



Housing for All

San Luis Obispo County Housing Trust Fund

Housing Element Cycle Begins Again

Local jurisdictions in San Luis Obispo County are beginning the fourth cycle of revisions to the Housing Elements of their General Plans. They have until August 31, 2009 to adopt new housing elements or amend their current housing elements to comply with state law.

The primary change that must incorporate into the new housing elements is the housing goals that were adopted in SLOCOG's new Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan (see below). The new RHNA Plan allocates 4,885 housing units throughout the county for the years 2007 through 2015. This is a considerable reduction from the 18,033 units that were allocated for 2001 through 2008.

Due to this low allocation, most jurisdictions should have an easier time adopting a housing element that is acceptable to HCD. However, some communities may have difficulty meeting the state requirement that land for low and very low income housing must be zoned at 20 units per acre or more.

Another area in which some jurisdictions may have difficulty is addressing the need for homeless shelters and transitional housing. All jurisdictions must now have an adequate supply of land zoned for homeless shelters and transitional housing, including at least one zone that allows shelters by right and without conditional use permits.

SLOCOG Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan for 2007-2015

	Very-Low	Low	Moderate	Above Mod	Total
Arroyo Grande	83	58	69	152	362
Atascadero	106	74	88	194	462
Grover Beach	44	31	36	80	192
Morro Bay	41	29	34	75	179
Paso Robles	149	103	123	272	647
Pismo Beach	36	25	30	66	158
San Luis Obispo	366	254	302	668	1589
Unincorporated County	298	207	246	544	1296
Total County	1124	782	928	2052	4885
Percent of Units	23%	16%	19%	42%	

A copy of the RHNA plan can be downloaded from:
http://library.slocog.org/PDFs/Agency_Mtgs_Agendas/SLOCOGBoard/2008/August/A-2%20Regional%20Housing%20Needs%20Plan%20Adoption.pdf

Inclusionary Housing

SLO County Supervisors
Tue, Nov. 4 @ 9:30 AM

See page 2 for details

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Inclusionary Housing Files

SLO County Board of Supervisors to Consider Inclusionary Ordinance Nov. 4

The proposed inclusionary housing ordinance will require that some affordable units be included in most new housing developments. It gives builders various options and incentives for meeting their affordable housing obligation. It also phases in the obligation over four years.

The proposed ordinance includes many of the inclusionary housing policies adopted in 2007 by the Housing Trust Fund and Home Builders Association (see www.sloctf.org/files/JPS.pdf).

The agenda for the meeting, staff reports and proposed ordinance will be available online about a week before the meeting at: http://slocounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2.

Send your letters of support for the inclusionary housing ordinance to:

Board of Supervisors
County Government Center
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

Santa Fe Extends Inclusionary Housing Requirements to Time Share Projects

The Santa Fe, N.M., City Council voted to bring "vacation time share projects" under the city's inclusionary zoning ordinance, which requires that 30 percent of the homes in any new development or rezoned area must be affordable. According to city officials, although vacation time shares are considered commercial properties, they have a residential component because people reside in and have an ownership interest in them.

The ordinance allows developers to opt out of providing affordable units by paying an in-lieu fee to the city's affordable housing fund. Council members were concerned that this "fee-in-lieu" option lead to fewer affordable housing units being built in the city's more affluent northeast and southeast areas. They also amended the ordinance to require higher fees in these areas.

The ordinance, which is called the Santa Fe Homes Program, is online at http://70.168.205.112/santafe_nm/lpext.dll/Infobase3/sfld_a8.htm?fn=content_doc.htm&f=templates#LPTOC11.

CRA Myths and Facts

With so many people, both nationally and locally, blaming the Community Reinvestment Act or CRA for the subprime loan and foreclosure crisis, we thought it was important to reprint the following from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. NCRC's website is www.ncrc.org.

Myth: The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) caused the foreclosure crisis.

Facts: The majority of subprime loans were originated by non-CRA covered financial institutions. In fact, only about 25 percent of sub-prime loans were made by institutions covered by CRA.

CRA was passed in 1977. The explosive growth in subprime lending occurred more than two decades later, nearly doubling from 2001-2006 alone. No major changes to CRA were enacted during this time.

CRA does not mandate banks to make only home loans. Banks are encouraged to examine credit needs and lend appropriately based on these needs (for small business, home, and other types of loans).

CRA penalizes banks for reckless, irresponsible and otherwise predatory lending.

Myth: Rapid growth of subprime loans was a direct response to financial institutions efforts to expand homeownership for low and moderate and minority households.

Facts: Between 1998-2006 over half of subprime mortgage originations were for refinancing.

In that same time, less than 10% of subprime mortgage originations went to first time homebuyers.

Significant gains in homeownership occurred in the 1990s when prime lending was offered to low and moderate income and minority borrowers.

Myth: Federal banking agencies encouraged banks to engage in risky lending practices. In particular, a 1992 Boston Federal Reserve Bank publication, Closing the Credit Gap: A Guide to Equal Opportunity Lending, provided unsound advice to banks.

Facts: Federal Reserve Guidance: Lack of credit history should not be seen as a negative factor for potential homebuyers.

Rationale: Willingness to pay debt promptly can be determined through alternative sources of information including timely rent, utility bills, and other scheduled payments.

Federal Reserve Guidance: Some households with debt ratios above standard criteria may be appropriate for home loans.

Rationale: The guidance discussed relaxing the standard 28/36 ratios. Problematic subprime loans with debt-to-income ratios above 50 percent became prevalent in the last few years, long after publication of this Federal Reserve publication.

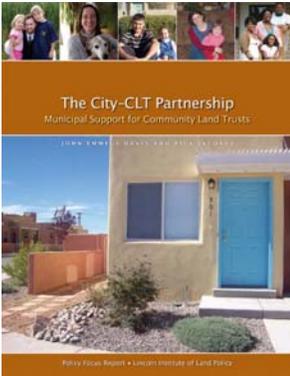
Federal Reserve Guidance: Valid income sources may include social security, second jobs, and other sources.

Rationale: Failing subprime loans are not related to alternative sources of income. Rather, problematic subprime loans are characterized by a lack of income verification, not source of income.

Community Land Trust Corner

The City-CLT Partnership

Initially, Community Land Trusts were grassroots efforts to improve and give residents control of distressed urban and rural communities. Over the years, the approach expanded to include higher cost areas.



More recently, local governments have chosen not only to support existing CLTs, but to also start new ones. Many actively guide their development and sponsor their affordable housing initiatives.

A new Lincoln Institute of Land Policy report documents and describes these city-CLT partnerships. It is available online at:

www.lincolnst.edu/pubs/dl/1395_712_City-CLT-Policy-Report.pdf.

World Habitat Award given to a CLT

The Champlain Housing Trust of Burlington, Vermont received the 2008 World Habitat Award for the northern hemisphere. The group, which was formerly called the Burlington Community Land Trust, was featured in the "Homes and Hands" video (see Summer 2008 edition).

The World Habitat Awards were established in 1985 by the Building and Social Housing Foundation (www.bshf.org) as part of the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The awards recognize, study and share effective models of providing shelter worldwide.

Hear more about the Champlain Housing Trust and their award at Vermont Public Radio at www.vpr.net/news_detail/82351. The Trust's website is www.champlainhousingtrust.org.

Short Notes

Tight Rental Markets

The US Census reported that California had some of the nation's tightest rental markets in 2007. The San Jose Metro area had a rental vacancy rate of only 3.8% in 2007 - the lowest in the nation. The LA Metro area (which includes both Los Angeles and Orange counties) had the third lowest vacancy rate - 4.7%. Baton Rouge, Louisiana had the second lowest 4.4%. The national rental vacancy rate was 9.7%. More information is available online at www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/~annual07/ann07ind.html

Local Vacancy Rates

HUD recently released US Postal Service data on residential addresses identified as being vacant for 90 days or longer as of June 2008 at the Census Tract level. The vacancy rates for census tracts in SLO County ranged from 0.0% to 4.8%. Most were under 1.0%.

The range in each city within the county are listed below. The raw data is available from HUD at:

www.huduser.org/DATASETS/usps.html.

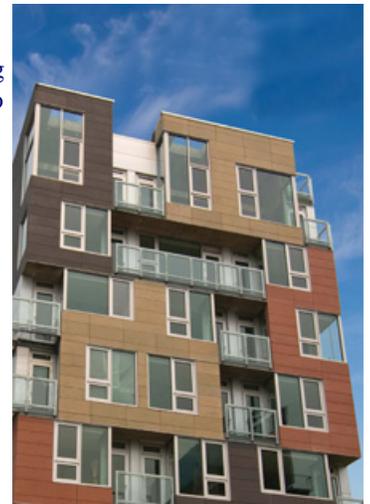
Jurisdiction	Vacancy Rates
Arroyo Grande	0.2% to 0.7%
Atascadero	0.1% to 4.8%
Grover Beach	0.1% to 1.0%
Morro Bay	0.6% to 1.3%
Paso Robles	0.1% to 0.5%
Pismo Beach	0.0% to 2.1%
City of San Luis Obispo	0.0% to 2.0%
San Luis Obispo County	0.0% to 2.6%

'Micro' Condos for sale in San Francisco

A firm has begun marketing "micro" condominium homes to young San Franciscans seeking to buy their first home. Hauser Architects' eight-story Cubix Yerba Buena building in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood is a modernist structure with 98 condo units plus commercial space on the ground floor (see photo below).

Designed as a single-residence occupancy (SRO) project, Cubix offers 250-350 square-foot units for \$279,000 to \$328,000. In the Bay Area, the Cubix provide "middle-income housing without a subsidy."

Dubbed the Mini Cooper of architecture, each unit offers a compact kitchen and full bathroom. A rooftop garden offers panoramic city skyline and bay views. The project offers a common laundry room as well as a professional laundry service. An on-site car sharing program eliminates the need to own and park a car. Learn more at www.cubixsf.com.



Items of Interest...

Publications

Community Reporter is the newsletter of ROC USA, a national coalition that supports resident owned mobile home parks. The first issue can be downloaded at www.rocusa.org/ROC_Newsletter_091508.pdf.

NeighborWorks America has reports and studies on a broad ranged affordable housing and community development topics available to download at www.nw.org/network/pubs/studies/default.asp.

Videos

Mo'Money, Mo'Money, Mo'Money: How Greedy Corporations Destroy the American Dream is a short video on the subprime loan crisis from the California Reinvestment Coalition: <http://calreinvest.org/predatory-lending/momoney-momoney-momoney>.

SLO County Board of Supervisors Oct. 14, 2008 Strategic Growth Workshop and update on SLOCOG's Community 2050 plan is available to view online at http://slocounty.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=555&meta_id=113413.

Websites

Shifting Ground is a public radio series that highlights land-use challenges that are faced by small towns and rural communities across the nation. The series is archived at www.shifting-ground.com where you can listen to and view photos from past stories.

Recipes for Financial Fitness. Habitat for Humanity now offers an online financial education and resources for Habitat home owners and others. Their offering, which covers several helpful topics including controlling finances, credit basics, finding a better-paying job and getting an education, is online at www.habitat.org/hfhu/nefe/index.html.

StableCommunities.org is an online information hub for groups that are working to stabilize their communities in the wake of the foreclosure crisis. View the site at www.stablecommunities.org.

Events

Oct 27-29 — Rural Housing Summit — CCRH, Asilomar, CA — www.calruralhousing.org/programs/rural-housing-summit.

Nov 4 — Hearings on Inclusionary Housing and Mobile Home Park Closures — SLO County Board of Supervisors, SLO — http://slocounty.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2

Dec 3-5 — 2008 Annual Meeting and Conference, National Community Land Trust Network, Boston, MA — http://www.clnetwork.org/doc_library/Boston%20Catalog%20September%2030.pdf

Dec 3-5 — National Rural Housing Conference 2008, Washington, DC — www.ruralhome.org/Conf2008/index.php.

Dec 8-10 — Creating Community 2008 (affordable housing for the mental health and homeless communities), Housing CA, Los Angeles — www.housingca.org/events/creatingcommunity.

April 20-21, 2009 — Annual Policy Conference — National Low Income Housing Coalition, Washington, DC — www.nlihc.org/template/page.cfm?id=134

April 27-29, 2009 — Housing California 2009 — Housing CA, Sacramento — www.housingca.org/events/annualconference

Note: "Housing for All" has active links — when you view this newsletter in Acrobat Reader, referenced documents and websites open when you click on them.



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