

June 2, 2023

Dear Mayor Arnold and Davis City Council:

On behalf of the Davis Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), I am submitting this letter in support of the Shriners project with an ask the City Council direct staff to begin environmental review on the project immediately.

The Shriners development team introduced their project to the Davis Chamber of Commerce in September of 2022 and the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors subsequently voted to support the project.

The Chamber continues to be grateful to the City of Davis for its focus on local economic growth. The Chamber is keenly aware of the economic devastation we experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also aware of the housing crisis in which we find ourselves and how that relates to the prosperity of the local economy. For example, many of our Chamber members who work in Davis and own businesses in Davis would love to live in Davis as well but continue to see it as economically infeasible.

The question before you tonight is how to proceed with a timeline and recommendations for housing projects on the periphery, including the Shriners project. Shriners continues to do their due diligence and community outreach. They have financially demonstrated that they are a shovel ready project once they get through their environmental review process and hopefully placed on the ballot and succeed in a Measure J campaign. In order to bring a significant amount of housing online that positively mitigates our current housing crisis, we must not delay.

It is crucial that Davis retains businesses that emerge from research being done at UC Davis to solve some of the world's biggest problems. This will further strengthen our city's proud ties to the campus and showcase Davis's strategically beneficial location between the Bay Area and Sacramento. Part of attracting and retaining these businesses is providing housing for the people that fuel them. It is worth noting that Shriners is very close to the DISC economic development site should that site win voter approval in the future.

The Davis Chamber of Commerce sees the Shriners project as a lifeline to Davis in several ways:

- The developers have committed to providing a significant amount of affordable housing (20%), well above current requirements.
- The project strives to provide housing and work opportunities for the intellectually and physically disabled (I/DD) population through strategic partnerships with local agencies.
- The project includes amenities and benefits for the "missing middle" including a goal of providing 10% of its single-family homes at 70% of Davis's median home price.
- The project will provide three desperately needed ball fields for soccer, little league and softball, and adult softball and baseball leagues. It also promises a community center with an indoor basketball court and a coffee shop.
- Because this project is designed to attract the "missing middle" it will help mitigate declining school enrollment in the Davis Joint Unified School District.

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- The project already has a grade-separated crossing, providing safe routes to school. In fact, children living at this site will be able to get to two local elementary schools and one junior high without crossing any major boulevards.
- The project provides an overall density of nine units per acre, which signals its understanding of the need to efficiently use peripheral land annexed for housing and makes Shriners the densest project proposed on the periphery.
- The project will add connectivity to our vast greenbelt system and provide open space and nature preserves for all of Davis to enjoy.
- Given the City's agricultural easement to the Northeast of the project, and the fact that the project site is surrounded by development on two sides, this is a natural site to build a housing project.
- The project will fuel economic prosperity and local business by allowing people to live and work in the same city, while also helping to alleviate commute traffic impacting the I-80 corridor.
- In short, we believe the project proposal is the best use of the property and of great benefit to the City of Davis.

The Chamber strongly supports the project proposed for the Shriners property and recommends immediate action. We also think Davis voters will strongly agree if given the chance.

We appreciate your consideration on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Cory Koehler
Executive Director