



# Thrive™ Policy & Advocacy

## Thrive Housing Statement

August 2019

The housing crisis in San Mateo County has a significant impact on the ability of nonprofit organizations to attract and retain employees and, consequently, threatens our ability to serve the communities that rely on us. Nonprofit employees provide many of the services that low-income communities in San Mateo require, yet increasingly these very workers cannot afford to live here themselves. Nonprofits are in an important and unique position to understand the impact of the housing crisis both on our organizations and the communities we support and advocate for the changes our community requires.

Therefore, we strongly recommend the following **Five Point Affordable Housing Guidelines**:

**1. Better define affordability**

- The definition of “affordability” needs to be focused on the need to maintain housing for low and very low-income renters. While higher limits do assist with mid-level housing, they do not reflect the main levels of crisis.
- Local government should use the localized version of the HUD definition for low and very low-income households.
- **Nonprofit employees should be included in the definition of “workforce” for which affordable housing is being considered.**

**2. Suspend the use of in-lieu fees**

- Rather than accepting in-lieu fees, local governments should require developers to build truly affordable low-income rental housing. In-lieu fees are too low and therefore they do not provide adequate funding to build additional, affordable housing units.
- The minimum target set by municipalities should be no less than 20% “affordable,” half of which should be reserved for low and very low-income households.
- Impact fees need to be assessed at levels that will ensure the required infrastructure will support additional housing.

### **3. Support higher density housing projects**

- Grant more flexible higher density bonuses for truly low-income rental housing. This would enable the market to “pencil out” profitable development.
- Suspend height limits near existing high buildings in areas that are away from low-density single-family dwellings.

### **4. Re-zone light industrial and commercial areas**

- Rezone light industrial and commercial areas for multi-family housing to better utilize the limited land available and take advantage of land that is more likely to accommodate higher density than suburban tracts.
- Add residential overlays to commercial zones wherever possible, particularly along transit corridors.

### **5. Make public lands available for affordable housing**

- Prioritize new uses of public lands for affordable housing.
- Set specific targets as to the percentage of public lands that would be converted to housing development.

Thrive, The Alliance of Nonprofits for San Mateo County and its partners signed below are urging all San Mateo county cities, and the County of San Mateo, along with all applicable joint powers and other jurisdictions to adopt our **Five Point Affordable Housing Guidelines**:

- 1. Define Affordability**
- 2. Drop In-Lieu Fees**
- 3. Support Higher Density Projects**
- 4. Rezone Commercial to Accommodate Housing**
- 5. Make Public Lands Available**

**We, the undersigned, believe that by adopting these guidelines we will be better positioned to address the housing crisis impacting our communities, and particularly our dedicated nonprofit workforce.**