

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eureka Citizens to Circulate Petition to Provide a Better Plan for Affordable Housing

EUREKA, Calif., July 14, 2023 – Two local citizens are spearheading a ballot initiative designed to provide badly needed housing in Eureka. The “Eureka Housing for All and Downtown Vitality” initiative is the focus of A Notice of Intent filed today with the City Clerk’s office. The petition, signed by Mike Munson and Michelle Costantine, seeks to put a measure on the City ballot amending portions of the City’s 2040 General Plan.

One of the key features of the initiative is rezoning the 14-acre site of the former Jacobs Middle School for single and multi-family housing. Located adjacent to bus lines and close to stores and services, this planned development would provide several hundred housing units, bringing badly needed funds to the local schools and fixing the poorly planned efforts by the City to build on several downtown parking lots, which would result in the loss of 640 parking spaces that are critical for downtown businesses, restaurants, and shops.

“This initiative addresses a problem in the City’s General Plan,” Munson said. “Re-zoning the school property and several other properties throughout the city will lift development restraints, paving the way for hundreds of housing units for all income levels in Eureka without impacting downtown vitality.”

The Jacobs site could accommodate almost all the City’s housing needs, including low, medium, and market-rate housing. Located adjacent to an existing bus line and close to stores and services, the development of the Jacobs site would help the City of Eureka to provide urgently needed housing that would reduce reliance on automobiles, increase the use of transit, include state-of-the-art technology to conserve energy and minimize the carbon footprint that new housing ordinarily entails.

In a recent poll conducted by FM3 Research, 57% of the 365 respondents (Eureka registered voters) said they would vote yes if such a measure were on a future Eureka ballot. Eight percent were undecided. The poll also asked how they would vote if the now vacant 14-acre Jacobs Middle School site were proposed for the several hundred units of subsidized affordable housing in place of the parking lot developments. 77% were in favor of the alternative location over the parking lots. Seven percent were undecided. The polling results can be found [here](#).

The ballot measure would allow voters to determine the approach to developing low, very-low-income, medium, and market-rate housing in the City while requiring the City to maintain current levels of public parking on downtown City-owned, off-street parking lots.

According to Munson and Costantine, building housing without parking severely harms the economic vitality of small businesses downtown and ensures parking for businesses and potential residents. This initiative will require any housing built on those lots to retain the existing parking spaces and provide an appropriate amount of parking to accommodate the needs of residents in the new units.

“This is about housing for all – working, middle-income families, along with low and very-low-income households, who are finding no place to rent or buy that they can afford,” said Costantine. “This initiative is a small but important step towards addressing this problem in the City of Eureka.” The initiative can be found [here](#).

The City has 15 days to prepare a title and summary for the ballot measure, followed by a required legal notice published in a local paper. Around August 1, the petition will begin circulating to collect registered voters’ signatures.

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