

Dear Emeryville City Council,

We, (three Park Avenue businesses) are writing in support of the Sherwin Williams mixed-use space proposal on the upcoming city council agenda. As small business owners we feel this project is crucial to the future growth and development of our businesses as well as others in the area.

While we each have our own personal reasons and history behind the growth of our individual businesses we have three main reasons for supporting this project.

1. Nearby areas of blight
2. Community destination connectivity
3. Economic development

Blight

As Park Avenue businesses we have two areas of blight located in close proximity to our locations. One, the homeless encampment at Target and two, the empty abandoned area of the Sherwin Williams project. These two areas are a magnet for crime and to some customers a negative aspect of Emeryville. Individuals do not feel safe parking next to areas that are desolate and present opportunities for criminal activity.

This development offers an opportunity to change this into a positive. Residential activity, open green space and in general a look and feel of life creates a welcome feel to individuals coming from outside the area as well as local residents.

Community connectivity

While each of our businesses has operated at varying lengths of time, East Bay Pilates 11 years, Shed 10 years and Pacific Landscapes Gallery, 3 years we feel we understand the neighborhood needs. While there have been several positive city improvements including the Park Avenue renovation, the recent skate park and the Center for Community Life, little has been done to support growth of small business.

We strongly believe by having multiple areas or “hubs” such as we have here on Park Avenue, the Doyle and Hollis Street areas and now with this Sherwin Williams proposal they each would compliment the other. Having multiple areas of activity, both residential and commercial help encourage support of the other sites. Plus, given Emeryville is so small you can easily access one or the other in minutes.

Small business growth

In case you have not seen this report California is at a 5-year low point in small business job growth. See article [here](#). Thus, cities wanting to support small business growth need to be implementing strategies for economic development.

We see the addition of residential along with commercial space for new business in the Sherwin Williams project as a positive move economically speaking. That is contingent of course on affordable rent for small business and parking that is easily accessible for clients and employees. In addition, this parking needs regular enforcement.

For those of us who have heavily invested in Emeryville more should be done by city council to promote existing small business as well as encourage new ones. This is something beyond the scope of the Sherwin Williams project. However, we mention this because it will be vital that the city council and community equally support both new and old businesses moving forward.

Thank you in advance for considering our perspectives. If you would like to speak with us individually please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Krisna Hanks, MS, MBA

Robert Surenbroek

Owners East Bay Pilates

1522 Park Avenue

Lisa Harvie

Owner SHED

1518 Park Avenue

Steve Lefkovits

Owner Pacific Landscapes Gallery

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