

Wyatt, Rosie

From: Santa Cruz YIMBY <santacruzylimby@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 7:53 AM
To: PLANNING COMMISSION
Cc: Herlihy, Katie (kherlihy@ci.capitola.ca.us); hello@santacruzylimby.org
Subject: [PDF] Input to Planning Commission meeting on Oct 3, 2024
Attachments: Santa Cruz YIMBY input to 6.C Planning Commission Oct 3.pdf

Hello,

Please find attached our comments on item #6C on your October 3, 2024 meeting agenda.

Sincerely,
Janine Roeth
Ryan Meckel
Rafa Sonnenfeld
leads, Santa Cruz YIMBY



To: Capitola Planning Commissioners
RE: Item #6C on October 3, 2024 Agenda
September 30, 2024

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to update Capitola's zoning code. These updates are essential to reducing barriers to housing production and encouraging more development over the coming years. Santa Cruz YIMBY has the following feedback on the proposed zoning amendments, Item #6C on October 3, 2024 Agenda.

Chapter 17.108 (Administrative Responsibility) and Chapter 17.120 (Design Permits)

Implementing right-sized reviews and approvals, along with clear objective criteria, is key to making housing development quicker and easier while addressing Capitola's housing needs.

Requiring Planning Commission involvement and a city-contracted design professional for many projects introduces delays and creates uncertainty, which ultimately increases both the cost and complexity of development. Section 17.120.050.E.2.c specifies the involvement of a "city-contracted design professional," for mixed use developments, and continues this practice for multifamily housing developments, even if they are consistent with zoning or utilize a state density bonus. However, state law limits design changes to projects already consistent with local zoning or that take advantage of a state density bonus. Requiring developers to pay for a city-selected design professional to produce a report suggesting design changes that are not legally required serves no public purpose, discourages housing development, and increases both the costs and risks involved.

Moreover, the proposed updates do not define a ministerial approval process. Given that Capitola is subject to [SB423](#) due to slow progress on RHNA goals, it is crucial to define ministerial approval for compliant projects. There is also ambiguity regarding who is responsible for determining compliance with objective standards.

The design review criteria in Chapter 17.120 still contain a significant amount of subjective language, which can lead to uncertainty and further delays. We recommend refining these criteria to incorporate more objective criteria or reference to objective standards to ensure a predictable and efficient process.



Chapter 18.03 (Residential Density Bonus)

Your proposed update aligns Capitola zoning code with the State Density Bonus Law (SDBL). Section 18.03.030.D.2.5, indicates that density bonuses or other incentives must be consistent with the LCP, with the exception of density itself. However, we note that Attachment C doesn't indicate how Capitola's Density Bonus zoning code amendments overall are consistent with the Local Coastal Program (LCP). We recommend modifying the zoning amendment with language like [Santa Cruz's zoning code \(24.16.242\)](#), to ensure clarity (emphasis added):

*2. For development within the coastal zone, the requested density bonus and any requested incentive, concession, waiver, modification, modified parking standard, or commercial development bonus shall be consistent with state density bonus criteria. All applicable requirements of the certified Santa Cruz local coastal program shall be met (including but not limited to sensitive habitat, agriculture, public viewshed, public recreational access, and open space), **with the exception of the numeric standards changed through state density bonus provisions.***

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Janine Roeth
Rafa Sonnenfeld
Ryan Meckel

Santa Cruz YIMBY Mission: We envision a community where our neighbors of all ages, cultures, abilities, and incomes, can make Santa Cruz County their home. In response to the ever-increasing cost of living, we advocate for more affordable housing to meet the needs of our growing population.

Santa Cruz YIMBY is a chapter of YIMBY Action, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization.