

November 17, 2020

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing in regards to an item on this evening's council agenda, Planning Board recommendation to change the zoning destination of the parcel at **2350 Fifth Street, XI Land Use and Planning b) environmental impact**

I would like to give you some historical knowledge. I have lived across the street, adjacent to this lot since 2006 when myself and my neighbors moved into the newly built BMR homes and the apartments at Breakers at Bayport. Almost everyone who moved in here in 2006 remains here today. This affordable housing was designed as part of the development that built market rate homes, a concession that was fought for by others before me.

Therefore, the information that I am sharing has been collected over the years and also reflects the experience of my neighbors. When Alameda talks about wanting diversity, that's us. Demographically, I'm one of the only White people who lives here out of at least a hundred people. Some of us live in the row of homes with our families (to be considered you had to be a family of 4) and many others in the apartments. Each home has a two car garage. Each apartment has a designated parking space. There are streets, but very limited parking. There is no space for visitors. Also, many of the families here as you know, due to gentrification, rising housing costs, let alone COVID-19, are made up of generations, not just a nuclear family or individuals, since that was prohibited. Therefore, there are at times families that have more than one car. Also, some of us have converted our garages into spill out living spaces not just for a car. Regardless, since **DAY 1** there has been a parking shortage.

Don't get me wrong. I am not about reliance on fossil fuels. I am not encouraging the use of cars. I am speaking on the reality of the situation, the present situation. Over the years, all of my neighbors, myself included, have had our cars or the cars of family or friends visiting us towed after someone made a complaint to the HOA of the privately market rate homes. Sometimes due to lack of parking, we park behind our houses or there is a space at the end of the driveway where two

cars can fit. I remember one year I was issued a ticket and had to fight it at city hall because I was issued a ticket and threatened to be towed when I was loading up my car in front of my garage to go camping. Another time, my cousin's car was towed and he had to pay \$300 to get it back.

Originally, that lot on Fifth street was not locked. The residents here in this community would park over there, without any disturbance or interference. Then, about 2010, a car was stolen from that lot. After that, they locked it and it has been locked ever since. I checked on the price of that lot, it was listed at around \$750,000. I wished that they had converted it to parking because the residents here do not have enough parking for ourselves and our families, let alone any friends or family that visits. Having a birthday party or celebration? Nearly impossible. Now people resort to parking at the Safeway and walking over.

Over the years, the apartments have changed and parking spots that were once available became unavailable, for staff only and now to my knowledge there are none if any parking spots specifically designated for visitors. There is no street parking to say. And to make matters worse, there is an adversarial history between the HOA of the market rate owners with the BMR and renters. They divided the street a few years back and try to enforce that only HOA owners and their guests can park on one side and the (poor) people on the other side. It's pathetic. They announce their HOA meetings publicly at the stop sign, and hold them near the school at the park, but when I tried to attend, I was excluded from the community meeting because I was not part of the HOA. Wow. I didn't even know until then. Also, over the years, the non profits that manage these properties haven't been doing anything for us, except yearly demand that we prove to them through documentation that the homes are owner occupied.

It's a mess. I'm all for affordable housing. Please convert that piece of land over there and build more housing. What I'm asking you to do is thoughtfully plan a realistic parking solution- I'll help! I can survey my neighbors. We can think through solutions.

The LAST thing we want is police patrolling and ticketing our neighborhood. THE LAST THING WE want is our cars getting stolen and towed and vandalized from off the streets. However, that is what is happening and will continue to happen if we don't think this through. Most of my neighbors don't have the time or

resources or privilege to attend a city council meeting or take the time or ever let their voice be heard this way. But believe me, we have a parking crisis over here. Please let's address as we continue to build up this area.

Sincerely

Debra Lewis Mendoza (electronic signature)

Debra Lewis Mendoza, community member and appointee to the City of Alameda Task Force on Policing and Racial Equity

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