



December 11, 2023

Santa Barbara City Council  
City Hall  
735 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: City Housing Element Adoption

Mayor Rowse, City Councilmembers,

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara appreciates the opportunity to provide input on and support the adoption of the City's Housing Element Update. We have been engaged throughout the development of this important planning document and support adoption with a few key changes.

Our requested changes are discussed in our letter to the Planning Commission dated November 14, 2023 (attached). The Planning Commission recommended most of our proposed changes in their comments to your Council. However, staff did not incorporate those comments into the latest version of the Housing Element before you today.

- **Planning Commission Comment 14** – Change the language in HE-12 to include exploring a local preference for new housing at all income levels.

We believe that having a local preference for housing at all income levels is key to ensuring that units constructed actually meet our local housing needs.

- **Planning Commission Comment 19** – In policy 2.6 eliminate upper middle income from goal 2 and policy 2.6.

The original intent and language for Goal 2, as voted on by your Council, was to “prioritize housing that is affordable to the workforce and vulnerable communities...with **special emphasis** on housing that meets the needs of **extremely low, very low, low, moderate and middle income**, and special needs households (emphasis added). We ask that you focus on where the need is greatest and return to that original goal.

- **Planning Commission Comment 11** – While not included in our letter to the Planning Commission, we strongly recommend that the Planning Commission’s request be incorporated into the Housing Element. We have been asking for an update to the **definition of community benefit** for some time now. **Your own Council has directed the change in definition to include only deed-restricted affordable housing rather than all rental housing.** We request that this change happen as soon as possible. Given that the AUD Ordinance is now permanent, this is an important change to prioritize deed-restricted affordable housing.

With these three changes recommended by the Planning Commission, the League supports adoption of the Housing Element.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important plan.

Sincerely,



Vicki Allen, Vice President, Communications  
Leadership Team, LWVSB



Dianne Black, Vice President  
Leadership Team, LWVSB