

August 11, 2020

(I tried to voice my concerns at the last task force meeting but found the one minute allotted to be insufficient for such a momentous proposal. Please share my letter with all task force members and submit for the record.)

Dear Opportunity Housing Task Force,

With little to no community engagement (transparency), it is difficult to fully understand the latest catch phrase “opportunity housing”. The committee also seems stacked with political leaders, special interests and maybe one community member from each district; hardly enough representation or input to take a vote on such a drastic proposal. From my general knowledge, it is an attempt to increase housing options. There is a big difference between affordable housing and increased housing. Increased housing seems to have had little effect on housing prices or rents. It appears that the increase in housing via opportunity housing will only benefit the city with increased property taxes at the expense of single family neighborhoods. A new four-plex in my neighborhood would still demand top dollar sales/rents. I’m guessing for the new Google Village employees?

My parents moved from San Francisco to the East Side of San Jose in 1965 when I was two years old. At that time, they were unable to afford a home in San Francisco but could barely make it work in San Jose. My father for years commuted to his job in San Francisco to support his family. I always felt blessed to be raised in San Jose as it has consistently been such a diverse city and its charm as a family orientated, bedroom community.

I worked hard in my adult years and diligently saved to buy a home. I looked at a lot of homes and settled on a fixer upper in the Vendome neighborhood as I enjoy downtown living and the eclectic, diverse community. The Vendome is a small historic neighborhood in downtown San Jose with many single family homes over 100 years old. It is adjacent to the zoned North 1st Street Transit Village. The transit village alone is a big change for the neighborhood. Change is difficult in general. Why not take a more cautious approach and see how the many urban villages throughout the city pan out before implementing additional widespread extreme zoning changes?

I can’t imagine a three story four-plex built up to the street next to my single family home. I’m not sure that opportunity housing or even current affordable housing programs are the answer anyway as it penalizes taxpayers, especially homeowners and their property values, to implement the programs. I am very liberal about funding programs that offer a helping hand but oppose permanently subsidizing programs at the expense of others that have worked hard for what they have earned. It is the responsibility of our leaders to provide checks and balances on our long established supply and demand economy; not replace it. Wouldn’t staying committed on getting businesses to raise their employee wages (livable) and take less profit be a more equitable solution? The valuable time and money spent on focus groups would be better spent on this or actually improving our schools or taking action to address the homeless “crisis”, etc.

My home is my number one investment. Please do not ruin my American dream to increase city revenues. I’m certain we will hear that this is all preliminary and nothing is approved. We are NOT fooled as every step takes us closer and then it’s too late. I also take exception at being called racist for trying to protect my investment.

I guess I’m at that age where you become more involved in political decision-making. It has been increasingly hard to not become consumed with nonsensical proposals. I’m trying to maintain faith in the democratic process and believing that my voice matters. I often say I’m not tied to any political party except the party of common sense. Please **delay any vote** on approving (even conceptually) this plan until the community has been thoroughly informed about the proposal. It’s time for more common sense.....

Thank you,

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