



North Berkeley BART Objective Design Standards Community Meeting #1 Summary Notes

Overview

Date + Time: November 16, 2022 from 7pm-9pm

Location: Online via Zoom virtual meeting

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Background / Planning Process
- Objective Design Standards Framework
- Key Elements of Design
- Next Steps
- Small Group Discussion

Attendance

There were approximately 160 meeting participants in attendance.

The following members of the project team (City of Berkeley, BART, and consultants) made presentations, assisted with the meeting, or facilitated small group discussions:

City of Berkeley

- Alisa Shen - Principal Planner
- Ashley James - Senior Planner
- Robert Rivera - Senior Planner
- Justin Horner - Associate Planner
- Zoe Covello - Assistant Planner

BART

- Shannon Dodge - Principal Property Development Officer
- Deb Castles - Principal Property Development Officer
- Rachel Factor - Principal Planner

Consultants

- Darolyn Davis - *D&A Communications*
- Surlene Grant - *D&A Communications*
- Kelly Scheurer - *D&A Communications*
- Chris Sensenig - *Raimi + Associates*
- Antara Tandon - *Raimi + Associates*

- Matthew Raimi - *Raimi + Associates*

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the first Objective Design Standards (ODS) meeting was to provide an introduction to ODS and the process to develop them, specifically regarding the North Berkeley BART Development. The following notes summarize the main agenda items, presentation, and discussion which occurred during the meeting. Members of the public were invited to provide initial feedback on the ODS both verbal and via the use of Mentimeter, an on-line survey instrument.

PROJECT TEAM PRESENTATION

Project Background / Planning Process

Alisa Shen provided an overview of the project objectives and timeline, and related previous planning efforts (*visit the project website for more information:*

<https://berkeleyca.gov/construction-development/land-use-development/general-plan-and-area-plans/ashby-and-north-berkeley>).

Objective Design Standards Framework

Chris Sensenig introduced the basic requirements for the ODS framework to provide background and context, and provide a baseline from which the ODS can be built. The requirements and ODS limitations were organized by the following topics: Station Access, Operations and Safety, R-BMU Zoning, City and BART JVP, and Project Feasibility.

Key Elements of Design

Chris Sensenig provided an overview of the limits of the ODS with a focus on streetscape design, building setbacks, ground floor design, upper floor step backs, and building form and massing.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Meeting participants were randomly distributed into six breakout rooms as part of the Zoom meeting to discuss and provide feedback on the topics that were presented. Each group was facilitated by members of the project team to guide discussion on the ODS, answer questions, take notes, and support the use of Mentimeter.

Below are the key themes that came out of the discussions organized by major topic.

Topics Covered in Small Group Discussions

Ground Floor Design

Themes from Small Groups

- Considering ground floor design is premature without having more specifics on the size and density of the overall project to review;
- Assuring ADA compliance (e.g. raised stoops);
- How ground floor designs could affect height and shadowing;

Internal

- Lack of clarity about ground floor design trade-offs and their impacts;
- Questions about the uses for accessory spaces on Sacramento (e.g. if they could be child care, bike repair, stores);
- Concerns about a lack of parking and increased traffic;

Mentimeter Responses to Ground Floor Design Questions

Delaware Street: Please select up to three ground floor design options most appropriate for Delaware Street?

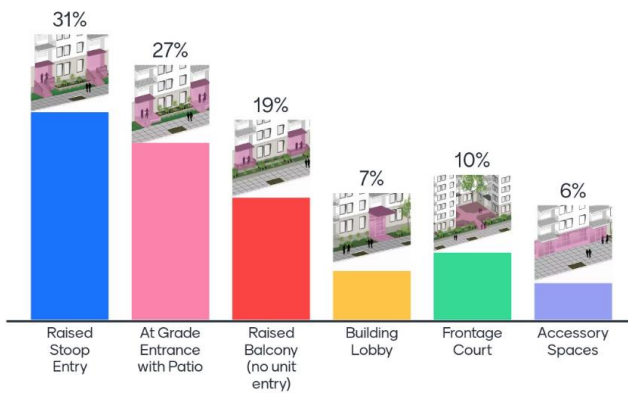
Mentimeter



88

Acton Street: Please select the three ground floor design options most appropriate for Acton Street?

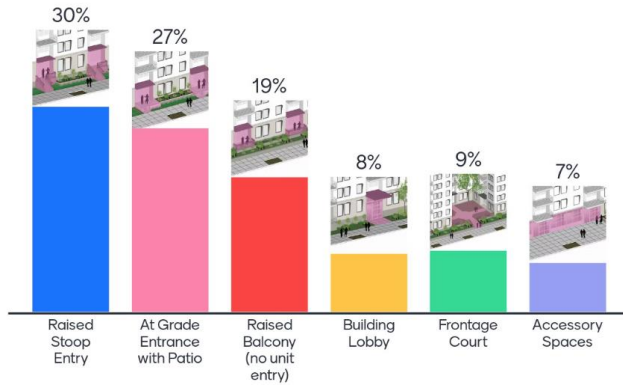
Mentimeter



84

Virginia Street: Please select up to three ground floor design options most appropriate for Virginia Street?

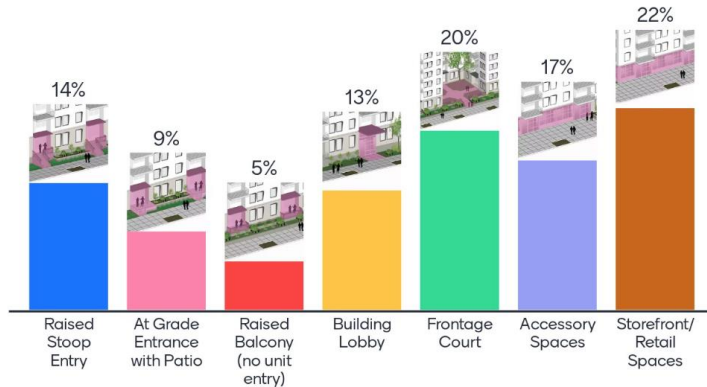
Mentimeter



85

Sacramento Street: Please select up to three ground floor design options most appropriate for Sacramento Street?

Mentimeter



92

Setbacks and Upper Floor Step Backs

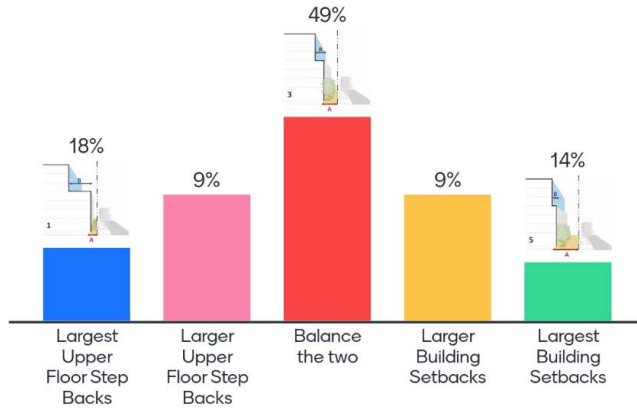
Themes from Small Groups

- Considering setbacks and stepbacks is premature without having more specifics on the size and density of the overall project to review;
- Lack of clarity about setback and step backs trade-offs and their impacts;
- Assuring ADA compliance;
- Questions about the costs associated with varied setbacks and step backs;
- Preference for real-life visuals and examples instead of renderings;
- Preference for a variation with height in the center

Mentimeter Responses to Setbacks and Upper Floor Step Backs Questions

Sacramento Street: Should we prioritize Upper Floor Step Backs or Building Setback on Sacramento Street?

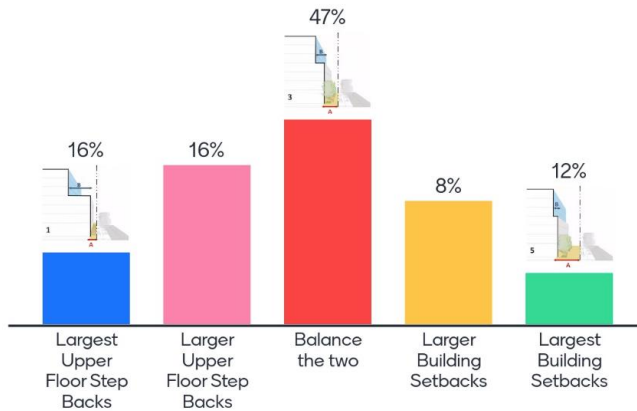
Mentimeter



85

Delaware Street: Should we prioritize Upper Floor Step Backs or Building Setback on Delaware Street?

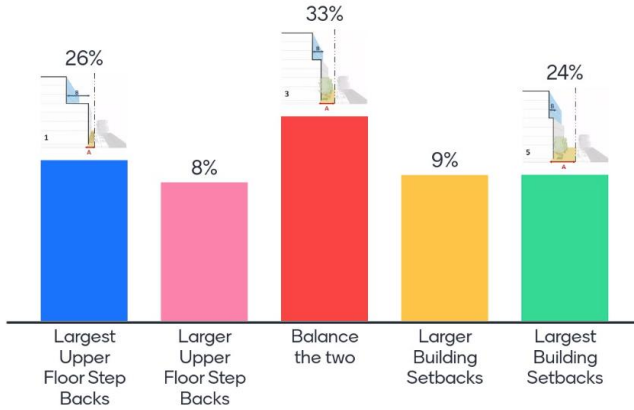
Mentimeter



85

Acton Street: Should we prioritize Upper Floor Step Backs or Building Setback on Acton Street?

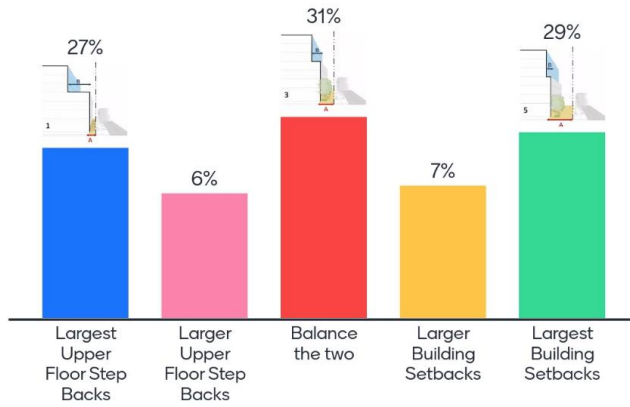
Mentimeter



85

Virginia Street: Should we prioritize Upper Floor Step Backs or Building Setback on Virginia Street?

Mentimeter



83

Building Form and Massing

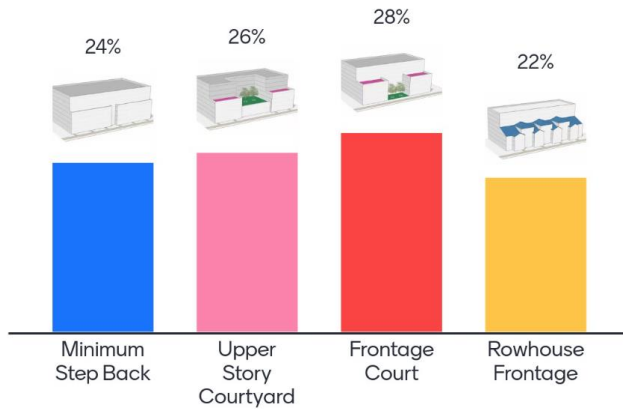
Themes from Small Groups

- Preference for real-life visuals and examples instead of renderings;
- Concerns about public access

Mentimeter Responses to Building Form and Massing Questions

Sacramento Street: Please select the two building form types most appropriate for Sacramento Street?

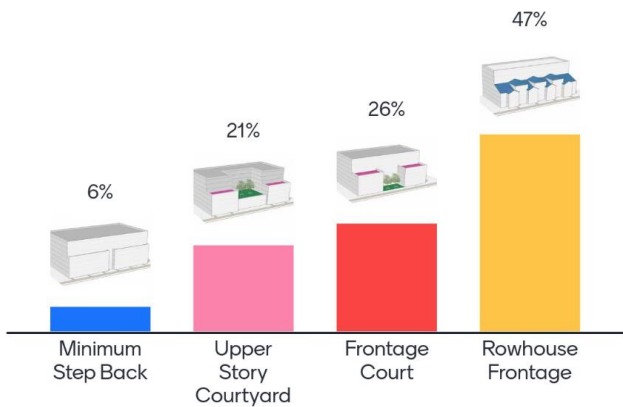
Mentimeter



85

Delaware Street: Please select the two building form types most appropriate for Delaware Street?

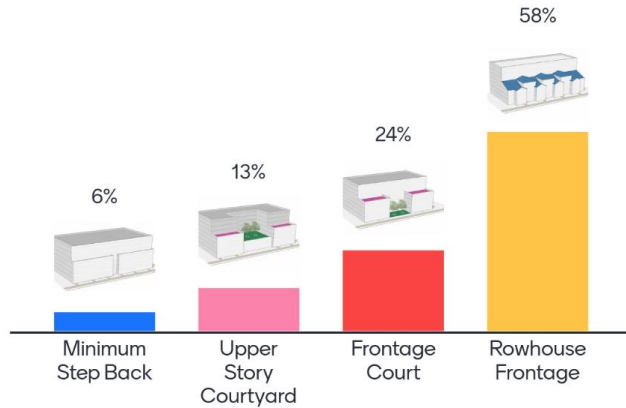
Mentimeter



83

Acton Street: Please select the two building form types most appropriate for Acton Street?

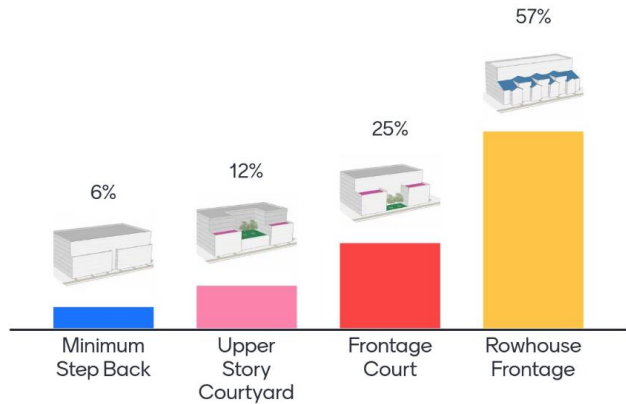
Mentimeter



82

Virginia Street: Please select the two building form types most appropriate for Virginia Street?

Mentimeter



83

Next Steps

Following the small group discussion, meeting participants were brought back into the main Zoom room to learn about next steps, including the opportunity to attend ODS Office Hours. The project team discussed future engagement opportunities including virtual and in-person office hours. The next ODS meeting is expected to occur in January or February 2023.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9pm. Additional Mentimeter responses were accepted for an additional 24 hours and general comments are continued to be accepted via email and mail.

Via email: bartplanning@cityofberkeley.info

Internal

Or via mail:

City of Berkeley Planning and Building Department
1947 Center Street 2nd Floor,
Berkeley CA, 94704 (Attn: Alisa Shen)

For more information, please visit: <https://berkeleyca.gov/construction-development/land-use-development/general-plan-and-area-plans/ashby-and-north-berkeley>

Internal

Emails Received: Objective Design Standards Meeting #1

From: [christopher.kroll](mailto:christopher.kroll@berkeley.gov)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); sdodge@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); rebecca.saltzman@bart.gov
Subject: 11/16 Town Hall Meeting North Berkeley BART
Date: Sunday, November 27, 2022 3:23:10 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

City of Berkeley and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART was grossly insufficient for allowing community members to participate in development of these standards for the proposed development at NB BART as requested of BART by the City. Participants were asked to vote on various high density development elements without being given a clear idea of how these elements would relate to an ultimate design. It was very disappointing and in no way clear how the design standards would be developed in the way the meeting was run.

We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show the community a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards! It is insulting that that is not what happened on 11/16.

Christopher Kroll
Berkeley

From: [Barbara Fisher](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [sdodge@bart.gov](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca Saltzman](#)
Subject: BART development
Date: Wednesday, November 23, 2022 9:41:56 PM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART was ridiculous - Steps up to the front door? Big or little setback after the 4th floor? Etc. Please show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. (Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make the choices you asked for in the absence of the big picture.) At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. Then we could comment on big picture design elements - height, massing, setbacks, open space, etc. in addition to the isolated design elements we saw on the 16th. This would be meaningful feedback, which the community deserves the opportunity to give.

Sincerely,

Barbara Fisher

From: [David Brandon](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); sdodge@bart.gov; rebecca.saltzman@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); [bartplanning](#)
Subject: Comment on November 16 Meeting on North Berkeley TOD Objective Design Standards
Date: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 10:00:43 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Mayor & Council, BART officials, and Planners:

I was unable to attend last week's meeting, but was deeply distressed when two friends who did attend described the presentation as lacking substance. That is, no overall plans or models of this enormous project were shown that would enable evaluation of the design standards. While I understand that the overall design hasn't been established, ***the public must see details of how various proposed design standards would affect realistic models of the projected TOD.***

In short, based on the feedback I got, I urge you to schedule a more meaningful presentation of the proposed ODS that would enable relevant public evaluation and comment.

Thank you.

David Brandon
Resident, Berkeley District 1

From: [aimee baldwin](#)
To: [bartplanning](#); sdodge@bart.gov
Subject: Design Standards and other community presentations
Date: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 11:03:28 AM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I have attended several different meetings about the North Berkeley BART station development over the past several years. Is it at all possible to require all future presentations about the station design to make all aerial illustrations/images of the station with the direction North at the top of the images?

It is impossible to visualize a site when the direction of north is in a different direction in some of the images. I believe the most recent objective design standards meeting had some images with north in a different direction.

Thanks,
Aimee

From: [Kori Kody](#)
To: [bartplanning](#)
Subject: Fwd: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Monday, November 21, 2022 8:40:59 PM

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----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART

Date: Mon, 21 Nov 2022 20:39:32 -0800

From: Kori Kody <Kori.Kody@mindspring.com>

To: Mayor@CityofBerkeley.info, council@cityofberkeley.info, sdodge@bart.gov,
ashen@cityofberkeley.info, Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov

Dear City and BART officials and planners:

I agree with the feeling of many that the 11/16 Town Hall meeting concerning objective design standards at North Berkeley BART was not effective in meaningfully engaging with the community about such a consequential project. Breakout Room consensus was that our choices were not meaningful in the absence of being able to envision the entire structure in context.

At the next meeting, it would be helpful to see a **presentation** of what, for example, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. It is essential that the community be able to provide **meaningful feedback** on the design standards.

Sincerely,

Kori Kody
Berkeley, CA

From: [Vicki](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [Kesarwani, Rashi](#); [Harrison, Kate](#); [Hahn, Sophie](#); [Wengraf, Susan](#)
Subject: Fwd: TOD Planning at NBB: The Sophie's Choice Survey of 11/16
Date: Thursday, November 17, 2022 8:57:28 PM

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Dear Civic Leaders

The meeting last night (11/16/22) was yet another waste of citizen and taxpayer time. Again we are being misled by images of 5-6 story developments (much as we were during the recent developer presentations, and as we have been at every BART presentation since 2018!!) . It is a fact that the site is zoned for 7 stories and that the developer could exercise a density bonus to build up to 12 stories.

The community needs to be clearly shown what developments of this size, massing and scale will look like and how they will shade the surrounding neighborhood homes.

Why are we talking about "balloons" and moving the deck chairs about on the Titanic?

I am of the opinion that exercises such as these are intentional strategies to distract the community from what is being planned by BART.

I cannot believe that the planners failed to recognize that people could not meaningfully choose frontages and setbacks without seeing the impact these would have on overall height and massing.

I do not want to see "MacArthur Monster -Lite" rising up out of the North Berkeley Parking lot in the middle of my low rise residential neighborhood!

My break-out group was very critical of this exercise as the process gave no real consideration to the substantive elements (how height and density will impact the surrounding community - ie. shadowing, traffic, parking) and no way for anyone to determine the big picture consequences of any of the given choices. I spent time trying to decide, what was best - leaving the survey blank in protest, or giving answers that may not be what I ultimately wanted. Best to say I wasted time...

The BART development at North Berkeley BART must fit in contextually with the surrounding low rise residential neighborhood.

There were no options that would make this development contextual with the neighborhood!

For example, there was no option to choose large setbacks at the ground level with large step backs at higher levels. There were no options for real breaks between buildings. There is no discussion of the height of buildings along the perimeter. There was no discussion of the overall look on the site.

Basically we were told we will have massive tall blocks of buildings casting shadows. We were being asked to cosmetically slightly alter these blocks , but warned that making any visually appealing modification could result in the "need" to build higher. Someone has called this the "Sophie's Choice" exercise. The "Need" here is to build a contextual development, and if BART's developers must build smaller to comply, then that is a modification that you must compel them to make!

I call upon you to go back to BART, and the developers and make them understand that North Berkeley is a residential community that is willing to absorb 75 units/acre, of affordable housing to help mitigate the "affordability crisis" facing Berkeley. (there is no "housing crisis" -just check Zillow-tons of market rate units for rent!)

We are not willing to tolerate a development which is not contextual, that is primarily market rate, that serves to enrich BART and the developers at the expense of our community (locally the size and massing, city-wide the affordability).

We want a village, a community, not large massive buildings.

Why did Civic Leadership hold a Visioning Event and encourage citizens to participate - only to ignore the results? Over 80% of participants indicated the desire for the North Berkeley BART to have a maximum height of 5 stories at the center, 3 at the periphery.

We want large setbacks and setbacks, three stories along the perimeter on all streets and 5-6-stories only in the very center. We want breaks every 30 feet or so between buildings.

Here is an image of what we want. This design is contextual to the surrounding neighborhood. We do NOT want 7 story massive blocks with cosmetic facelifts.



Please do not waste our time. The next time you call on us to participate, guide the process so that it is, in fact, a real process that involves the community in a **substantive** way.

Sincerely,
Vicki

From: [constance rivemale](#)
To: [Shen, Alisa](#)
Subject: N Berkeley Bart
Date: Monday, November 21, 2022 11:43:17 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community, in effect, to judge frosting without showing us the cake. We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards!

Sincerely,

Constance Rivemale
Berkeley native and tax payer
1916 Yolo Ave, Berkeley California

--

Kind Regards,
Constance Rivemale

From: [Lois Cantor](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [sdodge@bart.gov](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov](#)
Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 7:51:15 AM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community, in effect, to judge frosting without showing us the cake. We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards!

Sincerely,
Lois Cantor
Berkeley

From: [Diana](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); sdodge@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); rebecca.saltzman@bart.gov
Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 5:50:51 AM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community, in effect, to judge without seeing the overall proposed designs.

We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards.

Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture.

At the next meeting, I want a real presentation of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like.

The community must have the opportunity to provide truly meaningful feedback on the design standards!

Sincerely,
Diana Bohn
Berkeley

From: [Bonnie Forer](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [sdodge@bart.gov](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov](#)
Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Monday, November 21, 2022 6:29:38 PM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community, in effect, to judge frosting without showing us the cake. We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards!

Sincerely,

Bonnie Forer
Berkeley, CA

From: [Jason Warriner](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#)
Cc: [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); sdodge@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca Saltzman](#)
Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Monday, November 21, 2022 5:47:41 PM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community, in effect, to judge frosting without showing us the cake. We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture.

At the next meeting, I want a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards!

Sincerely,

Jason
Berkeley, CA

From: [DONNA DEDIEMAR](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [sdodge@bart.gov](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov](#)
Subject: November 16 Town Hall Meeting re North Berkeley BART
Date: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 2:49:50 PM

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Dear City and BART Officials,

I attended the Nov. 16 Zoom meeting regarding housing at the North Berkeley BART station and was appalled by it. It had every marking of being a pro forma exercise, meant to make people think they were really having a say in what was going to be built, but limiting the say basically to the equivalent of the color of the paint or the choice of the flowers.

This is a huge project which will have an oversized effect, particularly on the residents who surround the station. While size and the number of units may be dictated by state mandate and BART, there is much more that the neighbors deserve to hear about and weigh in on than whether there will be a stoop or a slight setback. The idea that people should vote at the end of the meeting on small what I would call 'end of design phase' details was absurd.

I tried to vote and found that I simply couldn't. There just was no way to figure anything out without seeing a 3D mock-up on something bigger than a 15" computer screen. And then I realized that I shouldn't be weighing in anyway. I live half a mile from the station - close enough for what happens there to affect me, but not nearly close enough for my voice to be weighted the same as the voices of those in the immediate neighborhood.

This charade was exactly what the neighbors close by on Hopkins went through (and are still battling) regarding a reconfiguration of that street. Please stop trying to humor us, and instead give us something to really comment on. It should be up to the builders you introduced at the meeting to come up with designs, produce mock-ups, and have them on display at an in-person meeting, where people can view and evaluate them. Then we can comment and vote.

If you truly wanted community input, the discussion would not have been about that which you wanted to talk; it would have been about what we want to see in a finished development. It would have given greater deference to those who live in the immediate area and who will suffer the brunt of the changes. And it would have shown some respect for the intelligence of the audience members. Framing the discussion to exclude the things most important to them was a blatant slap in the face, after all that has gone on over the years in preparing for this project.

Shame on you all.

Donna DeDiemar
1316 Albina Ave.
Berkeley

From: [Tony Corman](#)
To: [Shen, Alisa](#)
Cc: [North Berkeley Neighborhood Alliance](#)
Subject: ODS meeting last night
Date: Thursday, November 17, 2022 2:42:40 PM

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There were three architects in the breakout room with me last night, and all three felt that they were being asked to make choices without being able to see the choices in context and the effect the choices would have on other aspects of the project. Many of us seconded this opinion, and no one contravened it.

This effort feels like a step back from any vision of a desirable result, to one of wrangling details in isolation. It didn't feel productive, and I'm not sure how useful you, BART, or a developer would find the result. I also noticed that, by the time the breakout sessions were over, the 160+ attendees had dwindled to under 40 - 2/3 or more left before the meeting was over. It simply did not feel like a way to productively engage the public. As I told you post-CAG, my experience of the CAG was similar - as a group, we never sat down together to reach a consensus or produce any kind of working document or other product; it was a completely contained process. This feels the same. I've been at almost every meeting relating to TOD at NB BART and it feels to me like a show of inclusion - last night we were asked about factors that might dress up a massive project, but the constant subtext was that the choices won't have a lot of effect on the massing - the "balloon" metaphor.

At the outset of the BART TOD effort in Berkeley, the city held a visioning event, and there was a lot of love for the Opticos design. Most of us don't have the background to be able to envision architectural details, in isolation or in context. We need to be shown a vision, in context, to understand what's possible and to respond meaningfully.

I think some sort of charrette-like exercise where 3D blocks on a physical site model can be moved around would tell us and you a lot about what people want and do not want. Not hard to do, can be crude and still effective. The cardboard box models that artists brought to the final zoning meeting were actually rather powerful, showing the proportion of contrast between the extant housing and 7+-story apartment buildings.

My question for you is this: is the city really interested in engaging the public? If so, are you willing to rethink the ODS process? or simply let it play out as scheduled, where we spend the next year waiting to hear about setbacks when what we've wanted from the start is to see a compelling vision of a project that harmonizes? I really encourage you to rethink the process, if the City is sincere about meaningful engagement with the public.

All the best,

Tony Corman

From: mariko.nobori
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); sdodge@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov
Subject: Please Show Us Your Vision for North Berkeley BART Housing!
Date: Sunday, November 27, 2022 5:50:39 PM

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Dear City and BART officials and planners:

The 11/16 Town Hall meeting about objective design standards at North Berkeley BART asked the community to vote on details of design without a vision of the overall building design. It is impossible make these kind of judgements without any sense of the larger context.

We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, the voters/taxpayers/residents of Berkeley, and especially of this North Berkeley neighborhood, demand and deserve a clear proposal of what a, for example, 600-unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like.

The community must have the opportunity to provide truly meaningful feedback on the design standards!

Sincerely,
Mariko Nobori
1670 Short St
Berkeley 94702

From: [Anthony Campana](#)
To: [bartplanning](#)
Cc: [Shen, Alisa](#); [Kesarwani, Rashi](#); sdodge@bart.gov; chris@raimiassociates.com; darolyn@davis-pr.com
Subject: Public Comment on North Berkeley BART Objective Design Standards
Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 11:24:19 PM

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Berkeley Planning team,

Thank you to Principal Planner Shen, and to the other presenters and facilitators from the City of Berkeley, D&A Communications, Raimi Associates, and BART, for this evening's informative presentation and well-managed discussion about concepts and trade-offs for Objective Design Standards at North Berkeley BART. Thank you also for the clear follow-up information and opportunity to provide written comments; my comments are below.

On the subjects of feedback solicited in tonight's meeting:

1. It is important that massing is not concentrated along Sacramento St, which is the site frontage with the greatest noise and air pollution. It would not be just to place new residents along this undesirable street in service of keeping housing some feet further away from homeowners across Delaware, Acton, and Virginia. If there's any reason to have different massing on different sides of the site, I'd argue it should even go the other way, providing greater step backs along Sacramento and Virginia to preserve sunlight north and east.
2. I do not believe that the "rowhouse form" should be required on any of the site's frontages. It's too much of a constraint on floor plates, increases construction cost at the expense of other potential public benefits, is less durable long term and less energy and material efficient, and is just plain inauthentic architecture. One commenter in my breakout group, who was otherwise quite interested in placing additional design standards on the site, stated that an image of [this standard, zero-setback, frontage court five-over-one](#) in Raimi Associates' presentation would be his ideal pick for the site, because of its appearance and exterior design. We should allow the project architect the freedom to produce a coherent and attractive design – what appeals to new tenants will look good in the neighborhood as well.

I would also like to comment on other Objective Design Standards subjects not put to small group discussion tonight:

3. Just as the team described and solicited feedback on trade-offs between building setbacks and upper story step backs, and between setbacks on different frontages, there is a tradeoff between massing and open space on the interior and exterior of the site.
It is more important to maintain generous pathways on the interior of the site, and to encourage narrow courtyard buildings full of light, than it is to set the buildings back from the road frontages around the perimeter of the block. Useful "back yard" space open to the public is more important and useful than empty "front yard" space. European-style perimeter block courtyard buildings, with lively street frontages, are better than buildings forced into a low, wide form by setback requirements and perimeter height limitations. It would be helpful to solicit feedback on these tradeoffs from the public at large at the next Objective Design Standards meeting, with the same excellent massing drawings, explanation,

and examples your team provided for the other tradeoffs tonight.

4. On the subject of Station Access, it is crucial to maximize public benefit from the site by setting a parking maximum, preferably zero, for the residential and mixed use spaces on the site. I understand that the planning already performed has set a maximum of 120 BART parking spaces within the station block. While financiers may desire additional parking, adding it would increase the site massing, increase traffic in the surrounding area, and run counter to the environmental and public realm benefits of building housing at a mass transit station.
5. Similarly, for the Public Realm, all accessways within the site should be pedestrianized in normal use, with provisions for emergency vehicle access only. Certainly, private car drop-off must take place at the perimeter of the site only.

Thank you for considering and incorporating these comments into your planning, as I am sure you are doing for the feedback of many others keenly interested in this generational project.

Anthony Campana
Berkeley resident
North Berkeley BART user

From: [Virginia Browning](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [Kesarwani, Rashi](#); [Harrison, Kate](#); [Hahn, Sophie](#); [Wengraf, Susan](#); [Sue Martin](#)
Subject: Re: TOD Planning at NBB: The Sophie's Choice Survey of 11/16
Date: Thursday, November 17, 2022 11:13:28 AM

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Re: email from Sue Martin -
I substantially agree with her and have a couple of additional thoughts.

Why are we AGAIN paying Raimi (and how much) for this? It really seemed like a joke. It was an interesting course in terminology should any of us not be familiar with that by now, but other than that, how much did we pay for this meaningless exercise? I would sincerely like a reply to this question. Raimi and perhaps one or two other consultants are apparently paid millions of dollars in addition to what we pay city staff. This was truly a silly exercise. We couldn't envision entire buildings except at the beginning in flashed photos - and the ones flashed onto the screen were not anything such as is proposed here - perhaps one was 7 stories but I don't think so - I think they were all fewer stories. I saved a screenshot of one I liked (it happened not to be 7 stories, and happened to have elements substantially different from the little cartoons we were limited to in our preferences.) What was the meaning of flashing nice-looking buildings without our ability to say "I like that one, or at least these parts of it a lot" and instead were made to choose between elements that were substantially different from what they showed in actual pictures? Even if we chose for example, one with say a retaining wall with a raised stoop - this is not really a design element in and of itself. Those particular elements could go into an ugly disheartening building or into a cheerful inviting one. As we could see from the photos flashed on the screen, the details that made the building appealing were color, proportion, landscaping - elements of which none were in our tiny group of meaningless choices.

I don't doubt that now some of you will further this "balloon" analogy they presented, which may have been the major new help to those of you trying to hypnotize us into accepting that: (1) losing trees and ground cover somehow enhances climate resilience (2) hauling in enormous amounts of concrete and planning for massive new numbers of fueled haulings of goods into the long-term future to this now-human scaled earth-spot is somehow climate resilient. Etc. Sorry - I lost my train of thought which is this: If you're going to use that balloon analogy (I can almost see our council member's chirpy newsletter now making use of it) - I suggest you use it in a broader context to represent : that the balloon will indeed "pop" for sustaining earth if this idea that creating mega-cities is somehow going to sustain us, whereas what hundreds of scientists worldwide have said instead in the U.N. report on Climate Change - is that in already-developed regions, the most climate-resilient building (including for protecting the distant wilds supposedly being "saved") is that which retains a very large amount of greenery and protects and promotes LOCAL solar panels, NOT building towers and too-dense building that cancels any supposed benefits from SOME consolidation - consolidation such as those of us already here know of from filling our homes with truly affordable rooms and trying to keep a walkable, garden-friendly environment. Four stories should mean four stories, not eight. We should be lobbying the state AGAINST - not selling - density "bonuses" that subvert actual climate resilience. And we should consider not paying this kind of money to consultants for something that is really nothing but a trick of marketing.

Virginia Browning

On Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 09:22:39 AM PST, Sue Martin <getmesue@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Leaders of Our Community,

The Sophie's Choice Survey of last night (11/16/22) was so offensive and inappropriate to the process we've been in for the past 4 years. There was no real choice on the substantial elements.

For example, there was no option to choose large setbacks at the ground level with large step backs at higher levels. There were no options for real breaks between buildings. There is no discussion of the height of buildings along the perimeter. There was no discussion of the overall look on the site.

There were no options that would make this development contextual with the neighborhood!

Basically we were told we have massive tall blocks of buildings casting shadows. We can only cosmetically slightly alter these blocks so as not to "bust the balloon". What balloon? What are the unstated assumptions about the size of the balloon? Where is the discussion on the size of the balloon? Is the balloon 7 stories covering the entire property as portrayed in the images last night?

This is not the universe we want to live, breath, move or create in. We want a village, a community, not large massive buildings.

We want large setbacks and stepbacks, three stories along the perimeter on all streets and 5-6-stories only in the very center. We want breaks every 30 feet or so between buildings.

Here is an image of what we want. This design is contextual to the surrounding neighborhood. We do NOT want 7 story massive blocks with cosmetic facelifts.



Please guide this process so that it is, in fact, a real process that involves the community is a substantial way.

warmly,

Sue

From: [Sperberstein](#)
To: [Shen, Alisa](#)
Subject: The 11/16 meeting
Date: Monday, November 21, 2022 7:48:57 PM

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We're frustrated by the absence of an overall sense of design of the BART site project. With no context, it seems irrelevant to ask for input from the community on minor details. The developers need more guidance on expectations from Berkeley council members and especially community residents in order for their models to be relevant and appropriate.

Stephen Sperber &
Roberta Silverstein
Lincoln St.
Berkeley
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sue Martin](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [Kesarwani, Rashi](#); [Harrison, Kate](#); [Hahn, Sophie](#); [Wengraf, Susan](#)
Subject: TOD Planning at NBB: The Sophie's Choice Survey of 11/16
Date: Thursday, November 17, 2022 9:22:46 AM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Leaders of Our Community,

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Please guide this process so that it is, in fact, a real process that involves the community in a substantial way.

warmly,
Sue

From: [tom reilly](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); [bartplanning](#); [sdodge@bart.gov](#); [Shen, Alisa](#); [Rebecca.Saltzman@bart.gov](#)
Subject: Town Hall meeting concerning Berkeley BART development
Date: Thursday, November 24, 2022 2:20:08 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear City and BART officials and planners:

At the November 16, 2022 supposed town hall meeting about objective design standards at the North Berkeley BART station, BART asked the community, in effect, to judge the frosting without showing us the cake. We are several years into the process, and it's way past time to show us a vision for the entire project, so that we can give meaningful input on the design standards. Even several architects at breakout rooms felt they could not make these choices in the absence of the big picture. At the next meeting, I would like to see a **real presentation** of what, say, a 600 unit project (as specified in the new housing element) would look like, as well as what a larger project would look like. The community must have the opportunity to provide **truly meaningful feedback** on the design standards!

Sincerely,

Tom Reilly
1450 Keoncrest Dr.
Berkeley, CA 94702

From: [David Brandon](#)
To: [Berkeley Mayor's Office](#); [All Council](#); sdodge@bart.gov; rebecca.saltzman@bart.gov; [Shen, Alisa](#); [bartplanning](#)
Subject: Updated comment on North Berkeley TOD Objective Design Standards Meeting #1
Date: Thursday, December 1, 2022 8:49:02 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Berkeley Mayor & Council, BART officials, and Planners:

I am updating my earlier comments, based on review of the presentation materials from November 16 and attendance at tonight's Office Hours #1 session via Zoom. While I grasp the overall process in play, I reiterate my view that *the public must see details of how various proposed design standards would affect realistic models of the projected TOD*. The November 16 meeting and follow-up so far failed to contribute satisfactorily to the ODS process.

I think it would be useful for the City Planner to provide us with some design CONCEPTS, and then show us how various elements of the ODS might impact, a "small" development (e.g., 400-500 units) and a "large" development (e.g., 700 or more units). This would contribute to rational development of ODS.

This is the time for the City and its citizens to apply their best efforts to shape ODS that will serve the City and Community.

With appreciation for all the staff time and effort involved in this process,

David Brandon
Resident, Berkeley District 1