

Jessica Lynch

From: Megan Lynch <spidra@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:04 PM
To: Jessica Lynch
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment re Davis Housing Element

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From: **Megan Lynch** <spidra@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jun 15, 2021 at 2:20 PM
Subject: Public Comment re Davis Housing Element
To: <CityCouncilMembers@cityofdavis.org>

Dear City Councillors,

The lack of affordable accessible housing is one of the greatest crises facing Americans right now. I'm 55 years old and since the '80s, homelessness has been a regular feature of our society. One which too many of us have become inured to. We're callous about it until we ourselves are at risk of homelessness.

Safe clean housing is a right. We've been trained to think it is not. But if we truly believe in equality, that we are all born innocent and equal in the creator's eyes, every human has a right to clean water, safe clean housing, and other necessities for life. The pandemic showed the greater public health risks to people when they don't have clean safe stable housing.

But the gobbling up of housing stock by the wealth class in the last couple global crashes has exacerbated the problem of homelessness. We all know people who work hard and still cannot afford a safe stable home. I've talked to a number of Davis natives who've had this problem.

Another crisis is the climate emergency. Davis was already someplace that got fairly hot in the summer, but now it's fairly hot and at risk for brushfires a great deal of the year. This makes housing even more of an issue because when it's hot, when the air is full of brushfire smoke, people need to be indoors in a climate-controlled environment. Not just for comfort, but for actual survival. Additionally, the way we've developed since the rise in popularity of automobiles has caused the climate crisis we're currently facing.

I am a single childfree disabled student. The only housing I could afford in Davis is a trailer in a trailer park. This is my first time living this way and it's not easy for a disabled person my age. When I look around Davis, I notice a lot of sprawl. Buildings are 1 - 3 stories, which means instead of using already-developed land for housing, offices, and retail, Davis keeps expanding. This reduces the agricultural and wildlife land we all value. It makes all the sense in the world to allow buildings to be higher, to allow more infill development, and to reduce car parking as it's not only an inefficient use of space, but encourages the continued investment in the very mode of transport responsible for so much of the climate emergency we currently face and the economic losses that brings.

I was disturbed by some of the public comments at previous meetings I heard from those fortunate enough to own their own homes. The demonization of students and automatic assumption that they're "transient" and therefore unworthy of consideration by local government is deeply classist and anti-democratic. I've been a responsible engaged citizen my entire life. I vote in every single election. I am an active engaged citizen. The "I've got mine, Jack" attitude that some of

these public commenters have towards housing is why a responsible member of the community such as myself lives at risk of homelessness.

I wanted to highlight three aspects of things that I think are rarely discussed in housing discussions - **(1)** Everyone talks about families. Not everyone chooses or even has the option to choose to have a family. Single childfree/childless people, especially single disabled people, need housing as well. Make sure the housing element addresses this. **(2)** "Affordable" is usually defined as about 30% of average median income. This also leaves single disabled people behind. I was on low-income housing lists for years and when I made it to the top, I was rejected because income from SSDI was not considered enough to qualify. I was too low income for "affordable" housing! This needs to be considered as many senior and/or disabled people are on low Social Security incomes. **(3)** Accessibility as tested by disabled people, not as checked off for on some inadequate ADA derivative checklist, must be a requirement of any new or renovated housing. **(4)** It is better for senior and/or disabled people to live centrally where the transportation hubs and amenities are, not exiled to the edges of a city where there's little support for them, especially if they are conscientious about reducing their carbon footprint. While some disabled people are reliant on cars, others need to walk or cycle to be able to take care of their health and therefore living in a more walkable/cycleable neighborhood is needed for quality of life and health.

I have to agree with many others who are saying:

- 1) Reduce minimum parking requirements
- 2) Diversify the housing stock so that it's not just low income apartment blocks or single-family homes on large plots. Allow quality sound-baffled duplex, triplex, quadplex, co-housing, and other designs that make better use of our developed space.
- 3) The city should use its power to benefit the people and develop affordable accessible housing on city-owned land.
- 4) Strip malls are a relic of the car-centric culture that has caused anthropogenic climate change & wasted so much land in our most-desired areas. Allow strip malls to be redeveloped for housing or otherwise developed for better, more climate-forward uses.
- 5) Let's try the by-right approval process as the current one has resulted in the haves perpetually nixing development that would help the have-nots.

Thank you for your consideration,

Megan Lynch
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