

Good morning Board of Supervisors,

The City of Fort Bragg is committed to providing affordable housing for all. This goal can only be attained through a transparent process that includes its citizens and City Council. Only after establishing a clear understanding of what is needed and by whom, should the Council move forward with seeking funding to purchase and provide adequate and affordable housing.

Last week, the Homeless Ad Hoc Committee members were approached by county staff to explore the possibility of grant funds related to "Project Homekey," the next phase in the state of California's effort to house the homeless during the pandemic and beyond. At a July 29th meeting, County CEO Carmel Angelo pushed for the City of Fort Bragg to make a decision to identify a hotel or motel property for purchase, using Project Homekey funding through the county's application to the state. The hotel or motel property in or very near Fort Bragg had to be identified prior to by [August 13, 2020](#), when the grant application is due, and must be occupied by December 2020.

Faced with identifying a hotel or motel in town to convert to homeless housing in less than two weeks, we explained the failures associated with a similar project, the Old Coast Hotel (Hospitality Center) only a half-decade ago. We further reminded the county officials how this situation divided our community and continues to do so. In that light, moving forward in haste simply because a large amount of money may be available does not seem to be in the best interest of the community. Making decisions in haste is a practice the current City Council has endeavored to change. Rather, we strive for more professionalism and plans that are well thought out. Surrendering another hotel or motel in Fort Bragg to this project without due consideration would have a direct negative effect on the City's general fund in the form of lost transient occupancy tax (TOT). More than likely a hotel/motel of choice would be conspicuously on Main Street. We are a tourist destination and this could easily affect other lodging establishments. With homeless numbers having continued to decline in the past three years, this project may make Fort Bragg a go-to stop for transient homeless. An opportunity to really evaluate the needs and fit for our community would place the City and County in a position to apply for the second round of Project Homekey funding or future funding offered by the state.

Perhaps the need for alternative housing is what's best for Fort Bragg. For example, low income, family, workforce, affordable housing available for purchase by locals or veteran housing done on a scale that is appropriate to our needs and capacity. The City of Fort Bragg has been working with Danco over the last few years to secure support and funding for an affordable housing project (the Plateau Project). This would create sixty-eight affordable housing units, a manager's unit, and other in common structures at [441 South Street](#). Twenty-three of these structures will provide family/workforce housing; twenty-five units of affordable/low income senior housing; as well as twenty units of permanent supportive housing (PSH). This project will be completed in the next year and half.

It is expensive to live on the Mendocino Coast. Job opportunities are sparse. In the midst of a pandemic our focus should be on economic recovery not doubling down on an increase in homeless population.

City of Fort Bragg Mayor Appointed Homeless Ad Hoc Committee
Vice-Mayor, Bernie Norvell
Councilmember, Jessica Morsell-Haye
City Manager, Tabatha Miller

