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March 20, 2022

San Rafael City Council

1400 Fifth Avenue

San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: Annual Progress Report & Housing Policy Update

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,

At first look, the challenges of reaching San Rafael's RHNA goals this cycle are daunting, since the City has met only 39% of the overall goals so far, and only 22% of the affordable housing goals, with one year remaining.

However, if the City remains diligent in moving already approved projects to the building permit stage, the overall goal could yet be reached. We are encouraged by the proactive steps the Council and staff have taken to stimulate development, including the use of in-lieu fees to leverage affordable units at a ratio of 10:1 and the increase of staff devoted to housing.

The greatest challenge lies with the greatest housing need, which is for more affordable housing. Even if all the projected housing advances, the proportion of affordable housing appears to be less than half of the 569 units that RHNA calls for--and that the city needs to remain an economically diverse community.

So for this year and future years, we urge the City to supplement its Annual Housing Report with specific steps and metrics showing how its affordable housing commitments can be met.

We also continue to urge an additional 5-10% inclusionary housing requirement at the 'moderate' income level, which given high area household incomes would pose little burden to proformas, while addressing the 'missing middle' of the market.

We appreciate the wide scope of housing efforts outlined in the staff report, including those addressing accessory dwelling units, fair housing rents, supportive housing, senior housing, parking strategies, and the creation of walkable neighborhoods downtown and near transit. We especially look forward to early implementation of the new Inclusionary Housing Nexus Study.

Thank you for your ongoing attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

William Carney
President