

**WORKING DRAFT of ULTRA's
Recommended Development Guidelines for North Oakland:
Telegraph Avenue, Shattuck Avenue and Broadway**

OUR VISION —

The goal of any development guidelines for North Oakland must consider the long-term health of the whole community while continuing the revitalization of commercial corridors. ULTRA strongly believes that higher-density mixed-use buildings along the main transportation corridors will benefit the community.

Urban development guidelines should support the following goals:

1. Economic and cultural diversity
2. Multiple housing options, including affordable housing.
3. Community-based commercial spaces
4. Neighborhood serving businesses
5. Urban spaces that promote healthy community interaction
6. Strong local public schools
7. Increased community services
8. Promotion of alternative transportation
9. Pedestrian and bike safety
10. More open green spaces
11. Promote cultural venues and public art; and
12. Honor history

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ZONING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES THAT WILL IMPLEMENT THIS VISION —

ULTRA recommends the following changes to existing zoning along Telegraph Avenue to bring zoning in compliance with its designation in the General Plan as a growth and change regional transit corridor. These changes also encourage the continued revitalization of Temescal’s commercial district in a socially responsible context.

Economic and Cultural Diversity, and Affordable Housing

A broad range of housing types, ownership models, and price levels that higher densities could achieve would encourage daily interaction among people of diverse ages, races, and incomes, strengthening the personal and community relationships that are essential to an authentic community.

Building height, by far the most contentious aspect of development facing our community, cannot be viewed in isolation from other elements and impacts of a proposed project, particularly at the way a project abuts a single family lower density zone. Zoning guidelines could include provision of a ‘buffer’ zone between higher and lower density areas, particularly when a project abuts a single-family, lower-density zone.

Defining a blanket “absolute height” for the entire length of commercial corridors does not lead to the best possible outcome. ULTRA believes that the *ratio* of building height to street width along with identifying varying patterns of development based on high-intensity nodes of activity are important considerations in determining the height, by specific location, of higher density development.

Any height requirements should be written to encourage the following objectives: higher density at major transit nodes, opportunities for affordable housing, a mix of housing opportunities in North Oakland, a mix of retail opportunities and community-based commercial spaces, increased pedestrian safety and protection for the Historic Temescal Commercial District (defined as the east side of Telegraph from 49th Street to 51st Street, the west side of telegraph between 49th Street and 50th Street and 4912 Shattuck Avenue).

Proposed zoning changes to achieve these objectives:

1. A three-story minimum height requirement on Telegraph Avenue.
2. A maximum of two stories to preserve the Historic Temescal Commercial District.
3. Allow developers to build to a maximum height of six stories (approximately 65 feet.) at major nodes to encourage higher density, based on their meeting Conditions of Approval. These conditions include but are not limited to the following community benefits: providing a percentage of units as affordable housing, pedestrian safety and streetscape improvements, subsidizing retail space to encourage neighborhood-oriented business. We are proposing a calculus: a greater quality and number of community benefits earns a project greater height and density bonuses. We think the following intersections are major nodes suitable for higher density development along

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Telegraph Avenue at Claremont, at 51st Street, at 45th Street, and at 40th Street, as well as at 51st Street and Broadway.

4. Allow density above the General Plan's recommended 125 units/acre only when a developer is willing to provide long-term benefits to the wider community. The increase in density would be commensurate with the level of community benefit(s). NOTE: It needs to be determined whether these community benefits should be included in the zoning code and/or as conditions of approval in a CUP.
5. To encourage slightly lower heights on interior blocks along Telegraph Avenue a developer would have a higher standard of community benefits as Conditions of Approval before they could exceed five stories.
6. Any project exceeding four stories would have to be stepped back 8 feet for each additional story if the development abuts interior blocks along Telegraph Avenue.
7. Encourage higher density at major nodes by requiring any project that exceeds five stories to be stepped back 8 feet for the sixth story.
8. Further promote economic diversity by partnering with not-for-profit organizations like the Northern California Land Trust to set aside a percentage of units in a project (perhaps 10%) to be sold at our below cost and to attach deed restrictions to these units to prevent their future sale at speculative prices.
9. Mitigate transitions between the commercial corridors and the residential zones by creating a "buffer" zone that allows for medium density between the high and low density areas. This would eliminate the need for abrupt differences in height and density.
10. Shield loading docks, garbage dumpsters and garage entrances from adjacent residential areas with enclosures and fencing and landscaping.

Community-based Commercial Spaces

Uniquely designed flexible commercial spaces would encourage community-owned businesses or spaces that are open to community gatherings. Increasing the number of residents along the main corridors would also support neighborhood-oriented businesses. Ground floor spaces and street walls should be designed to be visually and experientially active. Spaces with sidewalk seating areas encourage community interactions and help to meld civic bonds.

As stated earlier mixed-use is the ideal building configuration with retail and commercial space at the ground floor and housing or offices above. However ULTRA realizes that economic realities will determine whether or not these retail spaces are occupied unless the City can contribute towards local economic development projects. We strongly urge requiring developers to design and build their first floor retail spaces with as much flexibility as possible, to include the following as well as other uses:

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1. The ability to subdivide larger retail spaces into smaller retail spaces quickly and efficiently.
2. If the retail vacancy rate in Temescal reaches a certain level, perhaps 10%, allowing the mixed-use space in a new project to be leased on a short-term basis as live-work space.
3. Allowing the windows of empty retail space to be used as gallery space for local artists.
4. Making commercial spaces as usable and attractive as possible by having a minimum finished floor to ceiling height of 11 feet.

Strengthening Local Public Schools and Increasing Community Services:

More residents and families living in the area will provide additional support to local public schools and active participation in our Libraries, community centers, etc.

Alternative Transportation Use and Pedestrian and Bike Safety

We envision a compact neighborhood that is transit oriented and pedestrian and bike friendly. Urban form and development can encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.

The over-arching goal is to encourage pedestrian friendly and transit oriented development. We believe the following Proposed zoning changes will help achieve these objectives:

1. Developments along these corridors should contribute towards a capital improvement fund that addresses the needs for transit users, pedestrians and bikers.
2. Developers along with City agencies, transit and special interest groups should work collaboratively to implement the Telegraph and Shattuck Avenues Streetscape Plan, City-wide and neighborhood specific bike plans, Greenbelt plans, etc.
3. Reduce the requirement to 0.5 parking spaces per unit dependent on the percentage of and level of affordable housing
4. Consider a sliding scale of parking required based on the type of unit. For example, a studio apartment might require .5 spaces compared to a 3 bedroom having 1.5 spaces.
5. Provide 1 “City Car/Truck Share” spaces per 25 units, preferably with alternative fuel source vehicles.
6. Unbundle parking spaces from residential units. Require that each parking space in any new condominium development be sold *separately* from the housing unit. We believe that selling the parking spaces separately from the condos will give home buyers the opportunity to see and evaluate the true cost of owning a parking space and then make a better informed decision as to whether or not they need the parking space or spaces.

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7. Require that a part of the monthly condo fees be used to purchase commuter checks for the residents of the project.
8. Present zoning only recognizes two types of parking spaces in new developments; those for residential use only and those for commercial/retail use only. In order to reduce the total number of parking spaces required we believe there should be a third type of parking space; one that is shared between the residences and the retail/commercial occupants of the project. These could be marketed to the residents at a discounted rate with the understanding that private residents would need to vacate these spaces during business hours so that the commercial/retail tenants of the building could use them.
9. Require all parking to be below grade so that there are no parking lots between the street and the building. Or for podium parking, create a buffer of street front retail spaces and usable open space above the podium, if possible.

More Open Green Spaces

Maintain existing C-28/R-70 open space requirement 150 square feet per unit *except* when a developer is willing to provide a benefit or benefits to the wider community.

In many projects, especially at Telegraph Ave. and 51st St. there are opportunities to extend the Greenbelt and realize the goals of the Friends of the Temescal Creek and create access to open green spaces. Provisions for easements, maintenance, etc. should be considered as potential conditions of development for projects on the adjacent properties. .

There is a dearth of parks in Temescal. Encourage the creation of pocket parks like Colby or FROG Park by allowing developers to fulfill their project's open space requirement off-site by purchasing vacant land in the neighborhood, building a park and then deeding it back to the City or to a non-profit entity so it remains a park in perpetuity. The size and the amenities of the proposed park would determine whether or not it was acceptable for earning bonus height and density for a project. Vacant land is defined as a lot or lots that contain no habitable structures.

Cultural Art Venues

Any project could incorporate public art or provide space for cultural arts activities. Density bonuses could be earned by subsidizing a community-oriented organization or business in the retail space in a project, such as a community art gallery or a community performance space.

Honoring and Making History

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In shaping the future, it is vitally important to honor and celebrate our histories. Telegraph Avenue in Temescal has been a retail and commercial center as well as a transit corridor well before Temescal was even a part of Oakland. What is truly unique about the buildings on Telegraph Avenue is that they are not of any single style but are examples of many different periods in American architecture spanning over 130 years. This architectural eclecticism is what defines the historic aspects of Telegraph Avenue. ULTRA believes this is strength of the Avenue in that such a range of styles and periods provide visual interest while walking or traveling down Telegraph Avenue.

Create a fund for activating history (for example: informative and accessible markers throughout the neighborhood could provide a venue for storytelling).

In shaping the future it is vitally important to set a standard for high quality design that would qualify for historic building status in the future. Low quality construction that incorporates the insurance standard of commercial devaluation after 40 years should not be an option. Buildings must incorporate unique and exceptional design with long-lasting materials and sustainable green building techniques. [LEED certifications]