



CITY OF ORANGE

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June 25, 2008

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

Subject: No County for Old Boomers—Findings and Recommendations Response

Dear Judge Wieben Stock,

The City of Orange has reviewed the Grand Jury report regarding future affordable housing needs related to the aging baby boomer population. As requested, the following responses are provided to address the findings and recommendations of the report per Penal Code section 933.05 (a) and (b):

Findings

F-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.

The City of Orange disagrees with this finding. The Grand Jury's *No County for Old Boomers* report states that "...it is doubtful that there will be sufficient affordable senior housing options available in Orange County." The City of Orange is not familiar with the level of identified need or availability of senior housing in other cities in the County. While there is certainly a need for restricted affordable senior housing in our City and the County at large, what is not reflected in the Grand Jury report or much of the readily accessible data regarding the aging population is the degree to which the baby boomer population currently owns their own homes, or may be in situations where they are able to sell a large home that previously accommodated a family and downsize to a residential unit more compatible with a senior citizen lifestyle (smaller home, condominium, in-law unit).

Many Orange County cities, including Orange, are planning for new types of living environments through the establishment of mixed-use land use designations. In Orange, the proposed General Plan (completion expected in late-2008/early-2009) establishes new

mixed-use land use districts in the vicinity of major medical centers, goods, services, and transit. This planning has been done, in part, recognizing that the City would like to allow its population to age “in place”, but provide alternative housing types for aging citizens who no longer desire the responsibilities of a single-family home and yard, may want or need to be close to medical care, are no longer able to drive, and want to live a less auto-dependent lifestyle. The proposed mixed-use designations in Orange also accommodate senior housing and assisted living facilities.

Through its General Plan update, the City is also modifying its *Public Facilities and Institutions (PFI)* land use designation to accommodate ancillary housing associated with institutional uses. Because a significant portion of the *PFI* designated land is occupied by hospitals, the City anticipates that housing built in the *PFI* district in the future would likely be in the form of senior housing or assisted living facilities.

F-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 of Orange disagrees, in part, with this finding. The City of Orange 2001 Housing Element and pending 2008 update address senior housing needs to the extent deemed appropriate by the State of California Housing and Community Development Department. The City’s pending Housing Element Update notes in the year 2000, 18.4 percent of Orange residents were over the age of 65 (per U.S. Census). These “elderly households” represented 22.3 percent of the City’s owner-occupied households and 11.7 percent of renter-occupied households. In 2006, estimates indicate that elderly households comprised 26 percent of owner occupied households and 11.8 percent of renter-occupied households.

In recognition of trends that suggest the aging segment of the population is looking for housing options other than detached single-family dwellings, and living in a location that is convenient to goods, services, and transit, the City of Orange intends to establish five new mixed-use land use districts as part of its General Plan Update in areas of the City that provide opportunities for the development of multi-family residential units near medical centers, shopping, transit, and other professional services. Furthermore, as part of the General Plan Update and as noted above, the City is modifying its *PFI* definition to accommodate ancillary housing in association with hospitals and other institutional uses, with the purpose of providing opportunities for senior housing or assisted living facilities in proximity to medical care.

F-3 Not all Housing Element are available online for easy access by the public.

The City of Orange agrees with this finding. While many Orange County jurisdictions do have their Housing Elements available online, not all do.

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

The City of Orange disagrees with this finding. The City works closely with non-profit housing developers to support the development of affordable housing, including housing for seniors. During the planning period for the City's 2001 Housing Element, 82 senior housing units were developed in the City, of which 14 are restricted to low income occupants, and 21 to very low income occupants. The City's Economic Development Department offers a number of programs, identified in the 2001 Housing Element, related to the preservation and development of affordable senior housing including:

- **Single-Family Rehabilitation:** Assist in upgrading the housing stock through assistance to low income property owners for needed home improvements.
- **Conservation of Affordable Units:** Preserve, or if unable to preserve, replace assisted multi-family rental housing at-risk of conversion to market rate. Implement specific actions to protect or replace at-risk units.
- **Mobile Home Park Rental Assistance:** Assist very low income mobile home park residents paying more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs.
- **Affordable Housing Ordinance:** Provide development incentives to facilitate the construction of affordable housing.
- **Affordable Housing Development Assistance:** Provide financial assistance to low income housing developments and provide funding priority for developments serving the needs of lower income large households.
- **Non-Profit Housing Development Corporation:** Expand affordable housing opportunities through support of non-profit housing developers. Attain maximum leverage of local funds with resources available through non-profits.
- **Pursue Affordable Housing Funding Sources:** Continue to pursue State and federal funding sources for affordable housing.

In addition to these programs, the Orange Municipal Code is consistent with the density bonus provisions of the Government Code pertaining to affordable and senior housing.

Recommendations

- R-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.***

The City of Orange intends to comply with the guidelines of the State's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) pertaining to senior housing in its pending 2008 Housing Element Update. We will work with HCD to ensure that the subject is adequately and appropriately addressed.

- R-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.***

The City of Orange intends to comply with HCD guidelines and Regional Housing Needs Assessment to address housing needs and seniors as a "special needs group" in its pending 2008 Housing Element Update. We will work with HCD to ensure that the subject is adequately and appropriately addressed. Toward that end, among the Policy Actions included in the pending 2008 Housing Element Update is one specifically calling for the provision of senior housing opportunities.

- R-3 Put all Housing Elements online on each city's website.***

The City of Orange Housing Element is available online at:

http://www.cityoforange.org/depts/commdev/existing_general_plan/default.asp

A preliminary draft of the City's 2008 Housing Element is also available on the City's website at:

<http://www.cityoforange.org/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=6292>

In the coming months the public review draft of the 2008 Housing Element will be available online, as will the final Housing Element adopted by the City Council.

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

The City of Orange maintains an open dialogue with developers of affordable housing projects, including those specifically geared to senior citizens. The pending 2008 Housing Element Update identifies policy actions and funding sources that address the need for the development of senior housing through density bonuses, funding assistance, flexible development standards, and other incentives.

Judge Wieben Stock

June 25, 2008

Page 5

The City appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report. Should you have further questions about the content of the pending Housing Element update, please contact Jennifer Le, Senior Planner, in the City's Community Development Department at (714) 744-7238 or jle@cityoforange.org.

Sincerely,



Alice Angus, AICP

Community Development Director

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