

ATTACHMENT A

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Humboldt County considers public participation fundamental to the planning process. County policies on public participation are embodied in the Humboldt County General Plan - Volume I, Section 1500 "Planning and Coordination" and provide for "Broadened public participation at all levels of the decision-making process; including study, workshops, hearings, and plan revision". This Housing Element was guided by a goal developed from the understanding that the public will be more able to support policies regarding housing when opportunities to participate in the generation and review of the document have been provided.

In the preparation of the 1998 and 2003 Housing Elements, staff solicited information from numerous agencies, organizations, and individuals involved in providing housing. The draft 1998 Housing Element was prepared by County Planning staff with the assistance of a twenty-one (21) member Citizens Advisory Committee on the Housing Element (CACHE) appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Citizens Advisory Committee met twice monthly as a group and held numerous subcommittee meetings open to the public on key housing issues such as finance, special needs groups, low and moderate income housing residential and land use and regulations related to housing. The document generated at that time continues to be the foundation upon which this update is built upon.

The following table describes the chronology of the public participation events organized to solicit input for this document.

Public Participation Events for the 2009 Housing Element Update		
Event	Date	Comments
Board of Supervisors Kick-off Meeting	September 25, 2007	Public hearing to review Housing Element work plan and policy alternatives. Noticed to the public and invitations sent to the public, stakeholders, cities and special districts.
Stakeholder Scoping Meeting (1)	January 15, 2008	Public meetings to discuss Housing Element issues, opportunities and alternatives with stakeholders. Notices to all housing stakeholders, cities and service districts.
Stakeholder Scoping Meeting (2)	February 6, 2008	Second in the series of scoping meetings.
Stakeholder Scoping Meeting (3)	March 11, 2008	Third in the series of scoping meetings.
Board of Supervisors Public Workshop	March 11, 2008	Public workshop to explore inclusionary zoning and other options for addressing very low income housing needs. Noticed to the public and invitations sent to the public, stakeholders, cities and special districts.

Event	Date	Comments
Housing Summit	March 14, 2008	Full-day community meeting at the Red Lion Inn with multiple panel discussions on tools and approaches to create workforce housing. Publicly noticed through brochures, public service announcements, sponsorship and invitations. Policy and programs referred to Housing Element for implementation.
Board of Supervisors Public Meeting	April 1, 2008	Public meeting to discuss plans for a workshop on meeting very low income housing needs with regional approaches.
Board of Supervisor Public Meeting	May 6, 2008	Public meeting to finalize Housing Element workshop plans.
Housing Element Workshop	June 16, 2008	Half-day community meeting at the Wharfinger moderated by the League of Women Voters on approaches to meeting low income housing needs. Publicly noticed through brochures, public service announcements and invitations. Policy and programs referred to Housing Element for implementation.
Board of Supervisor Public Meeting	August 26, 2008	Report on Housing Element Workshop and implications for the Housing Element.
Staff Meetings with Stakeholder Groups	May 22; June 11; July 9, 11, 21, 22, 24 and 31; August 5; September 4, 9, 10, 29, 30; October 14, 23; November 13;	Small group discussions with stakeholder groups representing homeless, low income, real estate, building and tribal communities.

It would be possible, but not practical to publish in this Appendix all the notes from all of the meetings and workshops listed in the above table. The essence of comments from all the Board of Supervisors workshops and public meetings is captured in the below comments from participants at the June 16, 2008 workshop:

“I learned that there is a legal basis to counteract NIMBY forces. Small groups can't have so much power in rural areas. (Example: Local CSD denies water to new development and effectively stops all new housing – affordable or not.)”

“We should build smaller units, smaller lots, less parking, with group campground area with a community building. “

“Redevelopment needs to be on the Agenda again. It's the key to affordable housing and so much more.”

“I think it's great that NCHB supports redevelopment. Yeah!”

“Re-examine redevelopment OR adopt inclusionary zoning with an in lieu fee paid into an affordable housing trust fund. As a Board...be strong and decide.”

“Excellent panels! Even among the experts the issues are unsolved and divisive. Let’s adopt something that helps the most people and has worked elsewhere. Crime is too high and people need housing.”

“I’d like to see us try inclusionary zoning.”

“I enjoyed the civil discussion of different points of view. I support inclusionary zoning ordinance as well as a Redevelopment Zone for the County.”

“Developers really won’t ever do affordable housing unless forced to and encouraged – so require inclusionary zoning and offer flexibility in developing more affordable units. Read Million Dollar Murray to see how creative affordable housing saves the community so much over all. I’d love to talk more about some of my ideas. Thanks for organizing this.”

“I learned more about inclusionary zoning. I saw many opportunities for cooperation amongst the development and regulatory community.”

“This was very informative and greatly helped us since we plan on building affordable housing for the working poor. “

“Informative, positive, diverse, and solution oriented discussion.”

“I learned that there are many incentives for building affordable housing and that inclusionary zoning is not necessarily going to drive up housing prices. Thanks for the workshop.”

“We need to house all segments of the community. Market forces alone will not provide the housing we need. We need to plan now to preserve green space, rural character, while meeting housing needs before it is too late! Plan for the future – Laissez faire creates sprawl.”

“Learn from Arcata and adopt Inclusionary Zoning.”

“Can shelter beds that serve the homeless meet RHNA standards? If so, in the case of the MAC where the County DHHS funds largely pay for the bed use, whose standard does it apply to the County or the City.”

“Why is it that the panelists believe that staff, the planning commission, and the Board does not understand the State Density Bonus Law?”

“The County can offer many incentives for developers of affordable housing projects without these incentives projects don’t get built. Seems like the argument of placing services where infrastructure exists does not fly when the cities have been leading the way while Humboldt County drags it’s feet. Land needs to be rezoned. The Anti-NIMBY Law needs to be respected and enforced.”

“Something that would have no long-term costs, but help in the short term, is to offer deferred permit and building fees to help offset predevelopment fees. “

“Relax existing regulations and fees before mandating housing products.”

“Inclusionary Zoning is problematic for the jurisdictions, because neighborhoods are against it.”

Similarly astute, well informed, meaningful, and relevant public comments were made at each of the three (3) stakeholder meetings held in December, 2007, and February and March, 2008. The following minutes from the March 11, 2008 meeting provide a good sense of what was discussed at these meetings:

“Housing Element Update Meeting Notes
3-11-08
6:00 to 9:00 PM
520 E Street Eureka

Minutes and outstanding questions were reviewed.

Mushrush handed out the draft table of policy considerations from the Board of Supervisors and then took the following notes, including written notes from Realtors.

INPUT POLICY ITEMS

- Mixed use within zone; mixed lot sizes & density within zone based on suitability & topography of lot
- Land use designation is a constraint to development county wide: see *table E-3*
- More Mixed housing type zoning (if you allow a single family unit, allow more mixed use ie. multi family – mixed zoning)
- Allow Subdivision of 2nd Units
- Reduce Minimum Unit Size
- Encourage efficiency Units
- Jobs/housing linkage fee (sq. ft. of development)
- Housing trust fund
- Density Bonus – clearly communicate with developers
- Land Trust Housing
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Education Session for Affordable Housing (Housing Authority)
- Pre-permitted zones for Homeless services
- Reduced parking requirements
- Incentives for infill & proximity to transit corridors
- Increased supply of affordable housing to match wages
- Smaller new home sizes
- Change zoning fro modular units w/ small yards similar to condos [Blue Lake, Big Lagoon]
- Incentives for developers/less regulations
- Mobile home park conversion ordinance
- Require replacement of lost Affordable Housing with like units
- Farm worker housing (accessible housing modifications –part of special needs)
- Need more residential zoned lands – interface lands, substandard timber/agriculture annexation, adjacent to infrastructure
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- More Multi Family; medium to high density zoning
- Don't allow less than zoned density (higher than mid density)
- Concentrate development around urbanized areas – avoid sprawl
- Smaller lots, more lot coverage – narrower roads, etc. (reduce costs) – more density
- 10 units/ acre & near infrastructure – concentrated growth
- Regulate restrictive C&R's for subdivisions (ie. house size) that discourages Affordable Housing

- Extra Elements add regulations – that adds costs to houses
- Permanent Supportive Housing (chronically homeless – studios/ efficiencies)
- Fast Track permitting
- Fee reduction for Affordable Housing
- Residential in Commercial/Industrial Areas
- Disperse AH throughout – mixed income communities
- Reduce lifestyle costs (energy efficiency/transport)
- Very low income needs annual funding – use a Trust Fund to bring in a revenue generator and earmark
- Exceptions to building code fro Motel conversions /rehabilitations
- Smaller Unit size for Single Resident Occupant units
- Cost-cutting incentives tied to price controls
- Recreational Vehicles (RV's) outside RV parks (i.e.: in front of houses)
- Special Needs Populations:
 - ✓ Homeless
 - ✓ Severe mental illness
 - ✓ Developmental disabilities
 - ✓ Veterans Substance abusers
 - ✓ Domestic violence victims
 - ✓ Transitional age youth (foster care)
 - ✓ Seniors
 - ✓ Physical disabilities
- Flexible Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinances – maximizes land use by discussing options
- Relax solar shading requirements
- Reduce setback requirements (front & side)
- Land use designations is sometimes a constraint – could rezone if there is infrastructure potential.
- Relax parking space dimension requirements
- Eliminate covered parking requirements
- Reduce minimum lot width by 20%
- Reduce open space requirement by at least 20%
- Reduce “fire safe” road requirement
- Expand & promote FTHB programs
- Offer subsidized loans which buy down interest rates
- Develop sweat Equity programs
- Encourage Second Units by:
 - ✓ Streamlining the process
 - ✓ Increasing Maximum Lot Coverage
 - ✓ Relax Level Of Service (Public Works Issue)
 - ✓ Allow For Separate Driveway
 - ✓ Allow For One On-Site Parking Space Only
 - ✓ Relax The Entrance Door To Second Unit Requirement
 - ✓ Reduce minimum space requirement between main and detached secondary unit

Board/Planning Commission Workshop:

- Housing Element Attendees suggested that the above items get sorted into the existing tables and be used to rate and rank items in order of importance and that this become the basis for the workshop.

- Housing Element Attendees appreciated the open discussion format and suggested that this be how the next workshop be designed, rather than the formal Board input format.

Outstanding questions:

- Richardson: What are Strategic Growth Bonds & the Compass Project?
- Richardson: How do other jurisdictions test (ground truth) that identified properties are adequate?
- Mushrush: According to those serving the homeless, what is the best location of these sites?
- Richardson: Will send the list of the first 86 parcels to the Julie Williams and Victoria Copeland to divide up parcels and begin to do the initial evaluation."

All the comments of the above listed workshops informed the discussion, goals, policies, standards and implementation measures in the draft Housing Element released in December, 2008.

The County's main effort to include the lower income groups and special populations was to directed at soliciting input from organizations serving the housing needs of those groups, and provide them with notices of workshops and public hearings. These organizations provided a great deal of public comments that shaped the draft documents. For example the community-based organization Housing for All suggested wording of several policies, standards and implementation measures which were inserted into the draft document. This group has several members who directly serve lower income and special needs populations.

The Planning Commission began what has become 6 months of public hearings on the Element in January, 2009. Display ads to publicly notice the Planning Commission meetings were published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Copies of these public hearing and notices were also sent by mail to the Housing Element mailing list (see Appendix E) and to the organizations who participated or are interested in housing issues.

Again, a voluminous body of well-targeted public comments was submitted to the Planning Commission for review. These comments were captured on the County's website (www.planupdate.org). The Planning Commission directed staff to revise the Element before making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. This draft (released in June, 2009) incorporates all the Planning Commission's recommendations.

Upcoming public hearings before the Board of Supervisors to consider the Element will also be noticed in the newspaper, and notices will be sent to all the persons that attended the scoping sessions for the Housing Element.

The Housing Element Web Page (www.planupdate.org) is used to keep interested persons up to date with notices of upcoming meetings where the Housing Element will be discussed, and to provide staff reports and other materials for the meetings.