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Opinion: Eliminating single-family home zoning in San Jose is a bad idea.

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The San Jose General Plan 2040 (GP2040) is the blueprint of how San Jose will grow in the future. One of the ambitious goals of GP2040 is to achieve financial solvency for the city by balancing job growth with housing growth.

For decades, San Jose has done the heavy lifting by building the majority of housing for the entire region, while neighboring cities enjoyed the benefits of this imbalance and offered little in return. This created a significant inequity between San Jose and other cities in terms of tax dollars per resident and produced a reality where San Jose struggles to provide basic city services while neighboring cities are able to provide superior services for their residents.

The current general plan has a smart growth strategy of locating new infill housing adjacent to transit and along major boulevards. San Jose consistently approves thousands of housing units, both market rate and low income, designated for these strategic parcels. The other goal of the balanced equation, job creation, necessitates we reserve commercial and industrial parcels for future development, so San Jose has a sufficient tax base without having to constantly raise taxes every two years (or in the case of 2020, twice in the same year).

While GP2040 allows for higher density development in strategic locations, it also pledges to protect single-family-home neighborhoods. When I served on the GP2040 task force for five years, I advocated for protecting established neighborhoods so higher density housing would be created where it most made sense, namely along densely populated transit corridors. This policy was supported by the former planning director, Joe Horwedel.

The current GP2040 task force has decided to renege on this pledge, however, and voted Aug. 21 to start the process of converting single-family houses into fourplexes "by right," meaning no community

meetings or hearings would be required, and a house could simply be demolished and a fourplex could be constructed in its place. This proposal would be citywide and encompass all San Jose neighborhoods. Taken a step further, allowing a four-unit complex to replace a single-family home could have an even broader impact on neighborhoods, as the same property may also have two ADU's on site, creating six units instead of one.

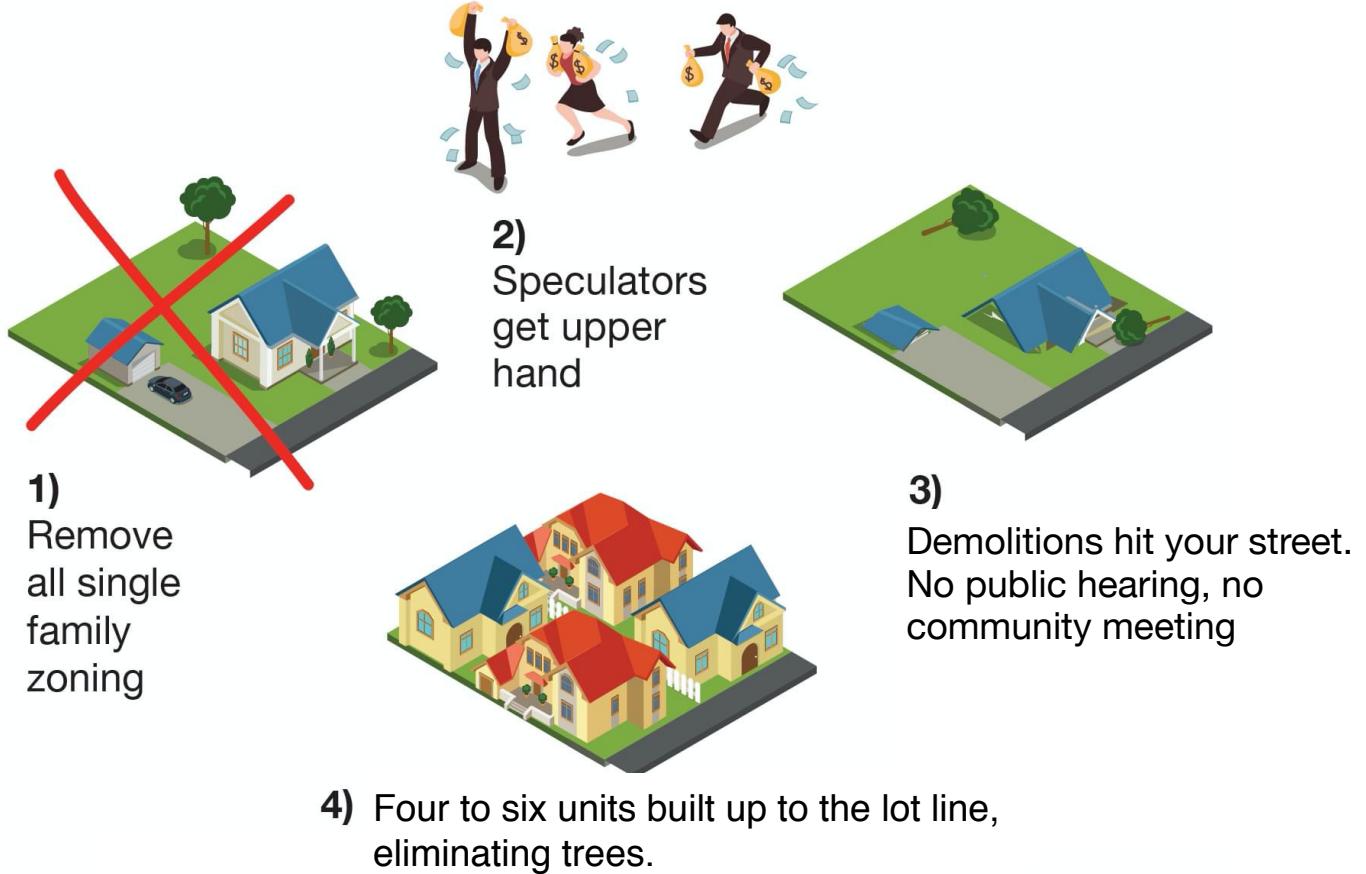
Access to these units will be car dependent, since the bus system will never reach far-flung cul-de-sacs. State law does not allow cities to limit the number of cars per dwelling, thus automobiles associated with these six units would be competing for available street parking. Density where it was not planned creates chaos and conflict. Once implemented, how would we fix it? Answer: The impact would be irreversible.

When a family saved up to buy a single-family home, there was a promise made by the city in the zoning that their block would remain intact, even if San Jose continued to grow around them. These buyers did their due diligence prior to purchase and should not be forced to swallow such a drastic change to their neighborhood. This policy would result in a family being outbid on a house by a profit-motivated buyer who would stand to make significantly more money with four or six units than with a single-family house.

Instead of hurting San Jose homeowners, we should stick with the existing GP2040, which will produce housing units at a lower per-unit cost and not denigrate the unique character of single-family home neighborhoods. If proponents are confident that this is truly beneficial for a majority of city residents, then the issue should appear on a future ballot for a citywide vote.

Pierluigi Oliverio is a former San Jose City Councilman and a current San Jose Planning Commissioner.

Financiers would jam your block by building up to six units per lot with unlimited number of vehicles, ultimately drumming out homeownership.



For more background please review the Mercury News article. The San Jose City Council will vote on this item in Spring 2021 instead of allowing homeowners to vote on such a draconian proposal.

Protect the neighborhood, sign the petition, and share with friends/neighbors in San Jose.

http://www.wgna.net/save_single_family_houses

Sincerely,
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