



May 24, 2010

City of Alameda Planning Board  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue  
Alameda, California 94501

**Subject: Proposal to increase height limits on Webster Street from three stories to five stories (Item 8-B on Planning Board's 5-24-10 agenda)**

Dear Boardmembers:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) first learned of the subject proposal when we routinely checked the Planning Board agenda over the weekend. We were surprised that no additional advance notice was given for such a significant proposal.

Due to the lack of advance notice, we have been able to give the proposal only cursory review. The following comments are therefore preliminary and subject to future modification and expansion.

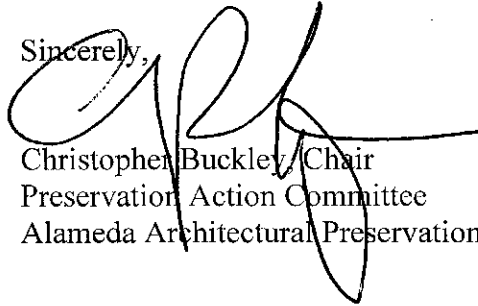
1. We are very concerned that the proposed increased height limit will adversely affect the setting of the numerous historic buildings along Webster Street (such as Croll's, Trans Pacific Bank and Holtz Hall) by promoting much taller new buildings that will visually overwhelm the historic buildings.
2. The proposal is inconsistent with Policy 2.5.i of the General Plan, that calls for three story and 35'-40' height limits on Webster Street.
3. The proposed CEQA Categorical Exemption (Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations) set forth in Section 4 of the draft ordinance is inappropriate, since the proposed 50 percent increase (40' to 60') in by-right height is hardly "minor" and has the potential to significantly increase the development intensity along Webster Street with attendant traffic and other impacts. An Initial Study should instead be prepared.

Section 4 also states "The proposed amendments amend the review process for Design Review and do not increase the intensity or density of use that would be permitted on property in Alameda". This statement is incorrect and suggests that Section 4 may have been mistakenly copied from another ordinance.

4. A "Webster Street Vision Plan" has been proposed by the West Alameda Business Association. Any changes to height limits and other important development standards should follow, not precede, adoption of such a plan. Considering changes to height limits before plan adoption is a backwards process.

Please contact me at 523-0411 or [cbuckleyAICP@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyAICP@att.net) if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CBuckley', written over the printed name.

Christopher Buckley, Chair  
Preservation Action Committee  
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

By electronic transmission:

cc: Mayor and Councilmembers

Andrew Thomas, Planning and Building Department

City Manager

West Alameda Business Association

AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee members