



**SIERRA CLUB**  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY

**NORTHERN ALAMEDA COUNTY GROUP**

ALAMEDA ALBANY BERKELEY EMERYVILLE OAKLAND PIEDMONT SAN LEANDRO

April 28, 2021

University of California Office of the President  
University of California Board of Regents  
University of California Chancellor Dr. Carol T. Christ  
TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

**RE: OPPOSITION to the Demolition of 1921 Walnut St. in Berkeley, CA and Displacement of its Tenants**

Dear University of California (UC) President Drake, Chair Perez, Members of the UC Board of Regents, and Chancellor Christ,

The Sierra Club speaks with the collective voices of nearly 800,000 members nationally, of which nearly 35,000 are in the San Francisco Bay Chapter and over 10,000 are within the Northern Alameda County Group; many of them (myself included) are UC Berkeley alumni and/or members of its extended community. **We write in strong opposition to a current proposal to demolish the rent-controlled eight-unit 1921 Walnut Street property in the City of Berkeley that was acquired by UC Berkeley last year and to displace its twelve tenants, several of whom have resided in that building for more than a decade.** While we laud the objective of creating housing for hundreds of new UC Berkeley students, we believe that the vast majority of this objective can be achieved without resorting to displacing longtime Berkeley residents.<sup>1</sup> Longstanding Sierra Club policy supports a harmonious interplay between the “3 P’s” of housing: production of new housing, protection of sitting tenants, and preservation of “naturally-occurring” affordable housing.<sup>2 3</sup> In this case, UC Berkeley is proposing to implement 60 additional beds at the cost of completely eschewing the other two “P’s.”

Last week we submitted our comments on the Draft Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) and stated the following on Page 3: “Displacement of existing residents, particularly residents in affordable or rent-controlled housing, would pose a significant impact to the community’s population and housing. To mitigate to less than significant levels, the mitigation measure should (1) commit to avoiding displacement of existing residents in any projects under the LRDP, and (2) require compliance with the City of Berkeley Demolition Ordinance, BMC 23C.08.020. Under the ordinance, demolitions may still occur, but displaced residents must be provided with comparable replacement housing, and rent

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<sup>1</sup> After public input, the project was reduced to beds for 700 students, said Mogulof. But the addition of the land under 1921 Walnut St., means the complex can house 760 students and offer larger rooms, said Mogulof.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2021/01/27/uc-berkeley-tells-tenants-of-112-year-old-rent-controlled-building-they-must-leave>

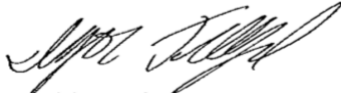
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u19041/SClub%20Infill%20Policy%202019-05-18.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/sierra-club-california/PDFs/SCC\\_Housing\\_Policy\\_Report.pdf](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/sierra-club-california/PDFs/SCC_Housing_Policy_Report.pdf)

controlled housing units must be replaced or mitigated with a monetary payment to the City's Housing Trust Fund according to adequate, quantifiable standards. Therefore, compliance with this ordinance is a feasible mitigation measure." **At minimum, we expect the UC to abide by all applicable state and local laws that would bind any other developer wishing to do business in Berkeley.**

We would be glad to arrange a meeting at your convenience to further discuss these comments. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor Tregub', written in a cursive style.

Igor Tregub, Chair  
Sierra Club Northern Alameda County Group