

ULTRA's Response to the Draft Zoning Update, 2/28/07

As we have said before we greatly appreciate the thought and effort that Councilmember Brunner and Planning Director Cappio put into the series of meetings held last fall in Temescal. Because of the expert knowledge of the panelists these meetings were more like development seminars rather than just simply meetings about development.

As much as we appreciated the meetings, the attendees at these meetings did not reflect the diversity of Temescal. So we are also concerned that any zoning updates that are a product of these meetings don't reflect the views of the entire community, only the views of those who attended the meetings.

The following is our response to the details of the draft zoning update —

Section 17.101.050

We interpret this to mean new projects would have ground floor retail/commercial space. However we think there should be allowances made for renting these spaces on a short-term basis as live/work or office space, or perhaps as a community gallery space. Simply building ground floor retail doesn't mean that there is a demand for more retail space. Rather than have an empty space for months or years we would want to see it occupied in some fashion.

Section 17.101.60

Telegraph Avenue is a transit corridor and has been designated a "growth and change" area under the General Plan. Therefore we strongly support the density allowed for under the General Plan. We do not support lowering the density to what was the maximum allowed under the previous zoning. We think taking this step would have one of two deleterious effects. Either nothing would get built at all because these lower densities would make it difficult for private for-profit developers to build or what would get built would only be luxury condominiums. We have an example of the latter in Temescal Station on 40th Street. It conforms to existing zoning, and the condos in this development start at \$725,000.

We support the down zoning of Mosswood from R-70 to R-50 because we strongly support preserving the residential side streets of our neighborhood and want to encourage new development to be higher density along transit corridors like Telegraph Avenue and Broadway.

Section 17.101.070

We strongly support setting a minimum height limit along Telegraph Avenue, though we would raise the minimum height to three stories. We also support having lower height limits along the core commercial district of Temescal (49th to 51st Street.) However we would redraw the boundaries of "Zone B" of the height map to exclude from it the Walgreens mini-mall and the post office, as well as the Shattuck Avenue side of the proposed Zone B. This block is so deep and wide that it could support taller buildings with no

impact on the surrounding historic storefronts. Our hope is that some time in the future the owners of this lot will rebuild with residential above retail and we want to encourage the chance of this happening.

We strongly support using community benefits as height and density bonuses. However we do not support the height limits proposed for "Zone A". We propose one of two options for Zone A. Either raise the maximum height allowed under a conditional use permit to 65 feet with appropriate setbacks above 45 feet or codify what is alluded to in the Design Guidelines, encouraging greater heights on corner lots but lower heights in the middle of blocks.

If the maximum height under a conditional use permit were raised to 65 feet there then could be an escalating rate of community benefits. That is the greater the height proposed, the higher the number of community benefits required to build it.

Or designate certain corners as major nodes along Telegraph Avenue and allow a maximum height of 55 feet with an option to go to 65 feet with a conditional use permit only at these nodes. We propose that these nodes be 55th and Telegraph, 51st, Telegraph and Claremont, 45th and Telegraph, 40th and Telegraph, and MacArthur and Telegraph.

Design Guidelines

Our overriding concern with these guidelines is that we do not want them written so strictly that all that will be built in Temescal are faux historic buildings. We are very concerned that if this were to happen rather than enhance the historic character of our neighborhood it would ruin it. We do not think that the only proper building to be built next to an historic building is a modern interpretation of an historic style. In fact such buildings muddle historic streets, they do not enhance them. One of the strengths of Telegraph Avenue is that between 40th and 55th Streets there are examples from over 130 years of American architectural history. American architectural history did not end in 1940. New buildings along Telegraph Avenue should be expressions of the times they are built in; just like the historic buildings already existing along Telegraph Avenue reflect the times they were built in.