



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: November 11, 2005 REPORT NO. PC-05-283

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of November 17, 2005

SUBJECT: Workshop on the draft 2005-2010 Housing Element

SUMMARY

THIS IS A WORKSHOP ON THE FOURTH WORKING DRAFT (NOVEMBER 2005) OF THE 2005-2010 SAN DIEGO GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AT THIS TIME.

BACKGROUND

A copy of a fourth working draft of the 2005-2010 General Plan Housing Element has been provided for your review and has been posted on the Planning Department web site. The Housing Element is a part of the General Plan. However, it is subject to state laws that differ from those governing the other General Plan elements. The state mandates that the Housing Element be updated every five or six years and all Housing Elements in a given region of the state be updated on the same schedule. In the San Diego region the previous two Housing Elements were required to cover 1991-1998 and 1999-2004 and the current one to cover 2005-2010. By contrast, the remainder of the General Plan is a 20-25 year document for which each jurisdiction sets its own schedule. In addition, following City Council adoption, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) must approve and certify the Housing Element.

There are numerous state regulations specifying what must be included in the Housing Element. The format and content of the draft document reflect these requirements. There are five major goals that must be covered. Jurisdictions are required to establish policies and quantifiable programs to achieve these five overall goals. The goals are as follows:

- 1) Ensure the provision of sufficient housing for all income groups.
- 2) Maintain the safety and livability of the existing housing stock with an emphasis on preserving the affordable housing stock.
- 3) Minimize government constraints in the development, improvement and maintenance of housing.

- 4) Provide affordable housing opportunities for low-income renters and low-and moderate-income homebuyers.
- 5) Facilitate compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

HCD sets goals for overall housing production in each region of the state. The regional planning agency divides the goals among jurisdictions. For the 7.5 year period from January 1, 2003 to June 30, 2010, the San Diego region's new housing production goal is 107,301. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) assigned the City of San Diego a goal to produce 45,741 of these units (42.6 percent of the regional goal). This corresponds roughly with San Diego's portion of the total regional population.

State law also mandates that a portion of the overall production goal be allocated to moderate-, low-and very low-income households. Moderate-income households are defined as those earning 80-120 percent of area median income, low-income households earn 50-80 percent of area median income and very low-income households earn less than 50 percent of area median-income. SANDAG has assigned the City of San Diego a goal of producing 8,645 moderate-income units, 8,090 low-income units and 10,645 very low-income units during the period from January 1, 2003 to June 30, 2010.

State law does not require that the production goals actually be achieved but rather that adequate land in each jurisdiction be available (zoned and planned for residential development) to meet the goals. There is no requirement that any particular site be developed during the 2005-2010 period, only that an adequate number of housing units could theoretically be developed to meet the goal.

The City is required to prepare an Adequate Sites Inventory of sites that have potential to be developed or redeveloped for residential use. A summary of the inventory is provided at the end of the Housing Element (Table 19). The inventory shows that San Diego has land available for nearly 120,000 additional housing units without need for any zoning or plan changes. This is far above the goal of producing 45,741 units by June 30, 2010. Therefore, the City will not be required to rezone land for residential use prior to 2010.

The Adequate Sites Inventory also shows that the City has adequate sites to meet our low-and very low-income goals up to 2010. Only sites zoned and designated for residential use at 30 units per acre or greater are considered by the state to be suitable for low-and very low-income housing. The inventory shows that there are sites available for approximately 56,400 units on lands zoned at 30 units per acre or greater, far exceeding the goal that 16,735 low-and very low-income units be produced by 2010.

Of the 56,400 potential low and very low-income units, 5610 units were completed, under construction or in the review process during the period July 1, 2003-March 2005.

While the City has the adequate sites required for low and very-low income units for the 2005-2010 housing element cycle, actual production of affordable units has been below the RHNA goals during the past decade and is likely to remain below these goals during the next several years, particularly for very-low income units.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the overall production goals and goals for lower income people, the Housing Element has many recommendations for meeting the housing needs of special needs populations, including students, the elderly, people with disabilities, military and the homeless.

Housing Issues of Particular Interest

There are several topics for which goals, policies and programs are provided in this Housing Element that were not addressed in the previous 1999-2004 Housing Element. Other topics are addressed in more detail in this document. Many of these are issues raised by the Affordable Housing Task Force in their report of June, 2003. These include some of the most controversial housing issues that the City has been facing in the past few years, such as inclusionary housing, universal design/accessible housing, farm worker housing, density bonus, single room occupancy hotel regulations and condominium conversions. The City is currently in the process of preparing revised regulations or taking other specific actions to address these issues. The Planning Commission has provided input recently on most of these issues which is reflected in the draft Housing Element language.

Reduced Federal Involvement in Affordable Housing

Unfortunately, some of the quantifiable goals have actually been reduced from previous housing elements. This is primarily due to the federal government's decreasing role in helping lower income people with housing needs. There have been significant reductions in federal funding for programs such as Section 8 and the HOME program, which have been fundamental parts of the City's affordable housing strategy in the past. Also, some types of housing, such as mobile homes, that provided a source of affordable housing in the past are less feasible to build today in San Diego due to high land costs. Today, affordable housing must be built at greater densities. Therefore, emphasis has been shifted away from mobile homes as a housing solution in this Housing Element.

Housing Element Review Process

HCD provided an initial review of the second draft of the 2005-2010 Housing Element. They requested some additional background and supporting information but have not indicated any significant problems with the policies and programs in the draft. This fourth draft contains most of the additional background information requested by HCD.

A working group with approximately 20 members has also reviewed earlier drafts of the Housing Element. Members of this diverse group include affordable housing advocates, special needs housing advocates, community planning group members, and for profit and non profit housing developers. This draft includes a number of suggestions received from the working group. The Community Planners Committee (CPC) has also received an earlier draft and has had one meeting to discuss the Housing Element. They have not yet provided any specific comments on this document.

The Housing Element is still in working draft form so there is an opportunity to incorporate additional suggestions from stakeholders. An environmental review of the Housing Element is currently underway. The type of environmental document required has not yet been determined. A second CPC discussion is planned after the environmental documentation is complete. Planning Commission and City Council hearings are anticipated in early 2006.

CONCLUSION

The 2005-2010 Housing Element is intended to address the primary housing challenges facing San Diego and at the same time meet all State legal requirements for housing elements. Many of the proposed solutions to the affordable housing crisis are complex and highly controversial. The Housing Element pledges continued work on these solutions during the next five years.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: City of San Diego 4th Draft General Plan [Housing Element](#), November 2005