



Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San José
and Members of the San José City Council
200 E. Santa Clara Street, San José, CA 95113
via email, sent Aug. 5, 2019

re: August 6th Agenda item 4.1, “Private Development Workforce Standards”

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers,

The District 6 Neighborhood Leaders Group (D6NLG), an association established over a decade ago, is comprised of officers, boardmembers and involved community representatives from the multitude of neighborhood associations across District 6 in San José. After discussion at tonight’s monthly meeting, the members attending unanimously voted to approve the writing of this letter.

We are concerned by Agenda Item 4.1 and its possible impact to the city’s park system. We received a briefing by Jean Dresden of the San José Park Advocates about a June 25th Council discussion on the arcane subject of “private development workforce standards” and “minimum labor standards”. We were told how, during public comment, a series of speakers, out-of-the-blue, spoke against park fees, prompting at least one Councilmember to comment something to the effect that, in a trade between housing and parks, it’s better to sleep in a house than in the park.

We are writing once again to reaffirm our support for parks. This is not an “either-or” choice. Housing is important, yes! -- but parks are critical as well! If high-density housing is built without backyards, patios, or nearby parks, then the residents are basically living in cages, deprived of sunlight, fresh air, exercise, and interpersonal interaction -- they cease to be residents and instead are more like prisoners in solitary confinement.

Yes, parks do cost money. But it is not fair to our current residents to either have their local parks overrun with the residents of the new developments, or else to tax themselves further so that the developers can reap their profits without mitigating the impacts of their enterprises.

Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers, please do not feel that the park fees are limiting the developers. Of course, they will complain about “high fees” -- everyone complains! -- but the park fee is but a fraction of a percent of a project’s total cost. If projects are not moving forward at the present time, it’s likely because of timing and our position late in a growth market: there’ll probably be recession by the time any project started now could be completed -- and giving away tax breaks will not affect that.

We can have housing -- decent housing! -- ***and*** parks! Please, do not give away San José’s future!

Thank you.

James Rincon, Chair, D6NLG

cc: City Clerk; City Manager; PRNS Dir.; SJ Parks Advocates; SJ Parks & Rec Commission