



ECOS

ENVIRONMENTAL
♦ COUNCIL ♦
OF SACRAMENTO

Post Office Box 1526 | Sacramento, CA 95812-1526

April 9, 2024

County Supervisors via Clerk of the Board (BoardClerk@saccounty.gov)
Todd Smith, Planning Director (smithtodd@saccounty.net)

Re: Board of Supervisors Workshop on Housing and Infill on April 10, 2024 - Item #2: Infill Program

Dear County Supervisors and Staff:

Since its founding in the 1970's, the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) has advocated for infill development rather than sprawl, for the sake of habitat conservation and healthier air. This is even more important now as climate change has become an existential threat, and as affordable housing needs have become critical. In 2020, ECOS (along with 350 Sacramento and the Sierra Club's Sacramento Group) supported the County's applying for the State's Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant - that funded the PlaceWorks contract; and in 2021, ECOS and 350 Sacramento supported staff's proposal to reinstate the County's lapsed 2008 program.

We have reviewed PlaceWorks' Final Draft "Sacramento County Infill Program Update", and recommend you adopt its proposed "Toolkit" and "Next Steps" for the Toolkit's implementation.

The County needs to incentivize infill development for several reasons, but the most important is to ensure that the SACOG region meets the State's mandate for a 19% reduction in GHG from vehicle miles travelled by 2035. The County has approved several sprawl projects that, to the extent they are partially developed by 2035, would make it impossible for SACOG to achieve that mandate. This would prevent the region from receiving at least a half-billion dollars in State transportation funds. In addition, because the USA EPA has tightened the national health-based standard for fine particulate matter, the County is no longer in attainment for federal air quality standards, jeopardizing the County's ability to receive even greater amounts of federal funds for transportation.

Infill development is also needed to address the County's increasingly severe housing shortage, especially for lower-income households – which is the major cause of our severe homelessness crisis. An emphasis on infill development is needed to achieve the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), as required by the State. Transit-oriented development enable households to avoid the cost of buying and maintaining a car, which further aids our progress toward healthier air and less GHG emissions.

Finally, an emphasis on infill development would benefit the County's economy. By showing that we are leaders rather than laggards in addressing climate change, affordable housing, and homelessness, we will convince businesses around the country that we are a good region for developing technologically-advanced businesses.

Sincerely,

Ralph Propper
Immediate Past President

Susan Herre AIA AICP
President of the Board of Directors