

From: [Serge Bonte](#)
To: [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Lieber, Sally](#); [Showalter, Pat](#); [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#); [Shrivastava, Aarti](#); [Cameron, Dawn](#)
Subject: Re: Agenda Item 6.2 Rowhouse Development at 294-296 Tyrella Avenue and re: sidewalks and undergrounding utilities
Date: Monday, November 15, 2021 8:29:14 AM

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Honorable Mayor and City Council Members:

I see no reasons this project should be rejected, but for what it is worth I support it.

I am writing to comment on two safety/quality of life conditions of approvals for this (and just about any other) development project(s).

- Undergrounding Utilities: I moved to the US many decades ago but I am still shocked to see so many utility lines disfiguring our neighborhoods. mutilating so many trees and causing power outages whenever the wind blows too strongly or a Mylar balloon crosses paths with a power line. All things we would typically only see in far less developed countries. Looking at the municipal code, it looks like the City started to encourage undergrounding utilities as far back as 1968, However, the effort is pretty limited: only brand new constructions trigger undergrounding utilities. As an example, my house was part of a small infill development and all utilities were put underground. Over 20 years later, the four homes in our small infill development are the only ones with underground utilities on our street. During that period, many homes were essentially rebuilt but exempt from undergrounding because they were considered renovations. For this project, by all means affirm the requirement for undergrounding. But more generally, the City should also make undergrounding a requirement for major renovations (above a dollar amount), when SB9 is used to split a lot (requirement for undergrounding at BOTH sub-lots) or maybe even when a detached ADU is built.

-Sidewalks: Similarly, adding or rebuilding sidewalks seem to be triggered only for new constructions. By all means, insure new sidewalks are put in place for this project. But as soon as possible, the City should explore maintaining/fixing/rebuilding sidewalks more frequently. Oakland adopted in 2019 a very good policy for making sure sidewalks are more frequently improved. Sidewalks need to be certified not only for new constructions but also for renovations greater than \$100,000 and whenever a property changes hands. The certification assesses sidewalk conditions and can force repairs before a permit is issued or a title change is approved. This would be a way to address removing no longer used and dangerous sidewalks cuts.

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/sidewalk-certification-faq>

Sincerely,

Serge Bonte
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