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Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 12:21 AM
To: Housing Element Committee
Subject: Housing Element

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Molly Mermin and I am a fourth year undergraduate at UC Davis. During my last four years here, I have come to love the city of Davis. I think it's a great place to live, learn, and work. I think everyone who wants to should have the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful town. However, due to high housing costs, this opportunity is not available for all people. The city of Davis is faced with a housing crisis, and unfortunately, the city's housing element draft does not appear to recognize this fact. We need a housing element that tackles this crisis head-on, instead of hoping that the problem resolves itself. We must be more aggressive in increasing housing supply, and reducing the cost of building housing. Some policies the city should consider:

1. Eliminating parking minimums. In one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country, it should not be required to own a car. However, zoning codes currently require new buildings to contain a certain amount of parking, which studies show add to the cost of building housing. Cars also contribute greatly to climate change, create traffic, and injure and kill thousands every year. We should encourage alternate modes of transportation, and this means making it more inconvenient to drive, by eliminating parking minimums.
2. Repealing bans on duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes. This "missing-middle housing is a great way to improve affordability, without changing the character of neighborhoods. These types of houses blend in with single-family houses, but are much more affordable and environmentally friendly.
3. Build on city-owned properties. Several lots were mentioned in the housing element draft, but the city also owns several properties that were not mentioned, that could be used for housing.
4. Build on strip malls. Strip malls like those in West Davis and at Covell/Pole Line are underutilized, and would be revitalized by building apartments on top of the commercial buildings or in parts of the parking lots. Plans like this were passed by city council last year for the U-Mall site.
5. By-right approval for eligible projects. Projects that meet affordability requirements should be approved by-right. This prevents unnecessary delays of housing and increases the stock of affordable housing in the city.

The city must do better with our housing element. All people should be able to afford Davis, and the current housing element draft does not give me the impression that the city is seriously committed to this goal.

Thank you for your time,
Molly Mermin