

February 23, 2025

Dear Mayor Cox and City Council Members,

I am a Sausalito resident of nearly 14 years and was appointed last year as Sausalito's representative on the Marin County Commission on Aging. I write in support of establishing either a Visitability Ordinance or a Senior Housing Overlay to create more housing so that Sausalito's older adults can remain in the community as they age.

We all know that Sausalito needs more accessible housing. The vast majority of respondents to the Age Friendly Sausalito Survey said they wanted to remain in the community as they age, yet almost half said the design of their homes would make it difficult to age in place. The historic character and steep hillside terrain that attracted so many of us to Sausalito are the very things that make it so hard to remain in our homes.

In my own household, this is a constant topic of discussion: How could we possibly modify our home, situated on a steep lot, to prevent that fall that could lead to a cascade of problems? How can we stay here?

I know this is a conversation happening in many households across our city. According to the County Board of Elections, 42% of Sausalito residents were age 60 or older. Of course, this does not include people of other ages who have mobility challenges. This is a huge constituency.

Sausalito's mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation of 724 units has been extremely difficult to meet, necessitating the proposed use of public land. Since Sausalito must go through the Housing Element process to maintain local control, why not use it as an opportunity to create housing that older adults need? A Visitability Ordinance (similar to that passed in Petaluma) or a Senior Housing Overlay would create practical solutions. For example, the city might require use of Universal Senior Housing Design elements for units constructed on public land and perhaps also for a portion of multi-unit developments above a certain size.

Sausalito's residents aren't getting younger, and the hills and stairs aren't getting any easier. I urge the City Council to take practical action to, as Policy H-2.7 states, "... (support) a range of housing types that allow people to remain in the community as their housing needs change." This is something to which the City has already committed. Implementing a Visitability Ordinance or a Senior Housing Overlay would be a concrete step toward meeting that commitment.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Schultz
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