multi-family housing projects on adjacent residents.

Policy EM-41 Fossil Fuel

Encourage and support efforts to reduce use of fossil fuel and other finite, nonrenewable resources.

Actions:

- A. Wherever feasible, purchase low-emission, fuel-efficient vehicles and phase out use of diesel-fuel vehicles.
- B. Encourage actions that provide access by proximity, such as locating housing closer to transportation, commercial services, and job centers. *(Also see Transportation Policy T-16, Housing Policy H-16, and Land Use Policy LU-23.)*
- C. Encourage use of "bio-diesel" fuel as an alternative to fossil fuel.

Notes on the Meaning and Process of Constructing the General Plan

The Berkeley General Plan is a statement of community priorities developed to guide public decision-making. The Plan's goals, objectives, and policies steer day-to-day decisions that are essential for responsive government. Decisions made by elected officials, advisory boards, and commissions will be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan. The City Council and Planning Commission will use the Plan to guide discussion regarding the physical development of our city, land use changes, and budget decisions, and the Zoning Adjustments Board and City staff will use the Plan to help regulate development proposals and make decisions on projects. The policies of the Plan apply to all property, both public and private, within the Berkeley city limits. Although the University of California and other

State/County agencies are not legally obligated to comply with the Plan, mutual cooperation benefits all agencies.

The Berkeley General Plan was developed through community meetings, public workshops, and the dedicated efforts of the following City Officials: **City Council** - Mayor Shirley Dean, Vice-Mayor Maudelle Shirek, Margaret Breland, Linda Maio, Miriam Hawley, Dona Spring, Polly Armstrong, Kriss Worthington, Betty Olds; **Planning Commission** - Chair Zelda Bronstein, Rob Wrenn, Susan Wengraf, Gordon Wozniak, Joe Howerton, Vice-Chair Gene Poschman, John Curl, David Tabb, Harry Pollack, **Past members:** Mary Ann McCamant, Laurie Capitelli, Betty Hicks, Ricardo Noguera, Henk Boverhuis, Betsy Morris; **City Staff** - City Manager Weldon Rucker, Planning and Development Director Carol D. Barrett, Housing Director Stephen Barton, General Plan Project Manager Andrew Thomas, Housing Project Manager Tim Stroshane, Senior Planner Ruth Grimes, and Housing Intern Karin Arnold.

Purpose of the Berkeley General Plan: The Berkeley General Plan is a comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent statement of policies for the development and preservation of Berkeley. It is a statement of community priorities and values to be used to guide public decision-making in future years. The Berkeley General Plan is a compilation of goals, objectives, policies, and actions designed to manage change. The Plan's goals, objectives, and policies serve as a guide to the day-to-day decisions that are essential for responsive government. Decisions made by the Berkeley City Council and its advisory boards and commissions about the physical development of the city should be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan. The City Council and the Planning Commission will use the General Plan when evaluating land use changes and making funding and budget decisions. It will be used by the Zoning Adjustments Board and City staff to help regulate development proposals and make decisions on projects. The policies of the Plan apply to all property, both public and private, within the Berkeley city limits. Although the University of California and other State and County agencies are not legally obligated to comply with the Plan, mutual cooperation benefits the City, the County, and the State.

Creating the General Plan: Although a number of public workshops and several important publications were completed in the mid-1990s for the update of the General Plan, this General Plan document is the result of an intensive two-and-a-half-year effort by the Berkeley Planning Commission with help from the Berkeley community and City staff.

In February 1999 the City Council authorized the Planning Commission and City staff to begin work on drafting a new General Plan for the City of Berkeley. City staff prepared the first draft in May 1999. After a series of five community workshops, staff prepared a second draft in October 1999 for Planning Commission consideration.

Over the next 12 months, the Planning Commission held seven public workshops, which included over 20 hours of "roundtable" discussions. Hundreds of Berkeley citizens participated in the workshops or submitted written suggestions for the Planning Commission Draft General Plan. After an additional series of Planning Commission meetings dedicated to focused discussion of particular policies and policy alternatives, the Planning Commission published a Planning Commission Draft General Plan in October 2000. Following publication of the Planning Commission Draft Plan, the Commission initiated a series of public hearings on the Draft Plan and authorized work on a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluating the Draft Plan.

During the spring of 2001, the Planning Commission dedicated another ten Planning Commission meetings to the consideration of additional public testimony and proposed amendments to the Planning Commission Draft Plan and held three public hearings for the public to comment on the Draft EIR and the Draft Plan. The goals, objectives, policies, and actions included in this General Plan are the result of four drafts, approximately 100 hours of public workshops, meetings, and hearings, close to 1,000 pages of policy suggestions submitted by Berkeley citizens, and the hard work and dedication of the Berkeley community and Berkeley Planning Commission. On July 11, 2001 the Planning Commission concluded its work on the update of the Berkeley General Plan and forwarded its recommended General Plan to the City Council for consideration and adoption.