

Re: Opportunity Housing

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To: Setiawan, Jessica <jessica.setiawan@sanjoseca.gov>

[External Email]

Dear Task Force Members,

I'm sure that most of us can agree that the need for housing at all income levels in San Jose is acute. For the last 30 + years, the City of San Jose has chronically undersupplied the housing market averaging less than 3,000 units annually. Supply/demand characteristics matter and the City has artificially constrained the market's ability to respond to the crisis. This Task Force has, under the limited charter afforded to it by the City Council, chipped away at some of the barriers facing housing production.

However, the City's policy bias against housing is clear. The GP 2040 is a jobs first document and the no employment land use conversion policy limits the supply of available land for conversion. For example, the former Pleasant Hills GC is just one example of a property that is sitting idle due to the conversion policy. The 115 acre site is surrounded by neighborhoods with a capacity to add thousands of homes and a limited amount of commercial retail. Many other sites within our City limits also make sense for residential conversion.

With the aforementioned constraints, the Task Force has limited options to address the challenge posed by the housing crisis. The City's ability to increase housing supply at a scale required to ameliorate the housing crisis lies in priority development areas primarily within downtown, specific plans and urban villages. Commercial FAR restrictions, minimum parking ratios, slope and property line setbacks, height limits and density must be modified to realize the development capacity of these PDAs. Going forward, it's incumbent upon the City Council and Planning Staff to revisit these policies and unlock future housing supply.

Many of the task force members have made clear the goal of engaging and listening to the voices of our neighborhood groups. Our neighborhoods are the heart and soul of our community. Today, despite past transgressions, our neighborhoods are more diverse than they have ever been. However, the distrust between neighborhood groups, the development community and the City is palpable.

Our community needs to be united in order to solve the myriad of social issues facing our City including the housing crisis. Allowing multi-family housing by right in established residential neighborhoods outside of PDAs is fraught with political risk. I suspect that opportunity housing will increase the distrust of our neighborhoods and adversely impact our ability to produce housing. We should be careful to fully understand the unintended consequences of our actions here.

Regards,

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