

September 7, 2007

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

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

Dear Honorable Judge Melville and Members of the Grand Jury:

The City of Lompoc has reviewed the final report entitled "Affordable Housing in Santa Barbara County: Myth or Reality?" prepared by the 2006-2007 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury. The City's responses are provided below.

Finding 3

Funding to subsidize affordable housing is limited and not keeping pace with increased costs.

Response:

The City agrees with this 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:

The City agrees with this finding.

Finding 5

Affordable housing programs vary across jurisdictions but are not always matched to local needs.

Response:

The City agrees that housing programs vary across jurisdictions. The City of Lompoc's inclusionary housing program is tailored to meet local housing needs. The City also uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Redevelopment, and In-Lieu Housing Programs funds to provide gap funding for affordable housing projects which provide housing types to fulfill unmet needs in the City.

Finding 6

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

Response:

The City agrees with this finding.

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:

The City agrees with this finding.

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:

The City partially agrees with this finding, however, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is not charged with monitoring duties. SBCAG staffs the Technical Planning Advisory Committee which meets regularly and includes discussion of affordable housing strategies.

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 Habitat for Humanity play an important role in affordable housing programs.

Response:

The City agrees with this finding.

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 City has implemented this recommendation. The City's inclusionary housing program requires a variety of housing types, as well as both rental and ownership opportunities. The type and distribution of the units is negotiated on a project-by-project basis, which takes current housing needs into consideration. The City also uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Redevelopment, and In-Lieu Housing Programs funds to provide gap funding for affordable housing projects, which provide housing types to fulfill unmet needs in the City.

Recommendation 2

At least annually, each jurisdiction should hold information community meetings to explain all aspects of its affordable housing program.

Response:

The City has implemented this recommendation. A General Plan Annual Progress report is prepared and review yearly by the City Council. Upcoming affordable

housing projects are discussed annually in the CDBG Action Plan and in the Redevelopment Agency budget. Affordable housing projects and/or project components are discussed during Planning Commission review. The City also uses its website to make affordable housing information available to its citizens as well as providing staff support for all programs at City Hall.

Recommendation 3

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

Response:

The City has implemented this recommendation with the programs previously discussed herein, and will continue to seek opportunities to provide affordable housing.

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 City is not responsible for implementing this recommendation, but as previously noted SBCAG staffs the Technical Planning Advisory Committee which meets regularly and includes discussion of affordable housing strategies.

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:

The City is not responsible for implementing this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

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

Response:

The City has implemented this recommendation. Loans and grant have been provided to non-profit organizations such as the Lompoc Housing and Community Development Corporation, Habitat for Humanity, and Santa Barbara Housing Assistance Corporation for use in developing affordable housing projects. The City also distributes Notices of Funds Available at least annually to promote use of available funds by non-profit organizations for affordable housing.

Thank you for your report and for the opportunity to comment upon its findings and recommendations. Please contact Arleen Pelster, AICP, Community Development Director at (805) 875-8274 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gary Keefe
City Administrator

Attachment: Computer Disc