



Town of Atherton
Office of the Mayor
80 Fair Oaks Lane
Atherton, California 94027
Phone: (650) 752-0500

March 29, 2023

The Honorable Scott Wiener
State Capitol, Ste. 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Wiener:

The Town of Atherton strongly **OPPOSES** SB 4 (Wiener), as amended March 28, 2023. SB 4 authorizes the construction of housing up to 40 units per acre on lands owned by an institution of higher education or a religious institution “by right,” without compliance with environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act, local government zoning, or public hearing requirements.

The Town has worked diligently and extensively over recent months to update our housing element and associated zoning to accommodate our share of the region’s housing needs. We have tackled that effort through a process that involved significant public outreach and discussion all in an effort to engage our community and be thoroughly transparent. SB 4 strips away that transparency.

As part of our Housing Element Update, the Town committed to rezoning Menlo College for housing up to 20 units per acre “by right.” The College is nestled amidst single-family development so that housing commitment was not without extensive negotiation with the surrounding community. SB 4 not only negates that deliberative process but strips away transparency and engagement for development that could be twice as impactful.

SB 4 ignores all the planning we have done, and proposes to bypass local transparency and public discussions to authorize the development of additional projects that are disconnected from analysis of environmental impacts, existing zoning, local infrastructure or service capacity.

This heavy-handed approach by the State Legislature, a Legislature that is disconnected from the front lines, undermines the public’s trust in local government. At a minimum, jurisdictions with adopted housing elements should be exempted from such intrusive legislation.

For these reasons, the Town of Atherton **OPPOSES** SB 4.

Sincerely,

Bill Widmer
Mayor
Town of Atherton

Cc: Assembly Member Marc Berman
Senator Josh Becker