
From: Matthew Solomon [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 24, 2021 6:05 PM
To: Lorrayne Leong <lleong@emeryville.org>
Subject: [External] Comments on Item 12.1 for October 5, 2021 Emeryville City Council Meeting

Hi Lorrayne,

Do you mind passing along the below comments on the Mass Timber item to the city council members and sustainability committee? I unfortunately won't be able to attend the meeting.

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Dear council members,

I am writing to voice my support for item 12.1 which would allow development bonus points to be granted for using mass timber construction techniques. Given that it seems the city attracts forward-thinking developers and the relatively low number of mass timber buildings being considered in the US, this is an incentive that I think will have a catalytic impact on an exciting industry. As staff identified, adopting these techniques can reduce negative climate impacts and improve health outcomes, in addition to creating unique and interesting buildings. I'm not a hugely aesthetic person, but I think this variety would be welcome in a city with pretty eclectic architecture.

One thing I do want to ensure is that it might be worth considering a requirement that developers who gain bonus points in this way must also provide some affordable housing, so that these building types don't develop a perception that they are just for wealthier residents. I believe that this is already the case based on my read of the development bonus point calculation, but just want to be sure!

Finally, and this is something I will bring up with the Sustainability Committee, but I wonder if there is a way to expand this approach more broadly to other types of building materials. In particular, I am thinking about low-carbon sources of concrete, steel, insulation, etc. - this report was very instructive: <https://rmi.org/insight/reducing-embodied-carbon-in-buildings>. (I'm by no means an expert on this and some of these may already be included in the CA building code). Over time these approaches will have to just be required in building codes to reduce carbon emissions and because the costs will be low enough, but this could be a good on-ramp to getting there.

I appreciate your hard work and focus on these issues.

Best,
Matthew Solomon