



CITY OF BUENA PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

July 10, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report - "No County for Old Boomers"

Dear Judge Wieben Stock:

On behalf of the City of Buena Park, I am responding to the recent Grand Jury report "No County for Old Boomers – When Orange County Baby Boomers Retire, Where Will They Live?" The City appreciates this opportunity to address the findings and recommendations made in the Grand Jury report. As preface to our comments, the City acknowledges the effort expended by the Grand Jury in advocating the provision of adequate housing for both current and future senior citizens. It should be emphasized that the City of Buena Park is committed to assisting in the provision of affordable housing for all segments of the community. However, it is apparent that the primary control for housing policy is not individual Housing Elements of each city in the County of Orange. Housing policy is based on the requirements of State housing law. Therefore, the following comments reflect the City's position with regard to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations:

Finding 1. The Housing Elements for the cities and County of Orange do not reflect that the number of affordable senior housing units in Orange County will not accommodate the projected population.

Response: The City disagrees with this finding. The City's adopted Housing Element has been certified by the State as appropriately addressing the State-designated fair share of housing for special needs groups, including the senior population within Buena Park. It should be noted that the City has adopted provisions to facilitate the development of senior housing including increased residential density bonus, reduction in minimum floor area per unit, and reduction in parking requirements.

Finding 2. The Housing Element for the County of Orange and the cities do not focus sufficiently on or analyze the population growth and housing needs of the aging baby boomer generation.

Response: The City disagrees with this finding. Based on State law, the City's adopted Housing Element was required to adequately discuss and analyze population growth and housing needs of special needs groups, including the

senior population as well as the aging baby boomer generation, in order to receive certification by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development. The Housing Element was found to be consistent with applicable State requirements.

Finding 3. Not all Housing Elements are available online for easy access by the public.

Response: The City disagrees with this finding. The presumption is that County households have computer access to the internet where this information can be reviewed. In addition, all cities do not have the resources to make this information available online. Instead, Housing Elements are available at City libraries and City Halls.

Finding 4. Municipalities are not proactive enough in encouraging the development of affordable senior housing.

Response: The City disagrees with this finding. The City has created Zoning Code provisions to facilitate senior housing, including density bonus, reduced floor area requirement, and reduced parking requirement. Further, the City has provided financial incentives to create partnerships to encourage the development of affordable Senior Housing, including a recent 150 unit senior project which the City promoted on a former commercial site.

Recommendation 1. Include the current and projected affordable senior housing inventory by type, location, and cost in the 2008 and future years' development of the Housing Element.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented, since it is not warranted or a requirement of State law. As stated previously, the mandatory Housing Element requirements are established by State law. To ensure continued compliance and certification by the State Housing and Community Development Department, the City is required to fully comply with the requirements set forth in State Government Code. State law requires analysis of the special housing needs of the elderly, as part of the special needs evaluation of residents in our City.

Recommendation 2. Include sufficient data in the Housing Element to acknowledge the imminent growth in the county's aging population. This data is to include the current population and the growth trend of the aging baby boomer generation as well as the current median income and the income trend of the senior population.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented. It is not specifically required by State law. State law requires examination of the housing needs of all economic segments of the Community. However, the City is aware that the population is aging. In accordance with the requirements of State law, the Housing Element update will include specific policies and programs to address this issue.

Recommendation 3. Put all Housing Elements on line on each City's website.

Response: The City intends to implement this recommendation after Housing Element Certification by the State.

Recommendation 4. Confer with developers to establish the needs for affordable senior housing and encourage investment in future projects.

Response: City practice is currently consistent with this recommendation. City staff routinely confers with developers regarding potential affordable housing projects and development opportunities. The City will continue to encourage the development of affordable housing, including senior housing projects, pursuant to the policies and programs of the City's adopted and certified Housing Element.

If you have any further questions regarding the City of Buena Park's commitment to affordable housing, please contact this office.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jim Dow

cc: City Council
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