



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning



Planning for the Challenges Ahead

November 20, 2007

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Director of Planning

TO: Esther L. Valadez, Chair
Harold V. Helsley, Vice Chair
Leslie G. Bellamy, Commissioner
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FROM: Connie Chung, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
Housing Section

**SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 28, 2007 MEETING – AGENDA ITEM # 5
HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE STATUS REPORT**

At your meeting on November 28, 2007, the Housing Section staff will provide you with a progress report on the Los Angeles County Housing Element Update, including the status of the draft and highlights from the outreach efforts.

BACKGROUND

The State of California requires every local jurisdiction to prepare and regularly update their Housing Element, which is one of the seven mandatory elements of the General Plan. As described in the Housing Element Law (Sections 65580-65589.8 of the California Government Code), the Housing Element Update must address the housing needs of all income levels and accommodate a diversity of housing types and special needs for the planning period July 1, 2008-June 30, 2014.

On June 6, 2007, the staff provided the Commission with an update on the status of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and plans for initiating the Housing Element Update. Since then, the staff has been working diligently in cooperation with the County's Housing Element consultants, Veronica Tam and Associates and EDAW, to work toward completing the Housing Element Update by the statutory deadline of June 30, 2008.

DRAFT SECTIONS

To date, the Housing Element team has produced preliminary drafts or is currently finalizing the following sections:

- **Housing Needs.** This section includes a comprehensive analysis of the demand and supply of housing in the unincorporated areas, including population and employment trends, housing types, age of the housing stock, overcrowding, substandard units, and the housing needs of special needs populations. In comparison to the County as a whole, some of the housing characteristics that are unique to the unincorporated areas include a higher homeownership rate, predominantly single family housing stock and a high rate of overcrowding.

- **Housing Constraints.** This section includes an analysis of governmental constraints to housing, such as restrictions imposed by the County's land use policies and zoning ordinance, as well as non-governmental constraints, such as environmental hazards, inadequate infrastructure, and market factors. The staff is currently working with other County departments to gather information on fees, permitting procedures and other requirements.
- **Review of Past Accomplishments.** This section includes an assessment of the past accomplishments of the Housing Element, including the County's progress toward reaching its RHNA goal of 52,232 for the previous planning period. The consultants have compiled an implementation table that outlines the 61 programs reported previously. The staff is currently working with other County departments to get information on the number of individuals within the unincorporated areas that have benefited from the housing related funding and administrative programs.

The staff is also working with the GIS Section to prepare a technical appendix to reassess the availability of sites for multifamily housing from the previous Housing Element, based on the Department's recent advancements in its capacity to conduct GIS analyses.

- **Adequate Sites Inventory.** This section includes a list of sites in the unincorporated areas to demonstrate the County's ability to accommodate the County's RHNA allocation through its existing land use policies. In addition to sites that have already been approved for residential uses, the consultants are identifying sites that are vacant and have infill potential. The adequate sites inventory of the Housing Element must demonstrate that these sites have access to adequate public services and infrastructure. Due to recent changes in the Housing Element Law, with the passage of SB 2 (Cedillo), the consultant will also include an analysis of the County's ability to accommodate emergency shelters.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

During the months of September, October and November, the Housing Element team solicited input from a variety of stakeholders, including housing professionals, County staff and residents of the unincorporated areas. The Housing Element Law requires all local jurisdictions to make a diligent effort to include stakeholders from all economic segments of the community in the public participation process. The Housing Element team facilitated outreach efforts for the Housing Element Update in the following ways:

- **Community meetings.** The staff facilitated discussions on housing issues with members of the public within the following communities: Willowbrook, the Santa Monica Mountains, Marina del Rey, Florence-Firestone, Altadena and the Antelope Valley. The focus of the meetings was to inform the public of the Housing Element Update, as well as to gather input on existing housing needs and possible solutions to address the region's housing crisis.

The staff promoted the meetings by targeting neighborhood groups, canvassing communities, publishing newspaper notices, and mailing meeting announcements to over 5,000 identified stakeholders and groups. The number of participants ranged from six to 24 participants per meeting; however, the discussions provided a fair snapshot of the diverse housing needs in the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County.

- **Focus group discussions.** The staff participated in the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission's (CDC) joint Consolidated Plan Update and Housing Element Update focus group discussion on identifying and addressing regulatory barriers to affordable housing development. In addition, the staff attended the community meetings for the Consolidated Plan Update to distribute information on the Housing Element Update within the following communities: Valinda, Hacienda Heights, East Rancho Dominguez and Val Verde.

The Housing Element team also made presentations and solicited input from the Department of Public Works' Land Development Advisory Committee, the Association of Rural Town Councils, the Los Angeles County Special Needs Housing Alliance, and the Housing Advisory Committee.

- **Web site and survey.** The staff worked with the GIS Section to develop a web site for posting information and updates on the Housing Element Update. Visitors to the web site can request to be added to the Housing Element Update mailing list, read summaries of the community meetings, and download a housing survey. The staff also distributed the survey at the community meetings, and will distribute them with future mailings.

NEXT STEPS

In the coming weeks, the staff will work with the Housing Element consultant to focus on developing policies and programs based on the results and findings made from the completed draft sections of the Housing Element Update and the input received from the outreach efforts.

The Housing Element team anticipates having a draft of the Housing Element Update available for public review in early 2008, and scheduling the Housing Element Update for public hearing before the Regional Planning Commission as early as March 2008.

Should you have any questions about the Housing Element Update, please contact me or the Housing Section staff at housing@planning.lacounty.gov or (213) 974-6425.

RDH:CC:GS/AR

Attachments:

1. Community meeting announcement
2. Community meeting Power Point presentation
3. Housing survey
4. Community meeting summaries