

081125 – Remarks to City Council – Zoning Code Update

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As the representative of the local business community, the Chamber strives for a local economy that is good for all of our citizens. It's a priority to support wise policies that positively address local housing affordability and supply, while maintaining a high quality of life.

As you know, we have been following and involved in the Century Code Update and have provided letters and public comments along the way.

The Century Code update is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to align our city policies to encourage the increase in supply and improvements in affordability that we desperately need. We recognize the work that has gone into the new code, and we encourage its adoption.

While all of the goals of the Century Code Update are desirable and appropriate, its most critical purpose is to produce more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability. Encouraging additional housing supply is not the only answer to affordability, but there can be no improvement in affordability and availability of housing without more supply. Affordability itself is significantly affected by the real costs of construction and the costs of complying with regulations.

We appreciate the amendments that were made at the last Council meeting to put housing and people as a higher priority over aesthetics and other subjective standards that could increase costs and inhibit development. However, we remain concerned that some of the tree preservation standards that remain in the code will inhibit the creation of needed housing. We once again point out that encouraging infill housing is better for the environment, more financially productive for the community, efficiently uses existing infrastructure, and lessens pressure on sprawl.

Going forward, we encourage city staff and the Council to monitor and assess the actual impact of the code as it is implemented... and to be open about making future adjustments to ensure its most important goals have a chance to be achieved.