



BETH KROM, Mayor

www.ci.irvine.ca.us

City of Irvine, One Civic Center Plaza, P.O. Box 19575, Irvine, CA 92623-9575

(949) 724-6233

July 15, 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,

This letter is submitted in response to the recent Grand Jury report "*No County for Old Boomers – When Orange County Baby Boomers Retire, Where Will They Live?*" The City acknowledges the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations made in the report. As requested, please find the City responses to each of the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations below. These responses indicate agreement or disagreement, either wholly or partially with each of 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 relative to the housing needs for low income seniors living in the City of Irvine. The City's Housing Element is required by State law to address housing for special needs groups, including the senior population, within its jurisdiction. The City's current Housing Element identifies six percent of its population as being 65 or older. It also indicates that the majority of senior households were homeowners. Of the City's 6,357 senior residents, 3.4 percent were living below the poverty level. The Housing Element identifies the City's policies and objectives for meeting the housing needs of these lower income senior residents.

Finding 2. The Housing Elements 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.

The City disagrees with this finding. The Housing Element is required by law to discuss and analyze population growth and the housing needs of special needs groups, including the senior population. Therefore it does discuss the housing needs of the aging baby boomer population.

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

The City disagrees with this finding as to the City of Irvine. The City of Irvine's Housing Element is and has been continuously available online since its last adoption in 2000 and is accessible by the public.

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

The City disagrees wholly with this finding. The City has had an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance since 2003, requiring housing developers to make 15 percent of their units affordable for very low, low and moderate income residents. Affordable housing created through this Ordinance is available for special needs groups, including lower income seniors. The City also has a Density Bonus Ordinance, which gives developers incentives to build affordable and senior housing. The City uses its financial resources to encourage the development of affordable senior housing, having recently funded the expansion of Woodbridge Manor affordable senior apartments. The complex now has 154 very-low income units and 11 low-income units specifically for seniors 62 or older.

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 1. The recommendation has not been implemented and requires further analysis. Although the data and analysis requested by the Grand Jury is not currently required under State Housing Element law, the City will comply with State Government Code Section 65583(a)(7), which requires an analysis of any special housing needs for the elderly. The City's Housing Element includes the following prerequisite analysis:

- A quantification of the total number of seniors and senior-headed households, including tenure.

- A quantification and qualitative description of seniors needs, including a report of the potential housing problems, existing resources, and an assessment of unmet needs.
- Identification of potential programs, policies and resources to address the need of seniors.
- The number of seniors living at or below the poverty level.

Implementation of the Grand Jury recommendation would require an added and unbudgeted expense to the Housing Element update and additional time to complete such analysis. In addition, a timeframe is not unidentified by the Grand Jury and the vague nature of the recommendation does not provide adequate guidance in completing such an analysis. Therefore, while the City agrees and supports this Grand Jury recommendation for future Housing Element updates, it respectfully disagrees that this work should be completed for the current element due to the reasons cited above.

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 2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented and requires further analysis. The City will comply with State Government Code Section 65583(a) (7), which requires an analysis of any special housing needs for the elderly and the analysis outlined in Response 1 above. To the extent that the update schedule and staff resources allow, the City will make a concerted effort to provide the requested additional data in the current element.

Recommendation 3. Put all Housing Elements online on each city's website.

Response 3. As previously noted, the recommended action has been implemented. The City's Housing Element is available for viewing and downloading on the City's website.

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

Response 4. The City agrees and supports this recommendation. City staff routinely confers with developers regarding affordable housing development opportunities, and will continue to encourage the development of affordable housing, including senior housing pursuant to the City of Irvine's adopted Housing Element policies, priorities, and objectives.

The Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock
July 14, 2008
Page 4

If you have any questions regarding the City of Irvine's Housing Element update please contact Mark Asturias, Housing Manager at (949) 724-7448 or at masturias@ci.irvine.ca.us.

Sincerely,



BETH KROM
Mayor

cc: Ann Avery Andres, Foreman, Orange County Grand Jury, 700 Civic Center Drive
West, Santa Ana, CA 92701
City Council
Sean Joyce, City Manager
Wally Kreutzen, Assistant City Manager
Sharon Landers, Assistant City Manager
Douglas Williford, Director of Community Development
Mark Asturias, Housing Manager
Steve Holtz, Housing Administrator