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## Comments to Item 8B

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**From** Melinda Orbach <melindashrimp@gmail.com>

**Date** Tue 10/8/2024 10:53 PM

**To** City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>

■ 1 attachments (27 KB)

Item 8b Comment for Submittal - 10.10.2024.docx;

Dear City Council,

Please read the attached comments regarding item 8b on the agenda for the meeting on 10/10.

Thank you,

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Melinda Orbach

"Find a job you love, and you'll never have to work a day in your life."

Dear Capitola City Council,

I have some concerns regarding the proposed concept plan for 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The City has already funded two visioning documents for the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue corridor in 2009 and 2011 and those only led to minimal changes in the zoning code and no significant development. Rather than spending \$100,000 on another pretty visioning document, which would require subsequent plans to actually implement, I think the City would be better served by building a larger budget over the next several years and applying for grant funding to develop a specific plan for the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue corridor (including a portion of Capitola Road and Clares Street).

Specific plans, which can be adopted by ordinance and used as regulatory documents, have the potential to truly transform a specific area of a city. The City of Santa Cruz updated their Downtown Plan in 2017 and again in 2020 and those modifications have led to significant investment in their downtown area. Watsonville followed suit last year, adopting the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan in October 2023, and that document has the potential to catalyze the same type of development in their downtown area. Specific plans do this by removing uncertainty for developers and businesses through catering development standards to the specific area, conducting a CEQA analysis for the whole area so that subsequent projects in the area do not require CEQA review, and addressing issues such as infrastructure, transportation, and financing needs more comprehensively.

Now, before anyone labels me an extremist (again), I am not saying that 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue needs to look like downtown Santa Cruz or downtown Watsonville. Drafting a specific plan for the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue corridor would involve a large amount of community input so that the resulting plan would reflect what our residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors want to see in the area. The plan will need to allow for the densities and development standards identified in the recently adopted 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element, but this effort would take that one step further by showing where and how those densities can be achieved in a form that is acceptable to the community while also building a path towards making that vision a reality.

If we are serious about revitalizing the 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue corridor, that is the level of investment we need to be willing to make. If not, we will end up \$100,000 poorer with another conceptual plan with lots of pretty pictures collecting dust on a bookshelf at City Hall along next to the ones from 2009 and 2011.

Respectfully,

Melinda Orbach