

The Davis We Love

Remember how Davis greeted you with open arms?

Perhaps you came here to start a new job, or to attend U.C. Davis. You stayed because this city, with its small-town charm, was an inviting place to live.

There was a sense of community here. Your neighbors were friendly. Picnic Day was a blast. Kids could bike to school and soccer practice. Housing was affordable. Davis was a great place to call home.

I am a transplant, and proud of it. For me, Davis is still a wonderful place to live. But today, owning a home in Davis is simply out of reach for many people who work here or grew up here.

Some Davis residents say: "Tough luck. It's time to roll up the welcome mat. We are not required to grow. Our internal needs can be met by other cities."

That's not only mean-spirited, it's unrealistic. The demand for housing can't be turned off like a light switch. California's population is on the rise, the university continues to grow, and Davis remains a desirable place to work and live.

So we can't just raise the drawbridge and expect Davis to stay exactly as it is. Change is inevitable. But as Davis changes, it's our responsibility to preserve the Davis we love.

Good Intentions, Failed Attempts

Attempts to preserve the Davis we love haven't always been successful. In the 1980s and 1990s, well-meaning politicians tried to stop residential growth in its tracks.

Their approach led to an unhealthy syndrome. At first, growth would come to a screeching halt. Then, demand would build, and -- under pressure from the market, state law and county policy -- a building boom would follow.

The no-growth diet doesn't work. The result is a binge-and-purge cycle, leaving Davis hungry for stability in the housing market.

That's why voters passed Measure J, a Davis City ordinance that requires a vote of the people to ratify any City Council decision changing the designation of land from agricultural to urban use.

And that's why the City Council passed a 1% growth ceiling. The 1% annual growth cap ensures slow, managed growth to meet our internal housing needs. It prevents wildly fluctuating home prices, stabilizes the planning process, and gives City services a steady, predictable stream of funding.

The Next Step: Smart Planning

Maintaining stability in the housing market is only the first step toward preserving the Davis we love. The next step is smart planning. What is smart planning? Smart planning makes room for kids who grew up here, local employees, UCD professors and staff, teachers, firefighters and police officers who deserve to own a home in the community they serve or live in. It integrates and preserves open space and wildlife habitat. It improves the City's balance sheet. And it's environmentally responsible