

ASHBY ARTS DISTRICT

Statement of Principles for Development of Ashby BART Station's West-Side Parking Lot

The Ashby Arts District is a partnership among eight non-profit organizations and performance venues in the South Berkeley/North Oakland/Lorin District area including La Peña Cultural Center, Epic Arts, The Shotgun Players at The Ashby Stage, The Black Repertory Group, Nomad Café, Northern California Land Trust, Unconditional Theatre, and the Triptych Gallery. Through collaborative events and programs, we work to increase awareness of the arts in our neighborhood and to unify the communities we serve.

One of the challenges faced by this community is lack of common identity. Since the area is so culturally diverse, communities operate side by side with little interaction. We seek to bridge gaps between neighboring organizations and to connect with local residents, in order to strengthen the greater community. Cultural development can offer a sense of pride and optimism to residents, which we have already experienced through community arts projects and collaborative events within the district.

Recommendations

In service to this vision, the Ashby Arts District is committed to the inclusion of the following elements in the development of the west-side parking lot of Berkeley's Ashby BART Station:

- 1) The development should be conducive to pedestrian enjoyment, and embrace a town-square sensibility that encourages neighbors to gather and mingle
- 2) The project should include community spaces available for neighborhood use, and vibrant activity should be encouraged in these spaces both day and night
- 3) Project architecture should relate to the existing neighborhood's architectural mix, including human scale design concepts and natural open space elements
- 4) There should be some street-level artistic presence for the enjoyment of residents and neighbors, including both public art projects and creative "functional design" elements integrated into the architecture
- 5) The development should be mixed use, both residential and commercial, and ensure that these uses complement and support one another
- 6) Housing should be mixed income, including a large proportion of units that are permanently affordable enough for artists and other low-income residents
- 7) Commercial development should complement and support the merchants and cultural activities already present in the neighborhood
- 8) Commercial activity should include restaurant(s), café(s) and other such businesses that are conducive to community convening
- 9) Security and safety concerns must be addressed in all elements of the design
- 10) Parking issues must be adequately addressed to minimize impact on the neighborhood
- 11) A plan must be established for the Flea Market's continued community presence

Most importantly, we insist upon a truly participatory process in the development of plans for the project, inclusive of our neighborhood's diverse voices and viewpoints.