

Butte County General Plan 2030
Citizens Advisory Committee
April 16, 2009
Butte College, Oroville, CA
Housing Element (Meeting Series #6)
Meeting Summary

This is a summary of the CAC meeting held on April 16, 2009 at Butte College 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 16 CAC members and 10 members of the public attended the workshop. This summary is organized according to the workshop agenda.

1. **Introductions** – Tim Snellings, Director, Development Services opened the meeting and welcomed the group.
2. **Update on Board of Supervisors Actions** – Dan Breedon, Principal Planner, Development Services presented an update on the General Plan 2030 land use map. The Board of Supervisors met on April 14, 2009, and provided final direction on the General Plan land use map. Mr. Breedon described the changes from the previous draft.
3. **Recap of CAC's Prior Input** – Tanya Sundberg, Design, Community & Environment, provided a brief overview of the CAC's prior input on housing issues and policies that was provided through Meeting Series #5, Goals and Policies Development.
4. **Presentation on Housing Element and Public Workshop Input** – Matt Kowta, Bay Area Economics, gave a presentation on Housing Element requirements under State law, implementation of the 2004 Housing Element, findings from the Butte County Housing Needs Assessment, and preliminary recommendations for changes to the Housing Element policies and programs. Mr. Kowta also presented a summary of the input that was provided at the March 26, 2009 Public Workshop on the Housing Element Update.
5. **Q&A** – Matt Kowta fielded questions on the Housing Element presentation.
6. **Public Input** – Members of the public provided the following input on the Housing Element Update:
 - ◆ Inclusionary zoning requirements should be removed. Instead of inclusionary zoning, the County should establish adequate zoning and General Plan land use designations to support affordable housing. Inclusionary housing requirements are problematic because of the following:
 - They increase the cost of housing for everyone, since the market rate units subsidize the affordable units.
 - They require additional County staff to implement.

- If a threshold is set at which inclusionary zoning applies, there will be an artificial limit on development. If inclusionary zoning is used, it should be applied to all projects in order to provide equity.
 - There is the potential for people who buy inclusionary units to reap a windfall by selling later for market rate. Equity appreciation restrictions would be needed so that units can remain affordable.
 - ◆ There is an existing County program to provide housing assistance to people with serious mental illness at risk of homelessness. The County should consider this funding source and potential partnerships to construct affordable housing under this program.
 - ◆ There is a need for one-bedroom and studio units located close to public transportation and services.
7. **Large Group Discussion on Changes to Policies and Programs for 2009 Housing Element Update**
– Matt Kowta facilitated input from the CAC and the general public on updates to the Housing Element policies and programs. Comments were received from the CAC in order of the 2004 Housing Element’s six main Goals, as follows:

Goal 1: Provide for the County’s regional share of new housing for all income groups and future residents as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.

- ◆ Commentors acknowledged that the County is required to zone land to accommodate the County’s Regional Housing Need Allocation for housing that could be affordable to all income levels.
- ◆ Commentors expressed varying views as to whether, beyond providing adequate land for housing production by the private sector, everyone is entitled to a house.

Goal 2: Encourage the provision of affordable housing in the unincorporated area.

- ◆ Commentors reiterated the need to provide the opportunity for housing to all, but not necessarily to guarantee housing for all.
- ◆ There was disagreement regarding whether everyone is entitled to a home.
- ◆ Comments were mixed as to whether or not to include inclusionary housing policies.
 - If inclusionary requirements are established, commentors recommended that the development size threshold for inclusionary housing requirements should be low.
 - There was disagreement as to whether inclusionary zoning does or does not affect the cost of market-rate units.
 - One commentor stated that the costs of affordable housing should fall on government agencies, and not on housing developers.

- ◆ Some of the income levels categorized as “low” include teacher salaries and people who are just starting out in their careers. This is especially true in Butte County due to the low-paying jobs.
- ◆ Butte County has a large baby boomer population. Some were concerned that there will be an excess of housing in the future when their single-family units are no longer needed.
 - Consider multi-use functions for homes, so that home type can be changed.
 - Consider providing more multi-family/high density housing to meet the increasing demand from seniors who want to “move-down” in the future.
- ◆ In general, commentors seemed to agree that the Housing Element should include policies about the need to provide affordable housing and emergency shelters close to services and transit.
- ◆ Policies should address concerns about increased public safety costs associated with low-cost housing.
- ◆ Permit streamlining was suggested as a way to reduce housing costs.
- ◆ There was disagreement on the appropriateness of shared housing and shared facilities. One commentor noted that housing costs are affected by energy supply and fixtures, and that shared/cooperative housing helps to reduce those costs. Some commentors supported shared/cooperative housing where appropriate, such as in the Mixed Use designation. Others suggested that the County should instead seek an increased energy supply.
- ◆ A commentor stated that Oroville needs higher cost and larger housing, including five-or more bedroom housing units and second units.
- ◆ The restriction on second units in agricultural areas should be eliminated.

Goal 3: Preserve and rehabilitate the existing supply of housing.

- ◆ There was discussion about the requirement in Policy H-P3.2 that rental housing that is repaired with government assistance remain affordable to low-income households for a specified period of time. This is a typical requirement, since rehabilitation funding is usually from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money, which must be used to benefit lower-income households. Enforcement of this requirement is typically via contract with the County. The incentive for the landowner is that they often receive below-market rate financing assistance, or sometimes a grant, in exchange for maintaining rents affordable to lower-income households.
- ◆ There was discussion about Policy H-P3.3, which requires the abatement or demolition of substandard housing that is not economically feasible to repair, and whether it is connected to Policy H-P2.5, which allows second units. These two policies are not

necessarily connected, but sometimes illegal second units that cannot be made legal retroactively need to be abated.

- ◆ There was discussion about the County's existing second unit requirements. Temporary second units ("Aunt Minnies") are allowed, but they must be occupied by a member of the family when needed for a temporary situation. There is also an existing second unit policy that allows permanent second units, and units constructed under this policy can be rented but not sold.

Goal 4: Meet the special housing needs of homeless persons, elderly, large families, disabled persons, and farmworkers.

- ◆ There was discussion about how to comply with the requirements of SB-2: whether to allow emergency shelters by right in a zoning district or to pursue partnerships to construct them. Support was expressed for both options, with a consistent recommendation that new shelter facilities and/or zoning districts that allow emergency shelters by right provide access to services and transit. It was also noted that it is difficult to find locations in the unincorporated county that are located close to services and transit.
 - If the County designates a zoning district to allow emergency shelters by right, the commercial, mixed use or higher density residential zoning districts should be considered, since they are located close to existing urbanized areas, public services and transit. Form-based zoning was also suggested, since it allows mixed use development. There was support raised for this option, since there is limited funding available to construct new shelters.
 - There are existing shelters that can be expanded through collaboration with other agencies. In addition, new shelters may be needed in other areas of the county.
 - There was a suggestion to designate a zone to allow emergency shelters by right, but also provide the opportunity for collaboration with other agencies to construct needed facilities in the future (e.g. City of Napa/Napa County collaboration).
- ◆ Homeless shelter products are not a for-sale product. Construction is likely to be done by a public agency rather than a for-profit company.
- ◆ Current shelters are at capacity.

Goal 5: Ensure equal housing opportunity.

- ◆ There were no comments or discussion on this goal.

Goal 6: Promote energy conservation.

◆ The group discussion suggested that in addition to energy conservation, the County should also promote water conservation and ensure water availability for new development (e.g., Energy and Resource Conservation goal, instead of just Energy Conservation goal). In addition, the following individual comments were received:

- New housing should be planned in consideration of water availability.
- The Housing Element should include policies to promote water conservation and address water availability that go above and beyond what is required in the Building Code. These policies should include gray water use provisions.
- The Housing Element should also cross-reference energy and resource conservation policies in other General Plan elements.
- Commentor expressed concern about complexity when adding policies regarding water and energy efficiency.

8. **Next Steps** – Board of Supervisors/Planning Commission Joint Workshop, May 29, 2009

9. **Adjourn** – Tim Snellings adjourned the meeting.