

From: Gail Napell [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 4:55 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: City Council Special Study Session 26.02.02

Thank you so much for this Special Study Session and attention to this project. Once again I'm gratified and proud to be a resident of this City.

A couple of questions:

1. ***The [City of San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan](#) is a legally adopted document that affects development in our City. Why was it not reviewed and referenced as part of the study?***
2. For the Irwin Street project, it has only 18 affordable units in 210 total, yet was granted a density bonus even though it does not achieve the 10% threshold. Why was it granted that bonus when it does not meet the required percentage?

My comments:

1. I'm a fierce advocate for liveable cities with urban density, enough safe housing for everyone, walkable neighborhoods, excellent public transit, and equitable access.
2. I'm also a recently retired architect with 45 years of experience and a solid understanding of jurisdictional requirements AND good design. Our city's currently limited control over the *design* of multifamily housing is clearly causing angst in both staff and residents.
3. There is no doubt that we need a LOT of additional housing, the sooner the better. There is no doubt that it's cheaper, faster and easier for developers to propose as much density as they can within jurisdictional requirements, in the simplest forms possible - a box with straight sides.
4. A box with straight sides is not inherently bad, but there is a point at which that box is completely inappropriate for the local context. We have seen many proposed projects that are straight-sided boxes at zero lot line with all the facades essentially identical - regardless of whether they face north, east, south or west. These are not good design, they are not environmentally sensitive design, and they are not context-appropriate design. Developers and their architects know this, and they should be called out immediately upon their first submission of such designs.
5. Adjusting / setting height limits is not the only solution to our current concerns. Buildings with appreciable setbacks, appropriately set back from the lot line, and with forms more complex than simple boxes, can meet density bonus and fit the context of their neighborhoods. They are also good design.
6. Our City does not need to grant multiple waivers to development proposers.

resiliently yours

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I live, work, recreate, shop, vote and pay taxes in San Rafael - and have since we moved here in 1999.