

Mendocino County

MAR 07 2023

Planning & Building Services



March 7, 2023

Dear Mendocino County Planning Commissioners,

I am writing to express our union's strong support for the Bella Vista Subdivision project that is being discussed at your March 9, 2023 meeting. We have followed this development with keen interest because housing is such an important issue for our membership.

SEIU Local 1021, a union of 60,000 members in Northern California, represents about 1,100 public employees in Mendocino County—workers at the County, the superior court, Mendocino College, and the City of Ft. Bragg. A concern that dominates many union meetings and discussions has been the lack of housing here in the county. As we heard more and more stories of employers struggling to attract qualified candidates, even well-paid professionals, because of lack of housing, we knew we had to do something to address this issue. Two years ago, our Local put out a report '**There's Nowhere to Live Here, Addressing Mendocino County's Housing Crisis**'. Here is a link to the report: <https://www.seiu1021mendohousingreport.org/>

Mendocino County like much of the state of California, is experiencing a crisis of housing availability and affordability. The lack of housing is driving up house prices and rents. It is impacting employers who are unable to recruit employees because of the historically low vacancy rates and slow pace of new construction. This is also making it harder for young people who have grown up here to find a place of their own.

Just yesterday I spoke to a County employee who had to give up a higher paying job here in the Ukiah area and return to Fort Bragg because there just wasn't any housing available. Large numbers of public employees have to live in Lake and Sonoma counties because there just isn't anywhere to live in the community where they work.

Most of the housing development that has occurred in the past few years here in the Ukiah area has been designated as 'low income' or agricultural housing. While this housing is certainly needed, what has been missing is workforce housing. This void has had a real and significant impact on our community. The proposed project will bring 171 new homes to our area in a well-designed, multigenerational neighborhood.

We urge the Planning Commission to support this thoughtful and much needed project to bring more middle-class housing to our community.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hickey
Field Representative