

BNC eNews, Special Edition

March 1, 2016 by [BNC Archivist \(Edit\)](#)

A new development proposal is underway that will affect large numbers of homes and neighborhoods. Since there seems to be no plan to notify anyone affected by this proposal, Berkeley Neighborhoods Council (BNC) is posting this Special Edition. Our urgent request is you read this and then forward it to everyone on your personal and organization e-mail list.

What: A proposal by Mayor Bates, “*Addressing the Housing Emergency*” with 13 recommendations, among which include changing the zoning in and around residential areas, increasing height limits and eliminating giving nearby neighbors a chance to comment on proposed projects that could affect their everyday lives.

When: This proposal is #17a on the agenda of the Council, Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 7:00 pm

Where: School District Board Room, 1231 Addison Street (West Campus)

Since the length, over 70 pages, of the Bates’ proposal prohibits going into each of its recommendations here, we will mention only a few. We urge everyone to read the full proposal which can be accessed by the following link:

[http://records.cityofberkeley.info/Agenda/Documents/DownloadFile/4_5_2016%3b%20C LK%20-%20Report%20\(Public\)%3b%20MAYOR%3b%20%3b%20REGULAR%3b%20ADDRESSING%20THE%20HOUS.pdf?documentType=1&meetingId=178&itemId=1994&publi shId=2575&isSection=False&isAttachment=True](http://records.cityofberkeley.info/Agenda/Documents/DownloadFile/4_5_2016%3b%20C LK%20-%20Report%20(Public)%3b%20MAYOR%3b%20%3b%20REGULAR%3b%20ADDRESSING%20THE%20HOUS.pdf?documentType=1&meetingId=178&itemId=1994&publi shId=2575&isSection=False&isAttachment=True)

1.

1. **By-Right approval (no notice and no opportunity to comment by nearby neighbors) of new multi-family and mixed use developments in all City designated Priority Development Areas. (PDAs are in the Downtown and Southside areas, and along both sides of San Pablo Avenue Albany to Oakland, University Avenue from the west side of MLK, Jr to Third, and South Shattuck and the Adeline Corridor.) Higher buildings than currently allowed are encouraged. Developers would not get a “By-Right Approval” unless their project had “a minimum height equal to the maximum allowed under zoning” (which could be *even higher* with a**

Density Bonus-see below). “By-Right buildings” will not be required to meet any more than the current lowest environmental standards, Gold LEED.

2. **Increase Developer Density Bonus to 50% from the current 35%.** To get the additional 15% bonus, the developer must provide an unspecified number of units affordable to people earning up to 120% of area median income. This does not help the vast majority of current tenants in Berkeley who earn 100% or lower of area median income. This Bonus increases density for all new multi-family buildings throughout Berkeley, not just in PDA areas.
3. **Change Zoning from R2 and R2A to R3 in a full block or 200 feet behind commercial zoning on both sides of Telegraph from Dwight Way to Oakland, and along University and San Pablo Avenues.** Some examples of streets affected by this increase in zoning are: Hearst, Addison, 10th, Curtis, Mathews, Regent, Chilton, Florence, Halycon, and Dana. Taken in combination with the Density Bonus increase this would result in 9 story buildings.

Mayor Bates is not proposing this change for Adeline and South Shattuck, but says the concept would be considered as part of the Adeline Corridor project. If applied in the South Shattuck, Adeline Corridor, this proposal would affect streets like Wheeler, Fulton, Harper and Ellis.

1. **Increase zoning designation to R4 in the Southside Area.** This Area is bounded by the west side of College, east side of Fulton, north side of Dwight Way and south side of Bancroft. The result, combined with “By-right approval” and the proposed “Density Bonus” will be taller, larger, more dense buildings under the stated purpose of providing housing for students.
2. **Reduce Fees on New Construction.** Mayor Bates wants staff to look at fees, which he suggests are too high, and to streamline the process of approving new market rate development so that fees for developments can be reduced. Presumably the purpose of this recommendation is to encourage development.

This proposal by Mayor Bates is a blueprint for expanding the gentrification of Berkeley. Although couched in terms of providing more affordable housing, and expressing concerns over the impacts of high rise buildings on nearby residential neighborhoods, in reality, it promotes lining the pockets of for-profit developers at the expense of nurturing a livable city. In BNC’s view, new development *must* include three objectives:

1. promoting strong neighborhoods that house an economically diverse population,
2. preserving our City’s historical resources, and
3. achieving the highest environmental goals and healthy living standards.

This is Berkeley. We can and must do better planning if we are to have a sustainable future. Let’s work together to find better solutions.

Send your comments by e-mail to bnc50@berkeleyneighborhoodscouncil.com. We will publish a follow up to this article in our next regular eNEWS.