

New eComment for Planning Commission Hybrid Meeting 8/15/23

Jon David submitted a new eComment.

Meeting: Planning Commission Hybrid Meeting 8/15/23

Item: a. REPORT 23-0481 STUDY SESSION TO DISCUSS HOUSING ELEMENT RELATED GENERAL PLAN MAP CHANGE (GPA 23-01), ZONING MAP CHANGE (ZC 23-01) AND ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (TA 23-02), TO EFFECTUATE PROGRAMS IN THE HOUSING ELEMENT (Community Development Director Carrie Tai)

eComment: The housing element hearings shined a light on the competing interests of the community. On one side, the resident homeowners who think we are already fully built out and feel state mandates will lower their property values and their quality of life. On the other side, renters and would-be homeowners including high-earning, highly-educated professionals have not benefited from inheritance or being on the property ladder. Young and old, they have been mostly left out of most discussions yet are being squeezed out of the town they love by housing stock constraints. BOTH groups are equally important and thus a balanced approach is needed. From my perspective, the balance was achieved in the housing element adoption process. I feel both sides won. Regardless if you agree, the message was sent to all of us - not only do we need to meet our RHNA numbers so next cycle isn't worse, but we need to add more housing stock to release housing pressure while respecting our community values/character. Fitting more housing in an already dense city is certainly a significant challenge. However, being densely built and "fully built out" are not the same. For a few years now I have been a proponent of mixed-use residential development in downtown as a multi-faceted solution to both our housing needs and our economic development challenges. Should mixed-use housing actually be produced in the downtown, I believe our community will look back at this moment as being the pivot point when the downtown, came alive. It will also be viewed as an important step in removing density pressure from the neighborhoods and putting it where they are needed most. Hermosa has not grown its population and has actually lost housing over the years. Smart and thoughtful zoning will result in the reasonable addition of housing without destroying it. I am a resident and a downtown commercial property owner. I also served on the economic development advisory committee and have participated in all related zoning meetings so have that perspective as well. To me, zoning success allows a resident to leave Hermosa for 8 years and come back and recognize there is change but not so much so that it does not feel like the same town. The staff has done a great job on the Draft Zoning Text Amendment. I particularly like that an adaptive reuse concept was added to make it easier to retain existing structures in the downtown. This is important because it helps both lift housing constraints and simultaneously promotes the retention of the character many of us love. I would have liked to see relaxed and reimagined downtown mixed-use parking requirements in situations where doing so will help remove development constraints without putting unreasonable parking pressure into the neighborhoods or the commercial corridors. This was discussed with Martha Miller and seemed to have found some level of support from the Planning Commission. Requiring bike parking for downtown residential without reducing car parking, creates added housing constraints and does not allow property owners to provide parking for both residential and commercial tenants. This is worth re-examination. Also, Tandem parking is allowed in residential zones...and it is allowed for commercial use...but is unaddressed for residential use in commercial zones. I suggest allowing tandem parking in commercial zones. Lastly, we do need to add housing for reasons beyond just the state mandate. We need to make change and provide opportunities not just for the low-

income brackets, but the countless, doctors, lawyers, teachers, firefighters, accountants, engineers, successful entrepreneurs, etc that are being left out of the conversation. We heard from many during the period of housing element adoption. Adding housing stock is essential for them. If you doubt doing so will help with affordability in a high-demand city, please read this article: <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/08/rent-growth-is-slowing-where-housing-got-built.html> It is also worth reading how zoning has impacted affordability in the region: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/strained-housing-affordability-manufactured-crisis-170452391.html>