



San Mateo may be first in state to use AB 1763 for low-income units

By Emily DeRuy, Mercury News, February 16, 2020

“San Mateo may become the first [California] city to use a new state law to increase the number of affordable housing units on a new project east of downtown.”

The project is five stories and 164 units. Developer Mid-Pen Housing had asked for concessions, including an increase in FAR from 3.0 to 3.39, according to a [city staff report](#) on the project from April 2019, prior to enactment of AB 1763. The project still needs final approval from the City.

“Assembly Bill 1763 says that low-income housing projects can be denser and taller, regardless of local guidelines. Projects near major transit hubs can be up to three stories taller.

“The [office of] Assemblyman David Chiu, D-San Francisco, [the bill’s author, said] the project is the first they are aware of to rely on the new law. But it won’t be the last.

“The law, said David Garcia, policy director at UC Berkeley’s Turner Center for Housing Innovation, ‘is going to be impactful for affordable housing projects, particularly in areas where zoning [doesn’t provide] the density needed to make a project pencil out.’

“Without AB 1763, [the City of] San Mateo said in a news release, height and density limits approved by city voters would have limited the number of affordable homes that could be built on the site.”

“The president of the neighborhood association where the project is to be built, [who is also] a member of San Mateans for Responsive Government, urged the council to push back against the larger project. San Mateans for Responsive Government said it supports affordable housing but the new design does not include enough parking, and the city is rushing the process without adequately hearing or considering the needs of the surrounding community.

“In addition to providing the land for the project, San Mateo is set to contribute \$12.5 million toward the \$182 million project, which includes a standalone parking garage for residents and downtown visitors.

“San Mateo Mayor Joe Goethals said in a statement, ‘We have over 2,000 units in the development pipeline and with the housing community that Mid-Pen is building, along with the increase to our below-market-rate program, we’re providing opportunities for every income level.’ ”

[Read the full article here.](#)