

Take Action To Keep 55 Laguna on Track and Affordable!

Please help by:

Sending a short email to each member of the Planning Commission urging him or her to continue supporting the project as approved in 2008. It is anticipated that this will be before the planning commission in early August, if not before.

Sample E-Mail to Planning Commission

Dear San Francisco Planning Commissioner,

I am writing to urge you to keep the development at 55 Laguna St. on track as approved in 2008 when the subject of a fee change comes before the Planning Commission.

The 55 Laguna development as currently approved is critical because it includes urgently needed affordable housing being built by Openhouse that will be welcoming to and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) seniors AND it also includes the required affordable housing for the rest of the development, helping to keep it in character as mixed price housing along with the rest of the neighborhood.

At a time of deep budget cuts, with so little funding available for housing, the developer and Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH) has proposed reducing the on-site affordable housing by having all the affordable housing concentrated in the Openhouse development, as opposed to the plan negotiated in 2008 before approval. Changing the project at this point will benefit the developer at the cost of residents of the City, gay and straight alike, who need the affordable housing that has been approved after years of public dialogue and compromise.

Please do everything you can to keep this critical development moving as approved. We need to move forward in such a way that that all members of our community are served!

Sincerely,

Your Name and Address

Cut and Paste Your Message into an Email to the Commissioners and Please Copy HVNA on the e-mail to the Commission President.

Christina Olague, Commission President: c_olague@yahoo.com with copy to info@hayesvalley-sf.org

Ron Miguel, Vice President: rm@well.com

Michael Antonioni, Commissioner: wordweaver21@aol.com

Gwyneth Borden, Commissioner: plangsf@gmail.com

Kathrin Moore, Commissioner: mooreurban@aol.com

Rodney Fong, Commissioner: rodney@waxmuseum.com

Hisashi Sugaya: hs.commish@yahoo.com

Update and Background:

You'll recall that in 2008 the City approved the development of 330 new multifamily rentals and 110 units of LGBT-friendly senior affordable housing at 55 Laguna St. (the old University of California Extension campus). Openhouse and Mercy Housing California are working together to build the senior affordable units. Wood Partners is the new developer considering managing the multifamily development. The project's overall vision remains intact, reflecting the years of community input, including yours, that was instrumental in building support to develop this site. However, the new developer is proposing a change in the financing plan.

Under their proposal, the Planning Commission must approve a huge change to the finance plan, which would allow Wood Partners to pay a \$17 million fee to the City of San Francisco to fund affordable housing priorities, including the Openhouse senior housing at 55 Laguna. The \$17 million fee would take the place of building the required and approved multifamily units on site that would be affordable to low-income renters. This change in fee is has been marketed as making the Openhouse project possible, seemingly at the expense of others in need. HVNA is supportive of both types of affordable housing in the development. This housing (both the Openhouse project and the on-site affordable units in the multi-family development) are part of the benefits that the community and various individuals worked for in 2008.

Why Do We Need Your Help Now?

Times have changed dramatically since 2008. Federal, State and local funds for affordable housing have all but disappeared. With a significantly smaller budget for affordable housing, San Francisco is being courted by the developer to change the financing for the project so that it can be built without the on site affordable housing, separate from that of Openhouse, that was required as part of the approved development after years of community involvement.

The Planning Commission is being asked to vote to approve payment of the \$17 million fee to support the openhouse part of the development in lieu of on site affordable housing in the rest of the development . They are stating that without the fee, Openhouse can't build the housing that LGBT seniors and their friends so urgently need. The reality is that the City proposed finding in-lieu fees separate from this project before, and need to commit to doing so again to keep this project on track and available to all San Franciscans, not just a segment of our population.

Why is 55 Laguna Good for San Francisco?

The 55 Laguna development replaces a dilapidated site with a vibrant mixed-income community in the heart of Hayes Valley. As approved, the project addresses a chronic shortage of affordable housing in San Francisco; and, with Openhouse as the sponsor, the senior housing will ensure a welcoming home for vulnerable seniors, including those who are LGBT. Having our City officials target affordable housing dollars to the Openhouse component while keeping the affordability of the rest of the development, as agreed to and approved, makes this the best possible development of the site for all.