

June 4, 2021

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of San Diego
202 C St, 10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101
(submitted via email)

RE: 6/8/2021 Docket Item #330– Amendment to the 6th Cycle General Plan Housing Element

Honorable Members of the City Council;

The City of San Diego was the first in the region, and therefore the first in the state, to begin drafting their 6th Cycle Housing Element plan, with a draft released for public review in December 2019. At that time, the San Diego Housing Federation (SDHF) reviewed the draft plan and found several components that earned our strong support, including: working to identify ways to increase and prioritize funding for affordable housing; implementing state legislation; improving and streamlining review and funding processes; providing housing for vulnerable populations; understanding the housing stock; advancing fair housing; and meeting climate goals.

Since then, the City has received feedback from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on areas in the plan that need improvement, including updating the plan to reflect guidance released from the state in April 2021 for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). In response, the proposed plan updates reflect best practices and serves as a tool for creating more equitable communities and increasing access to opportunity. It is worth noting that this includes the Community Plan Updates for Clairemont, University City, and Mira Mesa, all of which will have a significant impact on the City's AFFH goals.

The City has worked with HCD to address deficiencies identified in the plan. Given that the City of San Diego is the first municipality in the State to submit its Housing Element under a substantial number of new requirements, some of which were issued very late in the review process, it was expected that this Housing Element would serve as a test case for HCD's application of these new standards.

This plan is a framework that guides the City's efforts to attain its housing production goals, and as such it is both forward-looking and general in nature. Each of the policies outlined in the revised Housing Element will require substantial community engagement and public review before it can be implemented, and the San Diego Housing Federation remains committed to working with city staff and the City Council to follow through with the policy goals of the revised Element and to hold the city accountable to implementing them.

As a whole, the Housing Element provides a dynamic framework for the City's housing goals for the 6th Cycle, and lays a path forward for the City of San Diego to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals. A compliant housing element is essential not just for the policy framework to achieve our housing goals, but also for accessing the resources that are needed to do so.

It will be incumbent on the City Council to stay fully engaged in the oversight and implementation of the Housing Element, and we urge the Council to both support the Housing Element presented to you today, and to commit to the timely development, review, and implementation of the policy recommendations that it includes.



Stephen Russell,
President & CEO
San Diego Housing Federation

CC: Honorable Mayor Todd Gloria