



COUNCIL AGENDA: 08/31/2021
FILE: 21-1893
ITEM: 8.6

Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: August 30, 2021

Approved

Date

Sylvia Arenas

August 30, 2021

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITING POLICY

RECOMMENDATION

Approve staff recommendations and:

1. Approve Recommendations 2 and 3 from the August 27, 2021 memo from Councilmembers Peralez, Esparza and Jimenez.
2. Approve Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4 from the August 27, 2021 memo from Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers Cohen, Foley and Mahan with the addition of:
 - a. “(d) The location of affordable projects in all category neighborhoods that secured funding upon implementation of the Siting Policy” to Recommendation 3.
 - b. “(e) Information regarding which category the project would have been inside based on the criteria proposed in Recommendation 1 of the August 27, 2021 memo from Councilmembers Peralez, Esparza, and Jimenez.”
3. Direct the administration to include a review of Recommendation 5 in the August 27, 2021 memo from Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Cohen, Foley and Mahan when they return to Council by June of 2022.
4. Agendize for the September 14th Council Meeting to direct the City Manager to draft a letter from the City Council to the Santa Clara County of Board of Supervisors urging Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Housing Authority to consider aligning their funding decisions with the City’s high-level Siting Policy goals.
5. Include an Affordable Housing Siting Policy implementation update in the Assessment of Fair Housing Plan Report, currently scheduled to be heard by the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee in February 2022.

BACKGROUND

The Affordable Housing Siting Policy is an important step in undoing the current and past harms of segregative policy in San José. I am grateful to our Housing Department staff for continuously bringing opportunities before us to address that harm and promote policies that address longstanding systemic segregation and housing discrimination.

It has long been understood, through research and the lived experience of vulnerable communities, that where we live affects our opportunity to breathe clean air and access good schools. A zip code should not be the greatest predictor of how long one is expected to live or how much income they can come to earn – yet it is.¹ People living just a few blocks apart may have vastly different opportunities to thrive. The implementation of the Siting Policy will play a significant role in addressing this, as it will help ensure that more San José neighborhoods include affordable housing options and will intentionally invest in areas with the highest violent crime. Doors will open for thousands of children to better schools, safer neighborhoods, and healthy communities. The impact will be generational.

The Siting Policy has great potential in helping us achieve a more equitable San José, but it cannot do so alone. It will be much more effective if it's strategically connected to concurring housing and land use policy, both within the City of San José and Santa Clara County. As a City Council, we must take any supportive action we can to propel that collaboration forward. I am encouraged by Staff's recommended approach, while cognizant of the realities of changing social and economic landscapes that challenge our ability to meet intended goals and outcomes. I am supportive of regular evaluations, ongoing discussions, and course-corrective actions to ensure that no vulnerable community is left behind. Every child deserves to lead a life rich with opportunity, no matter where they call home.

¹ <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>