



SIERRA CLUB

LOMA PRIETA

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

July 8, 2022

To: Principle Planner Diana O'Dell and City of Redwood City Planning Commission

Via email: C/O City Clerk - paguilar@redwoodcity.org

Subject: Increased Density in Redwood City

Dear Diana and Members of the Planning Commission:

The Sustainable Land Use Committee of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter (SLU) advocates on making land use decisions more sustainable in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

A recent article in the [San Mateo Daily Journal](#) listed some strategies that Redwood City staff and Planning Commission are considering, increasing the total number of housing units in the city in the next few years. Many of the ideas in the article are admirable, but we have a few additional thoughts that we feel could further increase the effectiveness of the options.

1. Do not upzone and give away any revisions to the zoning code **by right**; but instead trade increased zoning density and benefits for significant community benefits - the topmost of which should be affordable housing. This can be done by establishing a base density below what is generally desired while instituting a local density bonus scheme which encourages zoning increases, and benefits above State density bonus law in exchange for substantial community benefits.
2. Do not establish specific maximum density limits for any multi-family residential project, but instead let the density of each project be determined by objective design standards using a form-based code and vetting and approval of all community benefits proposed by the developer. This allows for a wider variety of unit types from micro-units and SROs to family and luxury units. It also allows for greater flexibility in determining the most valuable community benefits.
3. Require all new office building and R&D developers to present a plan to the city indicating how the developer will aid the city in supporting the amount of new housing construction needed to house any net increase in new employees. This could be in the form of substantial financial set asides for new housing, or actually building enough new housing on or off-site, but the goal must be to strive for a reasonable jobs/housing balance within the city. It is important to link commercial development to the jobs/housing balance because, too often, cities accept in-lieu fees or on or off-site new housing off-sets that are far too small to meet the anticipated need.

4. Add Transfer of Development Rights to the toolkit: Climate change is accelerating the displacement of people as well as loss of ecologically critical habitat due to sea level rise flooding, wildfires, water availability, and extreme heat. Consider using Transfer Of Development Rights (similar to the Syufi Theater site) to increase density in safer receiving locations like downtown and reclaim land from sending areas for creating restored ecosystem uses such as buffering the force of flooding with landward migrating wetlands and reducing the risk of fire with rehydrated landscapes. Though FEMA picks up some liability from flood and burn out residents, planning for impacts can return positive economic benefits to the city from resilient development, safety, and reduced disaster mitigation.

5. Consider micro grids as a resilient Community Benefit: Climate change is increasing health impacts to vulnerable populations with smoke intensity, power safety shutdowns, and extreme heat and water cutbacks requiring alternative power and water. Consider building housing that incorporates energy, waste, and water microgrids, that can provide resilient shared resources in the face of increasing health impacts and function within local distributed grids.

Respectfully Yours,



Gita Dev, FAIA, Co-Chair
Sustainable Land Use Committee
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Cc: Redwood City, City Council
Redwood City Housing Commission, Margaret M. Becker – Chair
James Eggers, Executive Director, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
Gladwyn d'Souza, Conservation Chair, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
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