

From: [Kevin Ma](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: Additional Comment on 6.1 (Housing Element)
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 10:58:21 AM

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Dear City Council,

In addition to my comments in the MV Yimby letter, I'd like to add a few more thoughts.

The housing crisis affects people of all kinds. The children of current residents will either have to find lucrative jobs to continue in their hometown, stay longer with family and roommates, or move away to pursue other careers in cheaper areas. Seniors will have a harder time finding caretakers or places to downsize comfortably. Doctors, teachers, and other necessary professions will find themselves unable to sustain their livelihoods as the gap between pay and housing costs continue to widen. The prices of goods and services will continue to go up in reaction, given that shelter costs account for about ~30% of inflation. Those at the lower rungs of the income ladder will continue to risk homelessness, or move out to the Central Valley or out of the state (of which their cities also get hit with a spike in housing prices). And all of this under "normal" circumstances; once the big earthquake hits, or a large wildfire occurs, where do the affected go?

Therefore, we need a Housing Element that is effective and realistic, not one of the status quo that doesn't work. The failure to plan accordingly does not make people magically disappear; that results in overcrowding, long commutes, and expensive housing locally, and sprawl development into wildlands elsewhere. And another reminder that "RHNA is a floor, not a ceiling:" it is the bare minimum to improve the situation, with the targets now higher to take into account the chronic under-production.

Sincerely,
Kevin Ma

From: [MV TC](#)
To: [City Council FORWARD](#)
Subject: Housing Element
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 2:12:55 PM

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Dear Mayor Ramirez and members of the Mountain View City Council

The Mountain View Tenants Coalition would like to comment on the study session for the housing element (6.1). Since this is a plan for addressing the housing needs for the next 8 years, here are the needs we see among our community members:

- **We need an easy way to view all available affordable housing for our community**

Currently, to apply for affordable housing, community members need to search through a number of different sites and apply to many different websites or paper applications. Since many people are applying for so few units, a community member in need of affordable housing will need to apply for multiple opportunities to increase their chances of success. This means that a renter will need to submit and resubmit the same information multiple times from many different sources. A single way to apply for affordable housing would help people find affordable housing without causing loss of time and resources to hunt for it and resubmit the same information. A single source would also allow the city or county affirmatively market or share all affordable housing opportunities to vulnerable and hard to reach populations - Similar to [San Jose Doorways](#) program currently in development, and [Dalia in San Francisco](#), which provides a single start point for people to apply for affordable housing (inclusionary or standalone). A single source would also make it easier for the city, county or even the average resident to track the availability of affordable housing in their area.

- **We need increase relocation assistance in cases of eviction**

The financial cost of displacement is significant to the tenant and the community. We need the council to increase the amount of relocation assistance granted to affected community members.

- **We need help to create Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Community Land Trusts (CLTs)**

We want more options of multifamily affordable housing that allow for more community control and decision making tools such as Community Development Corporations (CDCs), co-housing, co-op housing, tiny home communities, and Community Land Trusts (CLTs). However, since many of these options do not exist in our city, we need financial and technical support and training to make these options viable. Training can be assisted by other and more established non-profit organizations.

The County recently created a grant program to assist with the creation of CDCs. With the strong level of community engagement in Mountain View, our city is well positioned to make use of such a program as well.

- **We want a Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) Policy**

We want renters, non-profits, and community organizations to get the first chance to purchase a rental property when a landlord wants to sell. This allows the community to compete against investment firms like BlackRock who purchase rental units so quickly, tenants do not even know that the building was for sale. This will help keep rental units affordable and allow the community to acquire housing. Local cities like East Palo Alto and San Jose are currently looking at adopting this policy and it will provide additional support to CDCs and CLTs mentioned in the policy above.

- **We need more protections for COVID impacts, including secondary impacts**

As renters continue to suffer from COVID, the city council should:

- Ban Evictions due to COVID impacts and secondary effects
- Non-payment of rent during Covid or when tenant has secondary impacts to COVID should not be a just cause for eviction
- Create a permanent rent debt forgiveness program/plan, especially for landlords who receive government assistance
- Rent Freeze: No rents increases during an economic emergency

- **We need special housing protections and prioritizations for essential workers (cashiers, first responders, service workers, teachers, etc.)**

We currently have hardship protections for low income tenants, but there is a hardship on the community when essential workers are displaced. We need additional relocation assistance to essential workers to ensure they can remain in our community. Our students need teachers, but they can't afford to live here. We need policies to prioritize building or acquiring housing for essential workers.

- **Protection against misrepresentation of specials offers to fill a vacancy (a.k.a move in specials)**

Throughout the pandemic, landlords have been offering "special discounts" to fill vacancies. With the confusion of these discounts, landlords have been increasing the rents larger than allowed by our rent control law. This is a clear attempt to subvert our tenant protections and we need programs to prevent that.

We thank the council for considering our needs as they plan for housing sites and policies to be adopted for the next 8 years.

With gratitude,
Mountain View Tenants Coalition

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Mountain View Tenants Coalition