



July 19, 2021

San Rafael City Council
14 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

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415.457.7656

RE: Affordable Housing Items 7b and 7c

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,

Sustainable San Rafael welcomes the progress on new affordable housing at the Merrydale Townhomes and Vivalon Healthy Aging projects. We offer the following observations and recommendations:

1. Though predictable, it is disappointing to see the number of on-site affordable units at the Merrydale development drop from 20% (9 units) to 4% (2 units). This demonstrates the difficulty of achieving a diverse and income-integrated community under the City's new 'inclusionary' housing rules. We ask that the City deploy the increased 'in-lieu' funds from the project towards the creation of new affordable housing located in neighborhoods similar to the Merrydale site, that is, economically integrated communities close to transit. We also ask that the results of the in-lieu expenditures stemming from the Merrydale development be carefully tracked, so that the estimated *additional 19 new affordable units* can be verified. As stated when the new rules were adopted, such monitoring needs to continue on a cumulative basis going forward and be included in the staff reports for future housing developments, in order to judge San Rafael's success in creating new units.

2. We recommend that the City continue to support the Vivalon 100% affordable senior housing by waiving associated permit fees to the maximum extent possible. We do not believe that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund should be used to offset the waiver, and urge the City to identify other sources such as those supporting economic recovery from the recent pandemic.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to revitalize housing construction and support housing equity in San Rafael

Sincerely,

William Carney
President

Copies:
Jim Schutz, Alicia Giudice