



To: Capitola Planning Commissioners
RE: Item #5A on August 15, 2024 Agenda
August 13, 2024

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the work on updating the zoning code. This is a crucial step toward addressing barriers to housing production and incentivizing the creation of more housing in Capitola over the next eight years. Santa Cruz YIMBY has the following feedback on the proposed zoning amendments, Item #5A on August 15, 2024 Agenda.

Missing Middle Housing (1.1) - 17.16.020.C

- The introduction of five new residential zones with a range of densities is commendable.
- We appreciate the inclusion of higher-density residential zones (30-40 du), which are well-suited for affordable housing.

Lot Consolidation (1.1) - 17.24.030.J and Table 17.24-4

- We acknowledge the increased height incentive to 40 feet in the MU-N zone.
- Regarding lot consolidation, there is a proposed increase in FAR to 1.5, while the 17.88 Community Benefits incentive already adopted provides an increase in FAR to 2.0. What is the approach to FAR incentives?

Alternative Housing Types (1.5) - Micro-units (17.24.030.K)

- The incentive for buildings with micro-units in the CC or CR zone is contingent upon the building being ¼ mile (walking distance) of a major transit stop or high quality corridor. Currently, Capitola lacks major transit stops or high quality corridors. While we are hopeful about METRO plans and AMBAG planning, this limitation could persist for years.
- The Proposed Zoning Code Amendment Table mentions allowing 0.5 parking spaces per microunits, but this standard doesn't appear in any parking standard tables.

Parking - Table 17.76-2

- See above for microunits not being included in the parking table 17.76-2
- If the standard is 0.5 spaces for a micro-unit (<350 sq ft), then units under 500 sq ft in multifamily buildings should also have a 0.5-space requirement.
- Noting previous discussions on bedroom vs. square footage, it is recommended that parking requirements be based on bedroom count, similar to the standards in the City of Santa Cruz, the County, and Watsonville. For example, 0.5 spaces for micro/studio, 1 space for 1-bedroom units, 1.5 spaces for 2-bedroom units, and 2 spaces for 3+ bedrooms.

Housing on Education and Religious Sites (1.8) - 17.96.220.D.2

- 17.96.220.D.2 outlines a “Ministerial Design Review” for *Housing on Religious Facilities Sites*, placing the Planning Commission in a ministerial review role. This is unneeded overhead and adds discretion to an objective process.
- “Ministerial action” is defined as a city decision on a planning permit that involves only fixed standards or objective measurements without requiring the exercise of discretion. This process should align with other examples of ministerial approvals, such as ADUs and SB9.

Design Review Process; Architecture and Site Review Committee - 17.120

- The edits to the Design Review Criteria are a step in the right direction, but there is room for further improvement. More subjectivity could be removed or referred to objective standards elsewhere.
- Elements like *Pedestrian Environment, Privacy, Safety, Massing and Scale, Articulation, and Visual Interest* are addressed more objectively in 17.82, which covers Objective Standards for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Residential Development.
- *Architectural Style* is completely subjective. *Materials* are highly subjective.

Referral of Applications to Planning Commission - 17.112.090

- This section allows the Community Development Director to refer any application involving a discretionary action to the Planning Commission for review and a final decision.
- All items before the Planning Commission should be part of a standard process or an appeal.
- It is suggested that this section be removed to prevent unnecessary referrals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Santa Cruz YIMBY supports sustainable growth, including along transportation corridors and activity centers and a commitment to lower Vehicle Miles Traveled by housing people near services and jobs.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Madrigal
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Leads, Santa Cruz YIMBY

Santa Cruz YIMBY advocates for abundant housing at all levels of affordability to meet the needs of a growing population in Santa Cruz County.