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Subject: Public Comment on Housing Element Draft July 2022

Dear Danielle and City Council Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Housing Element Draft July 2022.

I have lived in Mill Valley for 35 years in the Enchanted Knolls neighborhood with my husband and raised two children in that home.

I have reviewed the online submission process for public comments and find it very cumbersome. Moreover, it does not allow for the submission of attachments. Thus, I am submitting my comments via email with attachments. Please include them as part of the public record for the City Council Meeting on August 1, 2022 when the Housing Element will be reviewed.

I reviewed the Housing Element Draft of July 2022 and am disappointed to find that the City will continue with its past practice of building all affordable housing east of Camino Alto, keeping it out of downtown, the golf course area, West Blithedale Canyon and the hills. This discriminatory practice is being perpetuated with the proposed project at 1 Hamilton. See attached maps which were compiled by Mary McGerity, a resident of Sycamore Park which demonstrate that all current affordable housing and the proposed site at 1 Hamilton are east of Camino Alto.

I have compiled some statistical research on the racial composition and the average household of Mill Valley neighborhoods which is in the second attachment. The statistics show that racial diversity is greater in the Bayfront/Enchanted Knolls Shelter Ridge neighborhood with the white composition at 76.18% vs. Blithedale Canyon at 88.2%, Downtown/Lytton at 85.96%, Warner Canyon/Kite Hill at 87.33% and Sycamore/Tamalpais Park at 88.10%.

Attachment 2 also shows greater income diversity for households in the Bayfront/Enchanted Knolls Shelter Ridge neighborhood at \$118,225 vs. Blithedale Canyon at \$209,553, Downtown/Lytton at \$129,317, Warner Canyon/Kite Hill at \$177,246 and Sycamore/Tamalpais at \$167,420.

To rectify this situation:

At least one site of affordable housing should be built in the downtown area. To that end, please consider:

1. The city owned parking lot behind Piazza D'Angelo's: I spoke to an architect who builds affordable housing and he offered these comments as to the feasibility of that site for affordable housing:

"The site area at the rear of the lot is roughly 100' square, but with yard setbacks, fire safety setbacks, and enough space between the new structure and the existing buildings to have a reasonable separation for apartments, the buildable footprint ends up around 85' square or so. Depending on the unit mix, an ~85' square could possibly house 7 or 8 units per floor including corridors, 2 exit stairs, the elevator, and mechanical/electrical rooms. So, roughly a 7,000 square foot floor plate per floor level. Using the new housing laws, it appears feasible to get 3 levels of apt. building over parking for a total of 21-24 units with a ~42' building height (4 stories). That height would require an exemption/variance to the basic zoning. "

2. Please revisit the sale of city owned property known as Scott Highlands Park for "five market rate homes", which was previously considered at the City Council meeting in October 2020. The term "park" is a misnomer in the name as the parcel is an unimproved flat grassy area across from the golf course. This parcel was considered for sale to develop five market rate houses, not affordable housing, at the HAC meeting in September of 2020. The proposal was voted down by the City Council at the October 2020 meeting. Three council members stated that they didn't want to sell open space for affordable housing but the proposal was for the development of "market rate" homes which would look just like the rest of the neighborhood. I am not sure why the city council members are so concerned with the loss of this open space when the Highland Park residents enjoy the entire golf course as their backyard. The sale of that parcel would generate millions of dollars which could be used to purchase downtown properties for affordable housing which is where the jobs are located. Ryan Canepa of the Mill Valley Market is a proponent of affordable housing as noted in the Housing Element Draft. I believe the Bank of America building across from the Mill Valley Market is now for sale and could potentially house workers for the Mill Valley Market. Or better yet, use the city owned parking lot identified in paragraph 1 above.

It appears that the City used the concept of "Historic Overlay Zone" to limit the development of 36 sites in this zone but they are not identified in Appendix C: Sites Inventory Methodology. Did the use of "Historic Overlay Zone" eliminate all sites from development of affordable housing downtown?

In summary, the optics are that the City has consistently built all affordable housing east of Camino Alto, keeping it out of downtown, the golf course area, West Blithedale Canyon and the hill areas. The City has omitted from the Housing Element Draft, all city owned sites identified by the Housing Workshop Report dated February 10, 2021, commissioned by the HAC, except 1 Hamilton. See Attachment 3. The City Council has the opportunity with the housing element to increase the diversity, equity and inclusion of affordable housing units in the downtown area by implementing these suggestions.

Thank you for your consideration of this submittal.

Paula McGrath
