

From: [Kate Murray](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Surplus Parking for Housing
Date: Monday, December 5, 2022 2:14:20 PM
Attachments: [Santa Rosa City Council Surplus Parking Housing.pdf](#)

Hello,

Please share our attached letter with the City Council outlining our position for using surplus parking as housing. Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Kate Murray

Kate Murray

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President & CEO

KATE MURRAY
CAO

December 5, 2022

Santa Rosa City Council
Via Email

RE: Item 14.2 - Declaration of Four City Owned Parcels in the Downtown as Non-Exempt Surplus Land

Dear Mayor and City Councilmembers:

North Bay Leadership Council is an employer-led public policy advocacy organization committed to providing leadership in ways to make the North Bay sustainable, prosperous and innovative. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to ensure economic health by building more housing, promoting better education, and creating jobs to make our region a better place to live and work. Collectively, our members have over 25,000 employees.

In reference to Item 14.2 - Declaration of Four City Owned Parcels in the Downtown as Non-Exempt Surplus Land, NBLC understands there is real concern from local businesses about losing parking near their stores. In addition to seeing little evidence that pedestrian and car-friendly streets reduce business traffic, we think Downtown Santa Rosa can better compete with more car-heavy areas by offering an experience that's free from the hassle of parking. If these spots are absolutely necessary, can the city ensure that no additional parking is allowed and that the existing 75 spaces will not interfere with development in the airspace above a ground-level or below-ground parking lot?

North Bay Leadership Council agrees with Generation Housing and strongly supports requiring no additional parking for new affordable housing projects on these sites. This is in accord with the findings of the Walker Memo that the City's Parking System is adequate to absorb public parking needs from all three sites. It also supports the long-term goal to maximize the potential for housing by limiting the cost-prohibitive requirement that new housing must come with new parking.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Murray
President & CEO

From: [mark](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on item 14.2 DECLARATION OF CITY OWNED PARCELS
Date: Monday, December 5, 2022 6:08:27 PM

For the past 50 years the city of Santa Rosa has pursued a policy of making it easier to drive an automobile and park downtown. It has now reached the point of absurdity, where even on the busiest days **less than half the parking spots in downtown are used** and the parking program runs at a direct loss. Despite the millions of dollars of subsidies and redevelopment funds spent making downtown more auto-centric, business has been anemic for decades. Just take a walk down the downtown segment of Mendocino, you will find an inordinate number of empty storefronts and lack of people on the street.

It is time to abandon the failed policy of putting *cars before people*. So I am asking you to **designate Garage 5, Lot 11, and the Whitehouse Site as non-exempt surplus land.**

There are four big benefits to doing this:

1. **The surplus land can be redeveloped for housing**, providing a *built in* customer base helping downtown businesses thrive. Those new residents will find patronizing downtown business to be immensely convenient, and this will generate much more sales.
2. The added housing will provide much needed **relief to the housing crisis**, mitigating a lot of human misery and helping the city meet its *Regional Housing Needs Assessment* target.
3. It is the **smartest move the city can make in regards to meeting its climate goals**. Since downtown residents would live in a walkable area rich in public transit options, they are no longer forced into car ownership. This has a huge payoff, a residence in a non-car dependent city produces *a third of the climate killing CO2* compared to one in suburbia. If you are serious about meeting the CO2 emission targets, you have to build *lots* of downtown housing that does not require cars.
4. **More revenue for the city**. Converting parking lots into housing means the city will have a new revenue stream since they can now earn property tax and sales tax (assuming mixed use development) on that land.

Thank you for your time

Mark Franaszek