

February 2, 2025

Brandon Phipps
Director, Sausalito Community Development Department
bphipps@sausalito.gov

Dear Director Phipps,

The Planning Commission Housing Element Working Group (the Working Group), established in April 2021, met on Friday afternoon as scheduled. It is regrettable that you were not present as the discussion was constructive and on mission for its established purpose.

Following, please find a recap and summary of the highlights from our meeting. We trust that you will review and accept the following, integrate this input into further draft revisions to the certified Housing Element as well as share this with City Staff.

1. It remains inexplicable why CDD and/or the City Council Working Group has never engaged with this Working Group to assist with thought leadership and preparation of a revised Housing Element that is intended to supersede the existing certified Housing Element (2023). The Working Group is the sole entity that has continuity with the Housing Element since Sausalito started this effort in 2021. This Working Group was established specifically for the purpose of representing the Planning Commission in the effort, working constructively with the City Council to explore options and development viable solutions and briefing the Planning Commission on the progress of such efforts prior to critical hearings, votes and recommendations.
2. It is requested that the Planning Commission receive the benefit of the legal analysis, strategy and explanation for the purpose of this Housing Element update. The short legal memo circulated after the October 2024 Study Session is insufficient.
3. It remains unclear why the EIR was not circulated in 2022, when scheduled, requested and required for the January 2023 certification; it further remains inexplicable why the current EIR was prepared on a Housing Element that is not recommended for approval, approved, or certified. It is further baffling that sites, previously debated at nauseum and fully adjudicated, have mysteriously arisen again in the EIR and the Housing Element that even staff claimed were not included. This begs the question how this came about in this current Housing Element iteration without direction to the consultant by staff. Based on the Planning Commission study session (January 15, 2025), the majority of the Planning Commission has indicated zero support for Spencer Ave, City Hall and Marinship sites. Please provide accurate information, reflecting this, in your Staff Reports to the City Council.
4. Height limit in historic district – statements in CC staff report are inconsistent with PC. Please provide clarification.
5. We have reviewed the Staff Report that is posted on the City website for the February 4, 2025 City Council Study Session on the revised Housing Element. We believe that many of the recurring themes of comment and direction by the Planning Commission to staff were not articulated or captured in this report. We request that you urgently provide the City Council clear and accurate input from the results of the Planning Commission Study Session; following are comments and direction with the corresponding timing based on the video of the January 15, 2025 session:

- 19:15 Overall map of Sausalito with affected sites identified requested
- 19:50 Please provide the draft proposed zoning map with changes
- 20:55, 24:00 Explanation of the ballot process and what the public is expected to be voting on is requested to be included
- 25:17, 27:40 Staff and City Council Working Group has been requested to engage with the Working Group to assist with the accuracy, efficiency and speed with which to successfully develop a revised Housing Element and approve one for recommendation. A heavy lift is easier to do together than separately. It is a missed opportunity for the process and for our City.
- 28:36 There is a lot of institutional knowledge that is being lost, resulting in redundancy of efforts, to achieve a revised Housing Element.
- 33:10 Much greater explanation is required for the Jobs Housing Balance. This is an important component that needs further detail.
- 34:30 Please coordinate the SB9 language with the current legislation and recommendations of the Planning Commission and City Council.
- 36:26 Language to be expanded to include detailed discussion and description of the Sea Level Rise and Subsidence findings, including The County of Marin and Bay Wave results for Sausalito, in addition to the Landslide Task Force findings and ratified recommendations.
- 37:25 General Plan Land Use language needs updating on page LU-29
- 39:10 The City overlays are resulting in overlays over overlays; it is unclear what supersedes and is a conflict waiting to happen. The citywide overlay is not retired and perhaps should be considered for retirement in order for the proposed zoning changes to replace the overlay.
- 43:10 The General Plan LU 2.5 does expressly identify protecting the Working Waterfront zoning designation as well as the Industrial designation.
- 45:05 LU5.1 needs revision as directed by the Planning Commission.
- 47:30, 2:00:17 The 3D modeling studies executed previously for the January 2023 certified housing element have not been included in this round of proposed revisions for some reason. These models are very important and effective communication tools in study sessions and help the public visualize the proposed intention for certain sites. These models are still valid. In fact, the modeling of the MLK site originally had more units assigned to it and through the modeling process and feedback, this number was decreased to 80.
- 59:29 The massive buffer in the proposed revisions does not appear justified and is a huge increase from an already generous buffer in the certified housing element. We want to be very sensitive and mindful that HCD or ABAG does not view this buffer as an admission that Sausalito can accommodate more. We do not want to negotiate against ourselves.
- 1:01:24 Please emphasize that 379 units require voter approval related to 1022. 80 of those require voter approval related to 1128.
- 1:06:00 Owners have not yet been made aware of the underlying zoning and changes to revised zoning related to the required minimum and maximum units. The City needs to communicate this clearly.
- 1:11:00 Planning Commission consensus for advocating 80 units at MLK. A petition of over 1,300 Sausalito residents was signed in opposition to Marinship site 67.

- 1:25:15. What is the progress that has been made, to date, towards the 724 unit requirement? Staff committed to issuing a one-way communication specifying this, Staff committed to copying the Planning Commission on progress reporting issued to the State and incorporating this information into all future presentations.
- 1:41:00 Ordinances 1022 and 1128 are unclear as it relates to what a ballot measure may be asking the public to vote on. The Commission is unwilling to discard public comment on overwhelming input provided through the process. Graphics really do matter and assist with communication.
- 1:45:50 LA just burnt to the ground and it appears there is overwhelming evidence from experts that density played a large role in the outcome. Staff has been asked to work with the City Council and elected officials in the County and State to figure out, solve and implement primary infrastructure demands *prior to* the full fruition of the implementation of this housing remit.

We ask that you please incorporate this information and communicate clearly and accurately to the City Council what the comments, suggestions and clear sentiment of the Planning Commission; the City Council deserves the benefit of reliable and accurate information from the Planning Commission to assist them with the consideration of this matter in their study session and as part of the overall process. Please circulate this correspondence to the City Council for their thoughtful consideration prior to and in preparation for their February 4th Study Session.

We await your acknowledgement of this correspondence and request your attendance at the next Working Group meeting. As we said in our hearings, it is incumbent on all of us to work smartly to assist with the process and messaging to our community.

Regards,

Nastassya Saad
Chair, Sausalito Planning Commission
Housing Element Working Group

Kristina Feller
Sausalito Planning Commission
Housing Element Working Group
Former Chair, Housing Element Advisory Committee

cc: Neal Toft, CDD