



**AGENDA NO: C-1**

**MEETING DATE: October 15, 2024**

**AGENDA CORRESPONDENCE  
RECEIVED BY THE PLANNING  
COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC REVIEW  
PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

October 14, 2024

Chair Roschen and Morro Bay Planning Commissioners,

Your agenda includes a review of current and pending housing laws intended to address the acute need for additional housing resources and facilitate the ability of communities to respond rapidly and efficiently to potential residential projects. Staff's overview of these laws is timely and hopefully beneficial.

As you know, the City of Morro Bay, SLO County, and most places in California and the rest of the country have identified addressing housing deficiencies and costs as a top priority. Business owners in Morro Bay agree with the pressing need for rebuilding our community with affordable options for our workforce, young families, and young entrepreneurs as well as our aging population. This is about attracting the kind of people who will populate our shrinking schools, support and work in local businesses and service industries, and bring new energy and vibrancy to our community, as well as creating ways for our mature population to "age in place" in their home town.

The Morro Bay Chamber's legislative platform includes the following recommendations in it's housing element:

- 1) Morro Bay needs to have clearly defined residential development criteria with minimal subjectivity to allow for consistent interpretation and expedited processes;
- 2) The City should look at all of the opportunity sites that are in the Land Use Element and it should explore other areas that can be considered for future growth;
- 3) Inclusionary Housing Ordinance: The Chamber recommends the City go "all out" of the IHO approach;
- 4) By-Right Housing. Where there are purely subjective design issues, an architectural review is possible, but it is not required nor desired for every project. Cities and Counties in California hire professional planners to apply codes and policies. We should let them;

5) Improve permit processing.

6) Housing Production Goals and Inventory. The City needs 750 added dwelling units over the next 8 years in order to meet its economic, social, environmental, and RNHA goals. The City should map out adequate sites for those units and a strategy to achieve them. There needs to be an allowance for vacant seasonal second homes, for VRs, and for vacancies;

7) The City should master-plan the Morro Elementary school site to expedite its development for housing.

Much of the new and pending legislation allows for ministerial review and approval of projects, which goes a long way towards speeding up the permitting process. We have especially seen this in the development of ADU's and JADU's. However, these units will not be sufficient to produce the numbers kinds of housing projects that are necessary and required.

I hope as you look at this list of laws you also look for opportunities to move the housing needle in Morro Bay. How do you get to the "yes" when developers want to try something new and different in town? How do we incentivize apartment buildings, smaller and less expensive units, higher density with more open space per lot? How can we use these laws strategically, without sacrificing what we consider character? (And remember, character in old Morro Bay was small beach houses and artist studios before the advent of sprawling larger homes crawling up the hillsides. Raise your hand if you raised your kids in a two bedroom one bath house under 1000 square feet!)

I am especially interested in your exploration of AB 2011 and how it might apply to 100% affordable residential and mixed use development in commercial corridors: I'm especially thinking about Morro Bay Blvd and Main Street, Quintana, and North Main.

On another note, I am very pleased to see the Tracking Spreadsheets on the City website. At a cursory glance, there are clearly a number of ADU's in process, and also quite a few large homes (over 2300 sq ft, and one at almost 7400sq ft), as well as the 16 unit project on Atascadero Road with a mix of studios, one and two bedroom apartments including a variety of income levels. Kudos for staff to getting these projects underway! As

Commissioners, ask yourselves how can you help? How can we get the housing we need in town? How do we make it pencil out for developers to build smaller and more affordable units?

The tracking sheets also list commercial projects in the pipeline. How can the Commission help move the needle on these items to get these underused and stagnant areas moving forward in a timely and less costly way not--only for the developers, but to help add much needed money to Harbor and City coffers?

It's excellent to see fresh energy in the Community Development and Planning Departments. Many thanks to Mr. Singewald, Ms. Fowler and Ms. Toner for the work they are doing. We have some big projects in this community, and I recognize the challenges and respect your efforts!

Good luck with your meeting, and all the best,

Susan Stewart  
Business Owner, Morro Bay