

College of
Design Environmental
CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING
University of California, Berkeley
228 Wurster Hall #1850
Berkeley, California 94720-1850
phone 510.642.3256
fax 510.642.1641



URBAN
DISPLACEMENT
PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY

February 25, 2019

Honorable Mayor and City Council members:

I am writing to convey my strong support for the "Missing Middle Report" on your 2/26 Council meeting.

As the Council item co-authored by Councilmembers Droste, Bartlett, Kesarwani, and Robinson points out, Berkeley's housing crisis today is a legacy of its past racist and exclusionary practices. I commend their effort to push Berkeley to confront its history in order to build a more inclusive future.

Our research at the Urban Displacement Project has established a direct connection between the neighborhood designations by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and today's patterns of residential displacement and exclusion.¹ Overall, 83% of today's gentrifying areas in the East Bay were rated as "hazardous" (red) or "definitely declining" (yellow) by the HOLC, and 75% of today's exclusionary areas in the East Bay were rated as "best" (green) or "still desirable" (blue) by HOLC. Thus, this historic legacy, compounded by Berkeley's early exclusionary zoning practices, continues to shape housing opportunity and perpetuate inequities today.

Should Berkeley elect to proceed to study the potential for zoning reform, it will be in good company. As the item authors note, Minneapolis and Seattle are already experimenting with ways to open up single-family zones, and Berkeley should be leading the charge as well.² Zoning reform has the potential not just to address the housing crisis but also to become a form of restorative or even transformative justice. There is no more important issue for planners to tackle today.

I urge you to vote yes on Item 22 to request a Missing Middle report. Please do not hesitate to call on me if any research on zoning impacts or alternatives is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Chapple". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Karen Chapple
Professor, City and Regional Planning
Carmel P. Friesen Chair in Urban Studies
Faculty Director, The Urban Displacement Project

¹ See <http://www.urbandisplacement.org/redlining>

² Interestingly, leading the charge in Minneapolis is City Council President Lisa Bender, a graduate of UC-Berkeley's Department of City and Regional Planning.