



Kriss Worthington

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ACTION CALENDAR
October 31, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Kriss Worthington and Kate Harrison

Subject: City Manager and Planning Commission Referral: Facilitate Primarily Student Housing by a Twenty Feet Height Increase and Adjust Floor Area Ratio in the R-SMU, R-S and R-3 Areas Only from Dwight to Bancroft and from College to Fulton

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager and Planning Commission to facilitate primarily Student Housing by amending the Zoning Ordinance to add a twenty feet height increase and adjust Floor Area Ratio in the R-SMU, R-S and R-3 areas only from Dwight to Bancroft and from College to Fulton.

BACKGROUND:

In the last few years students have become increasingly active at proposing ways to increase student housing. Housing is urgently needed in close proximity to the UC Berkeley campus as rents increase and the University population steadily rises. Students, recent graduates, employees of the University, and local businesses contribute to the local economy, create jobs for the local community, and greatly enrich the community through their presence. Implementing this action would provide a place to live for many individuals who would otherwise have to reside far from campus. Oftentimes, the quest to find living spaces is emotionally taxing on students and can decrease academic performance or leave students without affordable and safe places to live.

Increasing density in the area surrounding campus proves better for the environment, better for campus area businesses, and better for students. By reducing commute times, students will opt to walk or bike to class, reducing congestion on the road. A shorter commute will also increase student safety and allow students to participate in extracurricular activities that may run through the evening because students have to worry less about how they will get home. An enhanced sense of safety in the surrounding region is beneficial for all in the community. Finally, higher density benefits campus area businesses because it brings them more customers which supports the local economy.

Previous efforts to increase southside campus housing improved project viability just for the very small area of the C-T zoned blocks. Unfortunately even blocks on Bancroft directly across from the University still have excessive restrictions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Minimal.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Consistent with Berkeley's Environmental Sustainability Goals and no negative impact.

CONTACT PERSON:

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