

**Butte County General Plan 2030**  
**Public Workshop**  
**March 26, 2009**  
**Oroville, CA**  
**Housing Element (Meeting Series #6)**  
**Meeting Summary**

This is a summary of the public workshop held on March 26, 2009 at the Oroville Sports Club in Oroville. The workshop included a presentation by the County's Housing Element consultant, followed by a large group discussion of the policies that should be included in the updated Housing Element. About 17 members of the public attended the workshop. This summary is organized according to the workshop agenda.

1. **Introductions** - Tim Snellings, Director, Development Services, welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the Butte County General Plan 2030.
2. **Housing Element Overview** - Matt Kowta, consultant from Bay Area Economics, made a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of key Housing Element requirements. He explained the progress made to date in implementing the 2004 Butte County Housing Element, described how the County must plan for the production of 3,402 units between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2014 to accommodate the County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and discussed how the County must work to meet the needs of County residents.
3. **Questions and Answers Related to the Housing Element Overview** - Mr. Kowta responded to questions related to the presentation.
4. **Presentation on the Preliminary Housing Needs Assessment Findings** - Mr. Kowta made a PowerPoint presentation on the preliminary findings from the housing needs assessment.

Workshop participants made the following comments in response to the presentation:

- a. Homeless
  - The 2008 Butte County Continuum of Care Point in Time Homeless Count Report identified unsheltered homeless persons in both Butte County and the incorporated cities. Therefore, Butte County is mandated by Senate Bill 2 to address this unmet need.

- b. Jobs Housing Balance
    - The number of jobs in Butte County has grown at a higher rate than the number of housing units.
  - c. Farmworkers
    - There are consistent vacancies at Gridley Farm Labor Housing Center, and it costs about \$535 a month (\$17.83 per day) to live at the facility. Rental assistance is available for those who meet the USDA Rural Development guidelines
5. **Questions and Comments Related to the Housing Needs Assessment Findings-** All of the comments related to the Housing Needs Assessment were asked during the presentation as noted above. No further questions were asked at the end of this segment of the presentation.
6. **Presentation of the Preliminary Housing Element Policy Update Recommendations** – Mr. Kowta explained how changes in State law and the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment led to preliminary recommendations for changes in the Butte County Housing Element Update Policy Document. The Policy Document contains a set of policies, programs and actions for the following categories:
- production of new market rate housing
  - production of new affordable housing
  - preservation and rehabilitation of the existing supply of housing
  - special needs populations
  - equal housing opportunity
  - energy conservation

The most significant policy and action changes include:

- Ensure 2030 Butte County General Plan Land Use Element can accommodate the County's RHNA.
- Require water and sewer providers to provide priority to projects containing affordable units when supply constraints limit new connections, as required by SB 1087.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow homeless shelters as a permitted use in at least one zoning district and/or enter into an agreement with no more than two surrounding jurisdictions to build

additional facilities to meet the unmet demand for shelters, as required by SB 2.

7. **Discussion on Policy Update Recommendations** – Mr. Kowta facilitated a group discussion related to each of the Housing Element goals in the current Housing Element Policy document. Participants provided the following comments:

**a. Production of New Market Rate Housing**

- Inclusionary zoning is useful because it lessens the stigma of affordable housing when it is integrated with market rate housing.
- Access to public transportation and bicycle routes is needed.
- Encourage the production of smaller market-rate units: studios and one-bedroom units.
- Public-private partnerships should be a central theme of the Housing Element. The County should take an active role in establishing these relationships. Paradise Community Village is a good model to follow.
- Change the Building Code to allow for different sewer technologies. See examples of technologies that are allowed in Napa County but not currently permitted in Butte County.
- The County restricts the ability to build housing because of the requirement of more than one access point for larger developments. The County should identify potential sites for housing that have two access points.

**b. Production of New Affordable Housing**

- We do not have enough housing for extremely low- and very low-income households.
- Follow the City of Chico's lead in regards to inclusionary zoning/in lieu fees, and establishing a housing trust fund. Collaborate with Chico or create a complimentary policy. The housing trust fund could start with donations.
- The County needs a program that provides deposit assistance for rental housing.
- The County needs a County Housing Coordinator: This person would seek grant funding, target specific areas in the County for additional affordable housing, and market affordable housing to the community.
- Encourage the production of smaller affordable units: studios and one-bedroom units.

- The County should incentivize affordable housing production.
- Inclusionary housing increases the cost of market rate housing; therefore, the policy is counterproductive and should not be part of the Housing Element Policy document. The County should rely on grants and other programs to produce affordable housing.
- Zoning changes are necessary so that multifamily units can be built in areas that are near services and transit.

**c. Preservation and Rehabilitation of the Existing Supply of Housing**

- If possible, CDBG and HOME monies that the County receives should be spent to help in the rehabilitation of multifamily units. Offer incentives for landlords to make improvements.
- Fund the renovation of two bedroom units into one bedroom units.
- Support the Continuum of Care Council and their 10-year plan to end homelessness.
- Partner with the Butte County Housing Authority.
- Use project-based Section 8 to help feasibility of new affordable projects that can target extremely low-income households.

**d. Special Needs Populations and Equal Housing Opportunity**

- The greater Oroville Homeless Coalition would like the County to take a more proactive role in the development of homeless shelters. The designation of a site in the County that is suitable for a homeless shelter is a key step to the creation of a homeless shelter.
- To meet the requirements of Senate Bill 2, the County should work with the incorporated cities to build a new homeless shelter to try to meet the short-term needs of the homeless. In the long term, the County should change its zoning code to allow for homeless shelters.
- The County should provide a space for a tent city to meet the interim needs of the homeless until a permanent shelter is built.
- Under Proposition 63, the County has received \$2.1 million to assist in the production of housing with supportive services for persons with mental illness.
- There is another special needs population not identified in the Housing Element: the population of young adults ages 16-25 that are leaving the foster care program and need assistance transitioning to living independently in their own households.
- Address the housing needs of those with mental illness.

**e. Energy Conservation**

- Emphasize the use of sustainable building material for housing production, such as straw bales. Changes would be necessary in the Building Code.

**8. Next Steps**

- a. April 16, 2009: Citizens Advisory Committee
- b. May 8, 2009: Planning Commission
- c. June 5, 2009: Board of Supervisors

**Meeting Adjourned**