

February 23, 2022

Housing Advisory Commission
County of Santa Cruz Planning & Zoning
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Housing Element Best Practices – MidPen Housing Corporation Case Studies

Dear Honorable Members of the County of Santa Cruz Housing Advisory Commission,

In 2022, jurisdictions in California will update their housing plan for the next 8 years (2023-2031). The Housing Element Update will include policies and programs that express our collective vision for a future that plans for 430,000 new homes to Bay Area and Monterey Bay regions. Approximately one-quarter of these homes are targeted to serve residents with Extremely- and Very Low-Incomes, and this cycle's update is the first one that will center on racial and social equity.

Through our [Strategic Plan](#) adopted last year, MidPen prioritizes producing homes for Extremely Low-Income households and other vulnerable populations, including housing for men, women and children experiencing homelessness and permanent supportive housing. MidPen has an ambitious goal of ensuring rents for 40% of all new homes in our pipeline are affordable to these households and see Housing Element implementation as a key strategy to scaffolding this goal in partnership with our local City and County partners.

Demonstrating sites and tools to advance affordable housing development is a key piece of an effective Housing Element. Affordable housing developers and housing developers more broadly are frequently asked by localities to provide input on sites and policies regarding feasibility and impact. **We are here for this conversation.** This opportunity to dialogue with our trusted local partners inspired us to assemble a set of case studies which profile effective examples from previous Housing Element cycles, including 2 examples from the County of Santa Cruz.

As with the most recent cycle, jurisdictions can look at today's tools and find ways to make them most effective by making more sites eligible or set policies that go beyond them with the goals of delivering more housing, more quickly or at a lower cost. In the face of tremendous un-met housing needs, and a more robust policy and financing landscape at the State level, this current cycle presents an important opportunity to build and expand upon what worked previously to plan for equitable growth.

We hope these examples are useful to city partners and other community stakeholders. If you have questions or would like to discuss, please feel free to contact MidPen's policy and development team. We look forward to this important year to set the vision for housing with our local partners and invite collaboration.

Sincerely,



Nevada V. Merriman
Director of Policy

cc: Jan Lindenthal, Chief Real Estate Officer
Joanna Carman, Director of Housing Development
Luis Preciado, Project Manager