

From: [Zac Bowling](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Inclusionary Housing Ordinance Modernization
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 6:20:11 PM

Mayor Ashcraft and Members of the City Council,

East Bay YIMBY strongly supports the proposed amendments to Alameda's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

The proposed update reflects a serious, evidence-based effort by staff, the Planning Board, affordable housing stakeholders, and the development community to modernize a 2004-era ordinance that no longer reflects current market conditions, housing needs, or state policy requirements.

Most importantly, the proposal recognizes a basic reality that housing policy must confront honestly: affordable housing requirements only produce affordable homes if projects remain financially feasible enough to actually get built.

The City's own reports make this clear. Staff notes that when inclusionary requirements become too costly relative to market conditions, projects may no longer be financially feasible, resulting in "fewer or no units being built across all income levels." That is not a theoretical concern. Alameda is currently far behind pace on its RHNA obligations, having issued permits for only 447 residential units in the first 2.5 years of the current Housing Element cycle.

The ordinance amendments appropriately respond to those realities while still preserving strong affordability requirements and long-term affordability protections.

We support the ordinance's effort to:

- Align Alameda's policies with AB 1505 and MTC Transit-Oriented Communities standards.
- Shift rental inclusionary requirements toward low-income and very-low-income households where need is greatest.
- Provide multiple economically equivalent compliance pathways that improve project feasibility and predictability.
- Expand clustered affordable housing partnerships with nonprofit developers and the Alameda Housing Authority.
- Extend affordability covenants from 59 years to 99 years.
- Continue studying expanded in-lieu fee mechanisms that can leverage additional affordable housing subsidy sources.

The staff reports correctly recognize that moderate-income rental units are often functioning as market-rate units in Alameda's current rental market and, in some cases, remain vacant because comparable market-rate units are already available. Updating the ordinance to prioritize deeper affordability levels is therefore both more efficient and more responsive to actual housing need.

We also support the ordinance's flexibility provisions, including clustered development approaches that have already produced successful outcomes in Alameda. Staff correctly notes that these arrangements can often achieve deeper affordability and greater unit production by

leveraging nonprofit financing and public subsidy sources alongside market-rate development.

Importantly, staff further notes that the proposed amendments could immediately facilitate stalled housing projects that are currently unable to move forward under existing conditions. Housing that remains permanently entitled but unbuilt does not help affordability, climate goals, or Alameda residents seeking housing.

We also appreciate staff's acknowledgment that housing policy should evolve with changing economic realities. The City should continue regularly reviewing inclusionary requirements, permitting timelines, fee structures, and procedural barriers to ensure Alameda remains capable of producing both affordable and market-rate housing at the scale required by the Housing Element.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that this ordinance is not eliminating inclusionary housing obligations. Alameda will continue requiring substantial affordable housing contributions from new development. The proposed changes simply recalibrate those obligations toward deeper affordability levels and compliance structures that are more likely to result in actual housing production.

For these reasons, East Bay YIMBY urges the City Council to approve the first reading of the proposed amendments to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Sincerely,

Zac Bowling
East Bay YIMBY