

HOUSING POLICY

Committee for Green Foothills Policy on Housing

- Adopted by the board on May 17, 2006

Preamble: The principles of good land use planning, which are implemented through General Plans and Zoning Regulations, include:

- (1) Directing new growth to existing urban centers with adequate infrastructure to accommodate it,***
- (2) Promoting a balance between jobs and housing,***
- (3) Building new housing near public transportation corridors, and making efficient use of land,***
- (4) Minimizing impacts on natural systems,***
- (5) Preserving watersheds, wildlife habitats, and agricultural, recreation, forests, and open space lands,***
- (6) Maintaining a permanent boundary between urban and rural land uses.***

To this end, Committee for Green Foothills supports the following actions:

*** Build necessary new housing, including affordable housing*, near downtown.** Our communities should provide economic and social diversity in housing opportunities. We should promote affordable, attractive, livable housing in downtown areas and in communities along transportation corridors, through appropriate policies and regulations in General Plans, Specific Plans, and Zoning Regulations. New housing should be compatible with existing community character and identity. Preventing sprawl development through establishing permanent urban boundaries will help revitalize our downtowns and locate people where they can access nearby neighborhood services, enjoy attractive public spaces, and use convenient, efficient, public transportation.

*** Add new housing when adding jobs.** A root cause of sky-high housing prices is the imbalance between jobs and housing. In some communities, such as Pacifica, Half Moon Bay, and San Jose, there are more housing units than there are jobs, but in most of the Peninsula and South Bay, the opposite is true. As the growth of jobs outpaces available housing, housing prices rise, and workers are forced to live farther and farther away, clogging up the region's freeways, impacting air quality, consuming energy, and taking precious time away from families. Requiring the creation of new housing at the same time new jobs are created would be a major step towards reversing this trend. Redressing existing imbalance between jobs and housing should be a priority.

*** Encourage good planning and land use decisions through economic incentives.** The fiscal inequities that have become more extreme since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 need to be addressed by the State

Legislature. With little incentive to make balanced decisions regarding land uses, cities are primarily driven by fiscal concerns. Cities vie for tax-lucrative land uses such as hotels and shopping centers, ignoring the fiscal and environmental impacts upon their neighbors. This is a major challenge, and requires a state-wide legislative solution.

CGF's role in protecting our future. Committee for Green Foothills has been a staunch advocate for preserving our natural open space heritage. We will continue our leadership role focused on the "green" side of the green line between urban and rural areas, while continuing to advocate for policies that promote balanced land use planning in urban areas. As a matter of current practice, CGF does not take positions on specific development projects unless they would adversely affect the natural environment or are inconsistent with adopted General Plans and Zoning Regulations. We will continue our advocacy at the policy level for sustainable, liveable communities, which include affordable housing for diverse populations, efficient and convenient transportation systems, and a balance between jobs and housing.

* Affordable Housing is generally defined as housing for persons meeting the income criteria of Very Low Income (below 60% of the median), Low Income (between 60% and 80% of the median) and Moderate Income (between 80% and 120% of the median) income level in each County. These criteria are revised periodically based on HUD guidelines.