

February 8, 2023

City Council Chamber  
Merced Civic Center  
678 W 18<sup>th</sup> St  
Merced, CA 95340

Hello,

I am submitting these comments to the planning commission in response to item E-1.

This subdivision is yet another market-rate, gated community being built in North Merced without any affordable housing included. The subdivision meticulously includes 57 single-family homes, which exempts it from the City of Merced's existing resolution that requires affordable housing be constructed in new developments over 60 units. Since the passage of this resolution in April 2022, the City of Merced has *never* invoked the resolution's requirements because numerous exemptions have resulted in a lack of affordable unit construction and have proven the resolution ineffective. Therefore, the City must pass a more effective policy requiring affordable housing construction in highly resourced areas to affirmatively further fair housing as required under Gov Code 8899.50.

The City of Merced continues to spend staff time on the subsequent permits and applications needed for projects like this one, while the housing, water, wastewater, and transportation needs of incorporated and unincorporated South Merced residents continue to go unaddressed.

The combined effect of insufficient affordability requirements, numerous exemptions, and inequitably spent staff resources have resulted in a lack of affordable housing units for some of Merced's most vulnerable populations. The City should reduce the number of exemptions while increasing the enforcement of the affordable housing resolution. We, therefore, call on the City to require that affordable housing be constructed alongside market-rate housing in new developments and take advantage of the Housing Element to include policies and programs that affirmatively further fair housing.

We urge the planning commission to recommend that the City use the Housing Element as an opportunity to increase density, create a right to counsel for tenants, establish a rent stabilization ordinance, and implement inclusionary zoning requirements

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out at [iserratos@leadershipcounsel.org](mailto:iserratos@leadershipcounsel.org).

Thank you,  
Isaac Serratos