

Taxpayers Against Government Deception

Public Comment Memo

To: City of Fort Bragg

Date: January 9, 2023

RE: Public Hearing and Proposed Resolution Adopting City of Fort Bragg General Plan Maintenance Fee

Taxpayers Against Government Deception (T.A.G.D.) is a newly-formed association of taxpayers and local residents who are concerned about the efforts of local government to impose fees and taxes on people and businesses in a manner that we feel is excessive or unjustified. In these challenging times of economic uncertainty and our local housing crisis, T.A.G.D. is particularly concerned about taxes, service charges, and fees like the City of Fort Bragg's proposed General Plan Maintenance Fee, that will add to the financial burdens of living and conducting business in the City of Fort Bragg and the Mendocino Coast.

The proposed fee is very concerning because it will apply to new and remodeled housing development, which are already expensive and out of reach for many local residents who are being squeezed by a limited local housing supply and inflation. Local rental rates have increased to a level that is excessive for many households and one of the few ways to tackle that issue is the development of new housing units or rehabilitation of existing units that aren't on the current rental market. Unfortunately, the cost of construction is a significant barrier to housing development due to increased building material costs and financing costs associated with relatively high interest rates.

Based on a review of the study that was prepared for this fee, it seems the City of Fort Bragg is trying to justify an amount that is significantly higher than the actual cost to be incurred by the City of Fort Bragg to perform long-range planning, in part by attempting to rely on expense "projections" that have no clear support or justification, including staff and consulting costs that exceed the historic expenses that were actually charged to this funding accrued from past development projects.

Consequently, T.A.G.D. objects to the City of Fort Bragg trying to impose a General Plan Maintenance Fee set at 0.53% of the building permit valuation and encourages the City Council to revise the study and calculate the fee based on a lower percentage that is based on the actual historic expenses that have been charged to this special funding. The rate must also reflect the City's proven track record of securing outside grant funding to pay for the bulk of its long-range planning rather than this fee.