



# HOUSING

AUTHORITY OF THE  
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

808 Laguna Street / Santa Barbara  
California / 93101

Tel (805) 965-1071  
Fax (805) 564-7041

August 1, 2007

The Honorable Judge Melville  
Superior Court  
312-M East Cook Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93455

and

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury  
Attention: Foreperson  
1100 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: RESPONSE TO THE 2006-2007 SANTA BARBARA REPORT ENTITLED  
"AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY: MYTH OR REALITY?"**

Dear Judge Melville and Foreperson Mercado,

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB) was pleased to see that the Grand Jury examined affordable housing programs for the County of Santa Barbara. We have reviewed the report and enclose our comments to the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations herewith pursuant to your request and Section 933.05 of the Standard Penal Code for the State of California.

## RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

**Finding 3:** *Funding to subsidize affordable housing is limited and not keeping pace with increased costs.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees with the finding.

**Finding 4:** *Housing Elements utilize zoning capacity and other policies to meet affordable housing requirements. However, construction of actual units is not required. Jurisdictions incur no penalty if no affordable housing units are built.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees with the finding.

**Finding 5:** *Affordable housing programs vary across jurisdictions but are not always matched to local needs.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees partially with the finding. The low and very-low income affordable housing rental programs which include the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, Public Housing and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit programs do not vary across jurisdictions and are reasonably matched to the local needs.

**Finding 6:** *There are varying degrees of public and local government support for affordable housing programs across jurisdictions.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees with the finding. HACSB and the City of Santa Barbara benefit from a high degree of public and government support of affordable housing programs.

**Finding 7:** *Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals have not been met in most jurisdictions; there is a marked shortfall in the low and very low-income categories. Guadalupe is the sole exception.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees with the finding. It is important to note that HACSB and the City of Santa Barbara are committed to meeting the RHNA numbers in the low and very low-income categories. However, due to the high cost of available land and the lack of funding, progress in meeting these numbers is limited.

**Finding 8:** *Santa Barbara County Association of Governments does not monitor or acknowledge jurisdictional successes in meeting affordable housing goals. There is minimal effort to identify steps and patterns leading to success and to share this information with other jurisdictions.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees partially with the finding. For the last several years, local jurisdictions on the South Coast have participated in the Joint City/County Affordable Housing Task Group. This group was formed for the purpose identified in this finding – that is to share information and identify successful affordable housing measures.

**Finding 9:** *Non-profit organizations such as the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara, the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, People's Self-Help Housing and Habit for Humanity play an important role in affordable housing programs.*

**Response:** HACSB agrees with the finding.

## RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** *Since there is more than one way to develop and administer affordable housing programs, jurisdictions should focus on meeting local housing needs rather than relying on one type of program (e.g., owner-occupied and rental vs. rental only).*

**Response:** The recommendation has been implemented. Although HACSB's core mission is to provide affordable rental opportunities to low-income families, seniors and disabled persons, we recognize that a variety of housing types are needed across a spectrum of the incomes. Our agency facilitated land acquisitions for Habitat for Humanity for owner-occupied units and we are currently assisting with the Los Portales homeownership development for the moderate to upper moderate income workforce.

**Recommendation 2:** *At least annually, each jurisdiction should hold informational community meetings to explain all aspects of its affordable housing program.*

**Response:** The recommendation will not be implemented as HACSB already has excellent outreach programs in place as is evident by our waiting list for combined programs of over 5,000 households. HACSB also has a well designed website for public access to the programs available through our agency.

**Recommendation 3:** *Jurisdictions should focus on developing more very low and low-income housing to meet Regional Housing Needs Assessment goals.*

**Response:** The recommendation has been implemented. HACSB's core mission is to provide more affordable housing for very low and low-income housing. Our multi-family development efforts are targeted for this population.

**Recommendation 4:** *Santa Barbara County Association of Governments should organize regular meetings of jurisdictional representatives to share successes and problems in affordable housing programs.*

**Response:** The recommendation will not be pursued by HACSB because HACSB is not a member of SBCAG. However, HACSB supports the recommendation.

**Recommendation 5:** *Santa Barbara County Association of Governments should first collect data on jurisdictional performance and compare it to current Regional Housing Needs Assessments and then use this information in the next round of allocations.*

**Response:** While we concur with this recommendation, we cannot actively pursue its implementation as HACSB is not a member of SBCAG.

**Recommendation 6:** *Jurisdictions should utilize successful non-profits as co-developers and administrators of affordable housing programs.*

**Response:** This recommendation has been implemented. HACSB has successfully assisted and/or partnered with a number of Non-profits to administer affordable housing programs and to develop additional affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report.

Sincerely,

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE  
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis R. Elledge", written over a horizontal line.

DENNIS R. ELLEDGE  
CHAIR

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert G. Pearson", written over a horizontal line.

ROBERT G. PEARSON  
Executive Director/CEO