

**From:** [Cadance H. Allinson](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Council Goal Setting, February 19  
**Date:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 4:24:53 PM

---

Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Downtown Action Organization, thank you for all you've done to ensure Downtown remains a priority for the City over the past few years. We have seen steady improvements - with more on the horizon - as a result of your attention and dedication to the heart of Santa Rosa.

We are well aware of the challenges and budget constraints the City is facing and appreciate your hard work to maintain critical services for all citizens and areas of the City. We hope as you look at the future you see the value in maintaining a focus on the Downtown area as the potential for economic development and growth continues to become realized.

The Downtown Action Organization remains your active partner in improving and enhancing the Downtown area to the benefit of the whole community, and we hope you will include Downtown on your council goals again this year.

Thank you,  
Cadance

**CADANCE HINKLE ALLINSON** | Santa Rosa Downtown District, Executive Director  
50 Old Courthouse Square, Suite 110, Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
P 707-636-2845 | F 707-545-6914  
**[DOWNTOWNSANTAROSA.ORG](http://DOWNTOWNSANTAROSA.ORG)**

**From:** [Omar Lopez](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Item 3.1: City Council Priority Setting  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:55:19 AM  
**Attachments:** [2025\\_0219\\_SR\\_CC\\_Letter\\_of\\_Advocacy.pdf](#)

---

Dear Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez, Councilmembers, and Staff,

Please find attached a letter from Generation Housing regarding Item 3.1: City Council Priority Setting Workshop on the 8/19 City Council Agenda.

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Omar Lopez | Senior Program Associate  
He/Him/His/El

**Generation Housing**

(707)267-3928 | 427 Mendocino Ave, Suite 100 | Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**From:** [Omar Lopez](#)  
**To:** [City Council Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Item 3.1: City Council Priority Setting  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025 9:57:05 AM

---

Correction 2/19 Agenda - apologies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Omar Lopez | Senior Program Associate  
He/Him/His/El  
**Generation Housing**

(707)267-3928 | 427 Mendocino Ave, Suite 100 | Santa Rosa, CA 95401

On Tue, Feb 18, 2025 at 9:55 AM Omar Lopez <[omar@generationhousing.org](mailto:omar@generationhousing.org)> wrote:

Dear Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez, Councilmembers, and Staff,

Please find attached a letter from Generation Housing regarding Item 3.1: City Council Priority Setting Workshop on the 8/19 City Council Agenda.

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Omar Lopez | Senior Program Associate  
He/Him/His/El  
**Generation Housing**

(707)267-3928 | 427 Mendocino Ave, Suite 100 | Santa Rosa, CA 95401



427 Mendocino Ave, Suite 100  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 900-4364  
info@generationhousing.org

February 18, 2025

Santa Rosa City Council  
100 Santa Rosa Ave,  
Santa Rosa, CA

**Re: Item 3.1: City Council Goal Setting Workshop**

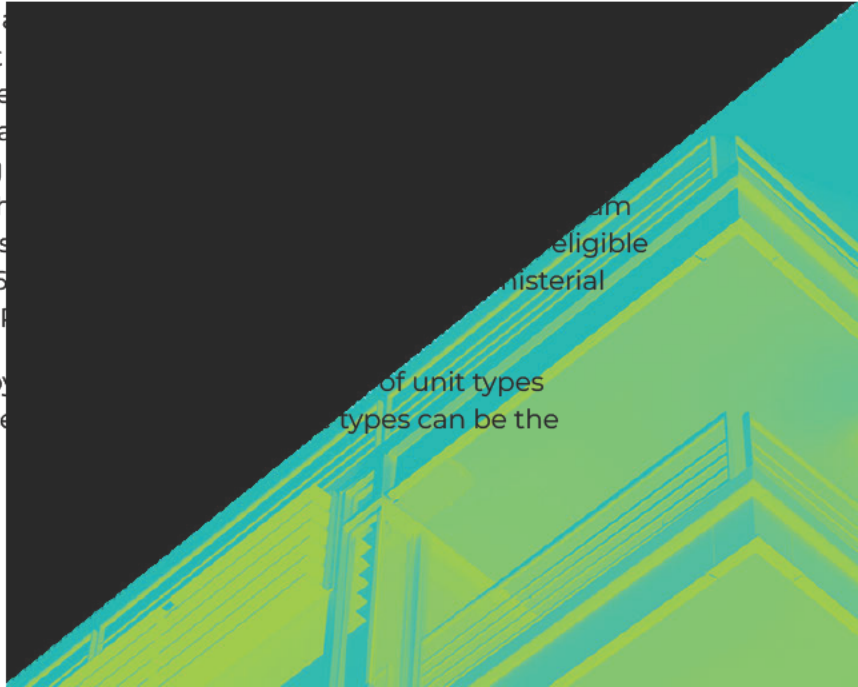
Dear Mayor Stapp, Vice Mayor Alvarez, Councilmembers, and City Staff,

Generation Housing is excited to continue our strong partnership with Santa Rosa City Council and Planning staff. The Council's 2024 mandate to find financial solutions to its affordable housing deficit through impact fee reform, along with the Planning Department's extensive review of reform models, was a significant step toward clearing a larger share of the city's affordable pipeline projects, setting the bar for the rest of the county. Because there is no silver bullet for the complicated and financially challenging endeavor of developing new housing, Generation Housing hopes to continue its partnership with the City on two additional policy innovations that we believe will help ensure Santa Rosa's early policy investments yield practical results.

These companion reforms – a targeted By-Right Approval process to increase the certainty that prioritized developments are completed, and a Parking Minimum elimination program to remove burdensome requirements from new development – are compatible with the city's 6th Cycle Housing Element programs as well as its Prohousing Designation plan. They will ensure that the financial incentives already underway are put towards high-certainty projects. We believe they will have the added benefits of curbing lengthy review processes that can add months to a project's entitlement time while also reducing staff time spent on project reviews, contributing a budget neutral, if not budget positive, solution to new housing.

**By-Right Approval:** By-right or ministerial approval programs allow the City to specify particular zoning and building standards, streamline the approval process, and shorten the time spent on review. These programs can target particular zoning types, geographic areas, or housing types that are harder to attract investment. As noted in the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element, these programs ensure entitlement in under 2 months and can work hand in hand with the city's existing programs for ministerial review (Program H-F-6) and the city's authority on small lot consolidation (Program H-F-7).

Sonoma County jurisdictions apply by-right approval to a variety of unit types including plex-style or Missing Middle housing. These unit types can be the





427 Mendocino Ave, Suite 100  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 900-4364  
info@generationhousing.org

hardest to attract and see to completion given complicated financing packages. The City of Santa Rosa has already committed to streamlining and expediting application and review processes through its 2023 Prohousing Designation conferred by the California Housing & Community Development agency. The city can elect to target particular types of housing units. For example, while we have passed the first quarter of the 6th cycle Housing Element, the city has met just under 10% of its moderate income housing needs. We encourage the city to think creatively and strategically about the types of projects it can target with by-right approvals and would be happy to research successful models of by-right application in other cities

**Parking Reforms** - Santa Rosa's 6th Cycle Housing Element (2023-2031) acknowledges parking mandates as a barrier to housing production and commits to reviewing and revising parking regulations through Programs H-38 and H-39, with recommendations expected in 2025. We believe targeted reductions in parking mandates, along with expanded flexibility, would better align with the city's housing and climate goals while making more efficient use of existing infrastructure. As part of this review, the City should explore unbundled parking, shared parking agreements, and the further elimination of parking minimums—proven strategies in other cities that have reduced development costs and optimized parking supply.

While the Downtown Station Area has already eliminated parking minimums, other high-potential areas remain constrained by outdated requirements. Allowing parking to be rented separately from housing can improve affordability for car-free households, while shared parking arrangements between residential, retail, and office developments can reduce the need for excessive surface lots. Coddington Mall and Santa Rosa Marketplace are prime candidates for these reforms, given their access to transit and existing parking capacity, making them ideal locations to pilot expanded parking flexibility.

### **Building the Future Now:**

While we face uncertain times in our country, we can take action to mitigate the impact of decisions outside our control. We can use its local policy power to help residents and businesses by challenging ourselves at Generation Housing to leverage every opportunity at the local level to improve life. Housing is where a solid quality of life starts, and we have the power to define it.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jen Klose".

Jen Klose  
Executive Director, Generation Housing

