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CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 30, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmembers Kriss Worthington and Ben Bartlett, and Mayor Arreguin  
Subject: Planning Commission Referral for a Pilot Density Bonus Program for the Telegraph Avenue Commercial District to Generate Revenue to House the Homeless and Extremely Low-Income Individuals

RECOMMENDATION

That the Berkeley City Council refer a City Density Bonus policy for the Telegraph Avenue Commercial District to the Planning Commission to generate in-lieu fees that could be used to build housing for homeless and extremely low-income residents.

BACKGROUND

Under current state law, new development projects that get a density bonus, allowing up to 35 percent more density, are required to build inclusionary housing. Inclusionary housing is typically defined as below-market rate housing for people who earn 50 percent or 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

While it's great that developers are including some affordable housing in their market-rate projects, affordable housing for the homeless and extremely low-income who don't qualify for inclusionary units can be provided if developers instead paid fees into the Housing Trust Fund. This can be achieved through the use of a City Density Bonus for the Telegraph Avenue Commercial District, an area where many residents have expressed support for housing the homeless and the extremely low-income.

The City bonus fee would be equal to the in-lieu affordable housing mitigation fee, currently set at \$34,000 per unit. Fees paid into the fund could be leveraged with other Federal, State and Regional affordable housing sources, resulting in significantly more affordable housing built through the Housing Trust Fund than currently available. The City has important policy proposals to assist the homeless and extremely low-income residents that urgently need funding.

The pilot program of a City Density Bonus in the Telegraph Avenue Commercial District could go a long way toward easing Berkeley's critical housing shortage by increasing incentives for developers to add more housing and give the city greater ability to deliver affordable housing.

FISCAL IMPACTS

This proposal will generate millions in new revenue to the Housing Trust Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed change is consistent with City Climate Action Plan goals supporting increased residential density. Additionally, new residential construction is subject to more stringent green building and energy efficiency standards and will help reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions.

CONTACT PERSON

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