

Home for All Community Convening

Connecting Housing and Transportation: Today & In The Future

Questions for the panel

Jan Lindenthal

Are there fair housing concerns with a live/work preference?

The short answer is “yes there are” and they can typically be managed through a combination of approaches:

- The live/work criteria is a *preference* NOT a requirement. This means that those meeting the preference criteria rise to the top of the applicant list, but all eligible households can apply and be on the waitlist, they are just processed once all the applicants who meet the preference are processed.
- Typically, attorneys often advise that a preference that includes both live and/or work is more defensible than just a “live” preference because there is a broader public purpose deemed to be served (reduction in GHG emissions) by preferencing people so they can live closer to where they work. In imposing such a preference, the local jurisdiction must make findings to document this broader public purpose.
- Demographic analysis must be done of the preference group as compared to the broader market area to ensure that no “disparate impact” is created (aka discriminatory impact) by virtue of the preference. What this means is that you must make sure that you are not inadvertently discriminating against a protected class by virtue of implementing the preference. If the demographics of the preference group match those of the market area, then there would be no case of inadvertent discrimination. This is why including both those who live and/or work in the city is important in the preference group as typically the workforce is more diverse than the city’s demographics as a whole.

Goldfarb and Lipman is a law firm that specializes in fair housing and local preference issues. They are an excellent resource if folks have further questions on this topic

Aaron Aknin

The result slide showed 2000 residential units built with 175 affordable. That's only .085%. What is the future goal for percent of new affordable units and was it lower in the past?

In the end, at least 15% (375 units) of all housing built under this phase of the downtown development will be affordable. This is being accomplished because in 2015, the Council bifurcated the 2,500 unit cap to require that at least 375 were affordable. The Council also adopted an ordinance in May requiring that all new buildings be at least 20% affordable.

Is there any data to show how many of those 175 are occupied by local RWC workers?

Most of the 175 units are still in the approved but pre-construction phase, however, we do not have that data for other Redwood City affordable units. The County Housing Department may have that information generally.

Why was sequoia station built with its backside facing downtown and parking lot on El Camino? What was the rationale?

Sequoia Station was approved in the early 1990s prior to the adoption of the DTPP (and prior to current thinking about land use and transportation). The City is currently looking at the design of the Redwood City Transit Center which is adjacent to Sequoia Station and downtown. The goal is to better integrate Sequoia Station into the Transit Center and Downtown Redwood City in the future.

What is being done to protect non-profits and cultural assets from being displaced as new TOD developments are built along transportation corridors?

I am not aware of any non-profits that have been directly displaced as a result of development in Redwood City. However, we do know that it is increasingly difficult for non-profits to afford rent in the Peninsula. Therefore, many of the community benefits associated with developments have been aimed towards non-profits. Regarding cultural resources, about 30 properties have been identified as local historic and/or cultural resources in our Downtown plan and have certain protections because of that.