



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember District 1

CONSENT CALENDAR

November 3, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author)

SUBJECT: Referral to Conduct an Automatic Traffic Calming Review for the Area Immediately Surrounding the Project at 1201-1205 San Pablo Avenue

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to conduct an automatic traffic calming review for the area immediately surrounding the streets of the project located at 1201-1205 San Pablo Avenue within six (6) months of the building's occupancy reaching 90 percent of its capacity with the intent of expediting the traffic calming process for neighbors impacted by the development of this project.

The traffic calming review should include the following intersections:

Gilman and Kains
Gilman and Stannage
Harrison and San Pablo
Harrison and Kains
Harrison and Stannage

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City's Traffic Calming Process is lengthy, requiring significant time and effort from residents. The typical process for initiating traffic calming measures in residential areas entails several requirements just to determine eligibility for a traffic survey:

- A neighbor living in the petition area submitting a [Neighborhood Request for Traffic Calming Study](#) identifying both the specific location of the area in question and the type of concern by the annual December 31 deadline for the following review cycle;
- Satisfying the minimum criteria to qualify for traffic calming:
 - Any residential street and a petition showing that 50% + 1 of households within the petition area defined by City staff support the proposal. AND,
 - At least one of the conditions noted below:
 - Where the 85th percentile speed profile is greater than 5 mph over the speed limit; OR

- Where there is a proximity to school or park (within two blocks), or senior center (within one block) combined with 85th percentile speed profile greater than 3 mph over the speed limit; OR
 - Where the traffic calming measure would mitigate a documented collision pattern (bike, pedestrian, motor vehicle); OR
 - Where there is a documented problem of a significant or inappropriate number of “through” motor vehicles on the street or in the neighborhood, per ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) volume guidelines for neighborhood streets.
- Evaluation by City staff ensuring compliance with minimum criteria.¹

After these steps, a traffic survey is conducted within the petition area to validate problems of significance that, if appropriate, could lead to a traffic study to determine a list of identified solutions. If the area qualifies for traffic calming, community meetings are called to engage the neighbors to select a solution. In the final step, staff prepare the cost estimates and integrate the project into the City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The entire process of the review cycle, from the beginning of the calendar year when staff review the newly collected applications to the preparation of cost estimates and prioritization for inclusion within the CIP takes an entire calendar year. Construction of any traffic calming mitigations begins the next calendar year – at a minimum 13 months from the date of the initial submission of the Neighborhood Request for Traffic Calming Study application.²

Neighbors in close proximity to the 1201-1205 San Pablo Avenue project site have been in the appeal process since spring of 2021 and are deeply concerned about the traffic impacts of adding a 66-unit building. This referral requests an expedited traffic calming review process to address any increase in traffic impacts once the new development is nearly at full capacity. As numerous residents of the neighborhood have already made clear in their appeal letter included within the appeal packet³ and through numerous communications sent directly to City Council, a traffic study will be needed to help identify and potentially mitigate traffic related safety concerns. The regular traffic calming process can be expedited for this group of residents by circumventing the initial stages of the review process by allowing them to skip the application and signature gathering phase, shortening the lengthy process by several months.

BACKGROUND

On May 11, 2021, Trachtenberg Architecture submitted an application for Use Permit #ZP2021-0070 to construct a six-story, mixed-use building on a vacant lot, with 66 units and 1,680 square feet of commercial space. In December of that year, the Zoning Adjustment

¹ See City of Berkeley website: [Request Traffic Calming](#)

² See this [Timeline](#) for Neighborhood Traffic Calming, found on the City of Berkeley Request Traffic Calming webpage: <https://berkeleyca.gov/city-services/livable-neighborhoods/request-traffic-calming>

³ See pages 72 - 82 of the September 29, 2022 Appeal Packet for ZAB Appeal 1201-1205 San Pablo Avenue Use Permit #ZP 2021-0070 for the [September 29, 2022 City Council Meeting, item #7](#)

Board (ZAB) conducted a public preview and provided a preliminary review of the project. In January, 2022, the Design Review Committee (DRC) conducted a Preliminary Design Review (PDR) of the project and continued the discussion to a second meeting. On March 29, 2022, the DRC conducted a second PDR meeting and forwarded a favorable recommendation for the project to the ZAB with conditions and recommendations for Final Design Review (FDR). On April 18, 2022, Councilmember Kesarwani met with the neighbors to hear their concerns and answer questions related to this project and several new housing laws. On April 28, 2022, the ZAB conducted a public hearing for the use permit application. After hearing public comments and holding discussion, the ZAB approved the use permit by a vote of 7-0-2-0 (Yes: Duffy, Matthews, Kim, Olson, Sanderson, Gaffney, Tregub; No: None; Abstain: Sheahan, Thompson; Absent: None). On May 5, 2022, staff issued the ZAB Notice of Decision.

On May 19, 2022, the City Clerk received an appeal filing from two residents living in close proximity to the proposed development: Yvette Bozzini, resident at 1110 Harrison Street, and Dan Hayes, resident at 1116 Harrison Street. On September 15, 2022, staff posted the public hearing notice at the site and three nearby locations, and mailed notices to property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the project site, and to all registered neighborhood groups that cover this area. The Council hears the appeal on Thursday, September 29th, 2022.

FISCAL IMPACTS

There are no direct fiscal impacts of expediting the traffic calming review process as this work is part of the standard process available to all residents throughout the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Traffic mitigation measures could slow down traffic and discourage the use of single-occupancy vehicles, thus decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

CONTACT

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