

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR REGARDING PROPOSED ZONING CODE / HOUSING ELEMENT CHANGES

Over the past few weeks, I have heard and seen a great deal of distorted and outright incorrect information about the proposed changes to the City's Zoning Code and Housing Element regarding low and moderate income housing. Perhaps you also have heard some of this misinformation, so I am writing to help clarify the situation and dispel any misconceptions. Below are the facts you should know before coming to conclusions.

The City is **required by State law** to adopt zoning that allows for development of housing that meets our **State required** allocation of low and moderate income regional housing. In other words, the State forecasts population growth and then requires **all** cities in the State to zone for their 'fair share' of the housing for that population growth. **We are not required to actually build that housing, merely to "zone" for it.** As a matter of fact, the City does not build anything. Private developers do that, and private developers typically look to make a profit. As you are aware, land costs are very high in LCF. Developers would have an extremely difficult time making a profit on low and moderate income housing because of that.

The current consideration is a proposal to rezone two areas in town to meet our State requirements. The first area is the lot on which Joanne's Fabrics currently sits. It is on a commercial area of Foothill Boulevard and **adjacent to existing multi-family** housing behind it. The other area is Curran Street, behind La Cañada Pet Clinic. This area is primarily single family homes. In order to convert this area to low and moderate income housing, a developer would have to buy, one-by-one, each lot from a *willing seller*, to accumulate enough land to develop into multi-family housing, which would likely be very expensive and take a significantly long time to do.

There are no projects currently under consideration by the City.

The City is also **required by State law** to zone for a homeless shelter and for transitional housing ("transitional housing" means temporary facilities for the homeless as they transition to permanent housing opportunities.) Again, the City is not required to build it, merely to "zone" for it. A homeless shelter is typically built where there is a homeless population, where services for homeless are provided, and where land is inexpensive, as these types of facilities are usually built by non-profits. None of these criteria exist in LCF and I can't image a time when they would. Because State law requires us to zone for it anyway, we want to make sure the zoning is not in residential neighborhoods, in our downtown area, or in our parks and open space areas. Therefore the proposed zoning is in the commercial area (outside of the downtown area) and we are exploring ways to ensure they are buffered from our schools.

Some would have us ignore the law. If we do, we risk costly lawsuits, most likely culminating with the City being ordered to come into compliance with State law. I don't know about you, but I really don't like wasting taxpayer dollars on unwinnable situations. And, quite frankly, the City Council has sworn an oath to obey the laws of the State of California. None of us take that oath lightly.

These rezoning requirements are the final step in the completion of the City's General Plan update and have been a part of public discussion for **over six years**. The Planning Commission recently held two hearings on the issue and the City Council will hold additional public hearings in January. We welcome your informed input, as always!

The City Council is committed to maintaining our La Cañada Flintridge way of life. We fully understand the desire of our community to remain primarily single-family residential -- a desire we most completely support! We will do our very best to ensure that happens while still obeying State requirements. I urge you to stay informed and to keep checking the City's website at www.lcf.ca.gov for facts and for meeting dates.

Thank you for joining us in being passionate about our town.