



Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center

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"...shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, and provide a path to personal self sufficiency..."

September 26, 2016

Marie Jones, Community Development Director

Scott Perkins, Associate Planner

416 N. Franklin Street

Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Marie and Scott,

We appreciate the time you took to discuss some of the upcoming zoning changes that the city of Fort Bragg is considering. We also thank you for taking into consideration the suggestions sent to you by Disability Rights California Staff Attorney Pamela Cohen on behalf of Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center (MCHC) and other Nonprofit Social Service Organizations in our community.

Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center Board and Staff remain deeply concerned about some of the zoning issues. It is our understanding that our Hospitality House homeless shelter and our "Emergency Weather Shelter" may now be under the category of "emergency shelter" and thereby restricted to locations in the "Light Industrial Land Use" designations.

Restricting emergency shelters to this small area out of town that has no sewers and minimal other amenities is exclusionary and unacceptable. As you know, the "Light Industrial" areas are located in a limited few blocks at the far northern edge of Fort Bragg. Furthermore, this would change the designation of our 30-year location of MCHC's Hospitality House on N. McPherson Street into a legal, non-conforming structure which is unacceptable as well.

Emergency housing should be considered a form of housing, nothing more, for that's exactly what it is---housing. Your own City attorney has eloquently opined about discrimination in housing being violative of state and federal laws. Imagine being someone caught in the unfortunate circumstance of requiring emergency shelter, when upon inquiring, being told that she must be herded into the light industrial area of the city as far away from other residents as possible. The city surely must not turn its back on those most in need of emergency shelter.

Affordable housing also remains a critical issue. MCHC is committed to helping curb homelessness and locating permanent housing for those we serve, but our community cannot end homelessness if there is no affordable housing available. The Obama administration is encouraging smart land use regulations and is releasing a new toolkit today that “highlights best practices that localities have employed---including streamlining permitting processes, eliminating off-street parking requirements, reducing minimum lot sizes, and enacting high-density and multifamily zoning polices---to reduce overly burdensome land use restrictions and promote mobility and economic growth.” (Article attached) We ask that the city and the community look at creative ways to encourage affordable housing as you revise your zoning ordinances.

We request that MCHC be notified of upcoming zoning discussions and changes that are being considered so that we can participate in this important decision-making process that affects the ability of nonprofit Social Service Organizations to provide affordable and accessible housing for so many deserving families and individuals in our community.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Respectfully,



Lynelle Johnson, Board President

Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center

CC:

Linda Ruffing, City Manager

Dave Turner, Mayor

Council Members

Attal Simet: Better to Move Down

OPEN FORUM On Land Use Reform

Promote Shared Housing Growth

By Jason Furman

It is no secret that cities like San Francisco, New York and Washington, D.C., face challenges in the availability and cost of housing. But policymakers and economists have increasingly recognized both the role that certain inappropriate land use restrictions play in raising housing costs — not just in major cities but across the country — and the opportunity for modernizing these regulations to promote shared growth.

When certain government policies — like minimum lot sizes, off-street parking requirements, height limits, prohibitions on multifamily housing, or unnecessarily lengthy permitting processes — restrict the supply of housing, fewer units are available and the price rises. On the other hand, more efficient policies can promote availability and affordability of housing, regional economic development, transportation options and socioeconomic diversity.

Research suggests that local barriers have become more restrictive in recent decades. One way to measure this is comparing the sale price of houses with construction costs. This gap typically reflects the cost of buying land — which increases with tighter land use restrictions. Indeed, the gap has increased in the past two decades: House prices from 2010 to 2013 were 56 percent higher than construction costs, a 23 percentage-point increase over the average gap during the 1990s.

Of course, many land use regulations can have benefits for communities. Environmental reasons in some localities may make it appropriate to limit high-density or multisection development. Similarly, health and safety concerns — such as an area's air traffic patterns, viability of its water supply, or its geologic stability — may merit height and lot size restrictions.

But in other cases, barriers to housing development can allow a small number of individuals to enjoy the benefits of living in a community while excluding many others, limiting diversity and economic mobility. This upward pressure on house prices may also un-

determine the market forces that typically determine patterns of housing construction, leading to mismatches between household needs and available housing.

Improving land use policies can also create benefits for the U.S. economy as a whole. High-productivity cities offer higher-income jobs than low-productivity cities and often attract workers who move from other cities, naturally bringing more resources to productive areas of the country. But when unnecessary barriers restrict the supply of housing and costs increase, then workers — particularly lower-income workers who would benefit the most — are less able to move.

All told, this means slower economic growth. Some researchers have estimated that GDP could have been almost 10 percent higher in 2009 if workers and capital freely moved so that the distribution of wages across cities was the same as in 1964.

On the other hand, smarter land use and housing policy can promote both growth and equity. While most land use policies are appropriately made at the state and local level, the federal government can also play a role in encouraging smart land use regulations.

Today, the Obama administration is releasing a new toolkit at <http://bit.ly/2d4dVAc> that highlights best practices that localities have employed — including streamlining permitting processes, eliminating off-street parking requirements, reducing minimum lot sizes, and enacting high-density and multifamily zoning policies — to reduce overly burdensome land use restrictions and promote mobility and economic growth.

Reforming land use policies can have important benefits for local residents and the nation as a whole, not only raising economic growth, but ensuring that its benefits are widely shared among all Americans.

Jason Furman is the chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers.