

**Santa Clara Valley  
Housing Action Coalition**

***ENDORSEMENT CRITERIA***  
*(Adopted January 1993, reviewed periodically)*

**General Goals**

The Housing Action Coalition will promote housing and mixed-use development when it meets broad community goals and adds value to the community. New housing should:

- 1. Discourage Urban Sprawl**  
There are ample opportunities within urban service areas of our cities to provide for projected housing needs of the county for at least the next 20 years. We can and should protect valuable open space and farmlands by directing development into existing cities. By adhering to development policies which prevent urbanization outside city urban service areas, we can encourage compact, higher density urban development which is more likely to include affordable units and meet other community needs.
- 2. Promote the Use of Public Transit**  
Higher density housing that is planned for and built within walking distance (1/2 mile) of a transit station will directly support transit use.
- 3. Provide for Mixed Uses Within a Neighborhood**  
In order to decrease auto-dependency, a mix of land uses within a neighborhood such as residential with retail; restaurants, child care, schools and other frequently visited services should be in close proximity. Developments should aim to integrate people's activities: work, shopping entertainment, recreation, etc.
- 4. Promote Affordability**  
There is a significant shortage of housing in Santa Clara County. This is particularly true for housing that is affordable to households earning at and below 50 percent, 80 percent and 120 percent of the County's median household income. (For example, recent HUD figures of the county's median household income for a family of four is \$105,500.) Housing which is affordable to working families at a range of income levels is vital to the Valley's future.
- 5. Promote Innovative Community Design**  
Residential and mixed use developments should be designed to maintain, enhance or create livable streets, neighborhoods and public spaces oriented to the pedestrian. A mix of housing types within a neighborhood also provides a healthy mix of residents from varying age groups, income levels and household types.
- 6. Promote Economic Development and Sustainability**  
Provide housing that encourages the location and expansion of business and industries within the region. In recognition of the significant job opportunities created by the home-building industry, development would strive to provide equal employment opportunities along with fair and competitive wage and benefit standards for jobs consistent with area standards and practices in the production of housing.
- 7. Minimize Cost of City Services**  
Housing at higher densities minimizes the per capita costs of city services by allowing for more efficiency.

## **Specific Criteria**

### **1. Location**

The project must be within an existing city urban service area. In order to maximize the compatibility with public transit and minimize auto use, the project should be within a ½ mile from major transit service\*, job center or within one-quarter mile of a town center that will provide a future focus for transit. The project can be within two miles of a rail transit station if provisions are made to provide ongoing shuttle service to the future residents of the development.

\*Major transit service is defined as a rail stop or a bus stop served by six or more buses per hour in the peak period. Major transit service also includes funded, not yet built, fixed rail stations.

### **2. Density**

As a general rule, the project should have an overall average net density of at least 14 homes per acre and the density should meet or exceed the average density of the surrounding residential developments. The HAC places priority on proposals with densities at the higher end of the allowable range.

The Coalition may consider projects with lower densities if the project's density is significantly higher than the surrounding residential area or if warranted by site-specific conditions.

For developments located within a half-mile walk of a rail transit station, the HAC encourages proposals that are at least 20 units per acre and at the higher end of the allowable range.

### **3. Affordability**

The HAC seeks to promote balanced communities that provide housing for households with different needs and income levels. For this reason, the HAC advocates new housing developments of all types including affordable housing, market-rate housing, and mixed-income housing. The HAC strongly encourages developments that increase the supply of affordable housing in Silicon Valley. Developments that receive public financing should include a proportional affordable component.

Affordability shall be defined as follows:

Homeless Housing: Housing affordable to households at or below 35% of Area Median Income, (AMI)

Rental Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 80% of AMI

Ownership Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 120% of AMI

### **4. Design**

The project should stress quality design and construction to help ensure its long-term contribution to the improvement of the neighborhood. The buildings should fit their setting, complementing and enhancing the existing neighborhood. The project should show how it promotes social interaction, pedestrian friendly design, innovative parking and other principles of urban village design. It should address transit use and access and, where appropriate, the potential for mixed use.

### **5. Size**

The project should be at least 50 units, but in exceptional circumstances smaller projects may be considered. Such circumstances could include exemplary design, an unusually high level of affordability, or multiple small compatible projects in the immediate vicinity that have the potential for creating viable neighborhoods.

### **6. Safety**

In order to assure the production of high quality, safely built housing, the Coalition will consider the responsibility of the applicant to the community, as evidenced by the history of compliance with all local, state and federal laws.

## **Background and Goals**

The Housing Action Coalition is composed of a broad range of organizations and interests whose members have as a common goal the provision of affordable, well-constructed and appropriately located housing in Santa Clara County. The lack of relatively affordable and accessible housing continues to be a chronic concern to Santa Clara County residents and employers. It threatens not only the area's overall quality of life, but its economic vitality as well. The lack of affordable housing contributes to continued urban sprawl and the destruction of natural resources, and results in increasing traffic congestion, air pollution and difficulties in attracting and retaining employees.

We must plan for a balanced housing supply that is affordable, appropriate and accessible to all residents. Balance means a sufficient amount of housing at a range of prices that is suitable for a variety of households that is appropriately located near employment centers along transit corridors.

There is a significant imbalance between what current households can afford and the cost of housing. To establish greater affordability, we will need to add a considerable number of more affordable houses, townhouses, condominiums and apartments to existing housing stock. It is crucial that new housing costs reflect household income profiles at lower and moderate levels.

As we strive to resolve our housing affordability problems, we must also seek to achieve other community goals so that we can:

- Support a vibrant economy by enabling employers to attract and retain skilled employees
- Enhance existing and new public transportation systems and thus reduce traffic congestion
- Provide for efficient provision of city services
- Conserve and enhance open space by focusing development within city urban service areas
- Reduce air pollution and energy consumption
- Promote social integration through a diversity of housing types and costs in neighborhoods
- Offer innovative design solutions to meet the needs of diverse households

Pursuing solutions that balance and promote these multiple objectives will help build the broad community support necessary to achieve our housing objectives

The Housing Action Coalition has chosen to focus primarily on moderate to higher density housing because it provides greater opportunity for affordability and transit utilization. Moderate to higher density development proposals also are most in need of support because of neighborhood opposition.

### **How the Endorsement Process Works:**

A request for support should be received at least four weeks before the action for support is needed. We encourage developers to contact the Coalition at the earliest possible date, preferably at the design development stage. This allows the project to be adequately reviewed, and time for the Housing Action Coalition to thoroughly examine the project through its committee process.

The Coalition may consider specific plans, master plans and general plan amendments that would likely result in housing developments that reflect the guidelines in this statement.

### **Request should include at least the following information:**

**Proposed Development:** A map of the proposal (site plan and area map, as well as its geographic location) should be submitted along with the following development details:

- The timeline for development
- The total number of units, with number of bedrooms per unit
- The total acres of the development
- Elevations
- Plans for mixed use
- Location of nearest rail or bus transit station and information on service frequency
- Information on traffic LOS, and mitigation plan, if needed
- List of interested parties, both potential supporters and opponents
- The proposed price of units, the number of units proposed at each price level and the range of incomes necessary to purchase or rent these properties.

**Public Process:** The person(s) or organizations submitting the request should provide a schedule of public hearings and their locations.

**Background Summary:** A brief background summary should be included with the request for support. Please provide the following type of information: Summary of past work in the area and background information on the applicant.

**Endorsement:** Requests should be sent to the following address:

**Housing Action Coalition  
c/o Shiloh Ballard  
224 Airport Parkway, Suite 620  
San Jose, CA 95110**

### **Housing Action Coalition Support**

HAC support may include any or all of the following:

- A letter of support for the project from the Housing Action Coalition that can be publicly circulated at the discretion of the developer.
- Support letters from individual HAC members and organizations can be written for public circulation.
- Active advocacy of the project, including testimony at public hearings by a HAC representative.
- HAC and organizational advocacy of the project, including public hearing testimony by a HAC representative, along with HAC members representing their individual organizations.