



*Legal Aid's mission is to promote social justice and
advance basic human rights for vulnerable people in our community.*

October 2, 2023

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Sent electronically to: cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org

RE: Comment on Agenda Item #8 - Senior Mobilehome Overlay District

To the Honorable Petaluma City Council,

Legal Aid of Sonoma County (LASC) thanks you for your dedicated work and commitment to safeguarding the well-being of elderly residents in mobilehome parks. As you know, LASC represents mobile homeowners and low-income tenants in Petaluma with a variety of issues including eviction, habitability, rent increases and obtaining access to housing/benefits. LASC has been a long-time advocate for the rights and welfare of our senior population, and we encourage you to adopt the proposed Senior Mobilehome Overlay Zone District Ordinance to ensure the long-term housing stability for senior mobilehome park residents.

Allowing mobilehome parks to convert to all-age parks would restrict the housing that is available for seniors. They already have a narrow selection of affordable housing. Our continuously growing senior population has played a pivotal role in shaping our community, and it is our duty to address the challenges faced by residents in mobilehome parks. By protecting their rights and interests we are not only upholding our community's values but also setting an example for other cities in Sonoma County.

Within Petaluma city limits there are five mobilehome parks out of the seven total mobilehome parks that identify as senior parks. The five senior parks include: Leisure Lake, Petaluma Estates, Royal Oaks, Cottages of Petaluma, and Youngstown. Legal Aid is familiar with the fear and instability faced by Youngstown residents after the announced conversion of the park to an all-age park. We are concerned about the possibility of more park owners attempting or threatening to convert senior parks to all-age parks.

Preserving the limited housing options that seniors have and ensuring they have access to communities exclusive to their demographic is essential. We are supportive of the recommendation in the Staff Report and encourage the City Council to adopt the proposed ordinance to establish a Senior Mobilehome Overlay District.

Thank you for your outstanding efforts to improve housing stability for elderly individuals in Petaluma. Please continue to lead our County in enacting essential protections during this precarious housing climate.

Sincerely,

Jace Voice, Housing Policy Research Analyst

Margaret DeMatteo, Housing Policy Attorney