

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING ACTION COALITION

ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES

Adopted March 2006

INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Housing Action Coalition's (SFHAC's) mission is to advocate for the creation of well-designed, well-located housing that meets the needs of present and future residents of San Francisco. The SFHAC aims to build a strong and diverse coalition of groups united by a shared interest in solving San Francisco's housing crisis. The objectives of the organization are to:

- Increase housing opportunities for San Franciscans of ALL income levels
- Pursue creative ways to make housing more affordable to a wide range of renters and buyers
- Preserve the city's existing housing stock and boost the amount of new housing that is produced each year
- Use well-designed housing to preserve and enhance neighborhood livability and character
- Promote a range of housing types that serve the diverse needs of San Francisco's residents
- Create or enhance pedestrian- and transit-friendly neighborhoods
- Make more efficient use of under-utilized land
- Reduce suburban sprawl by channeling growth into urban cores and inner suburbs and away from the region's greenbelt
- Improve the jobs/housing balance to reduce commute time and traffic
- Enhance neighborhood commercial vitality by adding housing in or near neighborhood commercial areas
- Collaborate with organizations which share our mission in other counties around the Bay Area

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM

The SFHAC's Endorsement Program brings a city-wide consciousness for more housing through broad-based support of development on a site-by-site basis.

ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES

The SFHAC will consider endorsing housing developments and mixed-use projects with a housing component. The following criteria only will be used to evaluate the project:

Project Size: The project should have at least 10 housing units. Depending on our review capacity, smaller projects may occasionally be considered.

Affordability: The SFHAC recognizes that the need for affordable housing in San Francisco is a critical problem and gives preference to projects that propose creative ways to improve unit affordability. Projects that include below market rate units above the legally mandated minimums will receive special support.

Land Use: Housing should be an appropriate use of the site given the context of the surrounding neighborhood and should enhance neighborhood livability.

Density: The project should have the maximum housing unit density allowable under current zoning for the project site. Extra support may be given to projects that further propose increased density above the base zoning, particularly in areas that are transit accessible.

Transit Orientation and Parking: The project should not exceed the maximum standard parking allowance under current zoning and should never be more than 1 space per residential unit. In exceptional circumstances when the zoning allowance is less than 1:1, we may consider supporting a project that requests extra parking. Extra support will be given to projects that reduce parking where appropriate, particularly in areas that are transit accessible. The SFHAC prefers creative strategies to reduce the need for parking, such as transit linkages, provision of space for car-share vehicles on-site or nearby, and un-bundling parking cost from residential unit cost.

Preservation: If there are structures of significant historic or cultural merit on the site, their retention and/ or incorporation into the project is encouraged. If such structures are to be demolished, there should be compelling reasons for doing so.

Design: The project should promote principles of good urban design: pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly site planning; contextual design such as compatibility of style, scale and facades with existing neighborhood character where appropriate; increased density while maintaining compatibility with streetscape and neighborhood scale. We expect design treatments to protect the pedestrian realm, with curb cuts minimized and active ground floor uses provided.

Greening and Energy Efficiency: Extra consideration will be given to projects that incorporate energy efficient materials and green building principles.

Community Input: Projects for which the developer has made a good faith effort to communicate to the community and to address legitimate neighborhood concerns, without sacrificing SFHAC's objectives, will receive more SFHAC support.

ENDORSEMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The endorsement process is simple. After receiving information about the project, a member of the Endorsements Committee will review the project according to our criteria and prepare a brief report and recommendation. The Endorsement Committee, made up of representatives from environmental and community-based groups and design and planning organizations, then makes a decision whether or not to endorse. In rare cases the Committee may elect to refer the final decision to SFHAC's full Steering Committee. Typically a project review can be completed in one month, in some cases more quickly. Developers are encouraged to request SFHAC's review early in the project planning process.

Outline of key steps:

1. Developer submits project profile and request for endorsement review
2. Reviewer looks at plans, makes site visit, talks with case planner at Dept. of City Planning or SF Redevelopment Agency, talks with project proponent, talks with any known opponents
3. Committee may request presentation by project developer/architect and/or organized opposition
4. Reviewer prepares and sends brief report and recommendation to Endorsements Committee
5. Committee makes decision on endorsement
6. Letter sent to developer
7. Further public support needs determined

Developers are encouraged to request SFHAC involvement in the early conceptual and design stages of projects. The SFHAC's final endorsement, however, will consider the community input process.

HOUSING COALITION ACTION ON REVIEWED PROJECTS

Depending on how closely the project meets the endorsement criteria, SFHAC can offer a range of support, including some or all of the following:

1. An official letter of endorsement that can be used to publicly promote the project
2. Media/press announcement highlighting the benefits of the project and the Coalition's endorsement
3. Public testimony at hearings
4. Attendance and promotion at neighborhood meetings
5. Attending meetings with public officials
6. Publication of the endorsement on the SFHAC website.

HOW TO REQUEST A PROJECT REVIEW

Please include the following materials and information about the project:

1. Project name:
Developer, Address, Phone, Fax #, email, etc.
2. Description of Project:

- Project location, existing zoning and General Plan designation (specify density, height, parking allowances), and applicable city policies
- Size of site, number and type of units
- Proposed price of units and number of units at each price level
- Anticipated occupancy. If families, indicate family oriented project features
- Number of vehicular, car-share and bicycle parking spaces, design of parking facilities
- Pedestrian amenities
- Access to local public transit, including intermodal accommodations
- Site plans, sections and elevations of buildings
- Green building amenities, including LEED rating goals
- 3. Environmental Clearance:
 - Indicate status of environmental review
- 4. Description of Surrounding Neighborhood:
 - Zoning and general plan designations for surrounding properties
 - Description of uses of surrounding area including approximate residential densities
 - Location of nearest transit services
- 5. Guideline Compliance:
 - Using the Guideline headings on Page 2, briefly state how the project relates to each guideline
- 6. Public Hearing Process:
 - If known, provide public hearing timetable. Please include a list of interested parties, both of supporters and any known opponents
- 7. Public Outreach Process:
 - Key issues based on any meetings or other communications with neighborhood organizations
- 8. Planning Department or Redevelopment Agency Staff Contact:
 - Provide name and phone number of planning staff assigned to review the proposal

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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SFHAC MEMBERS, AUGUST 2006

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