Initial Outreach Summary

April 2008

Introduction

In March and April 2008, the project team met with municipalities in San Mateo County to discuss the Housing Element Update Kit (HEUK). Additionally, the team distributed a questionnaire asking municipalities about their timeline and plans for completing the housing element and the goals and desires for the HEUK. This document summarizes the results from this initial phase of the project.

Benefits

When asked about the primary benefits of the HEUK process, the most common answer was that it would help participants complete their housing elements quickly and efficiently. Other important benefits include:

- Ensuring a fair and consistent review process by HCD
- Sharing best practices
- Providing opportunities to learn about new or challenging topics
- Closer relationships with neighbors / opportunities to partner in the future

Timing

Most municipalities are in the initial stages of updating their housing element. Some have hired a consultant while others are still writing their RFP. A few cities have begun examining available sites, but not most. The timing proposed in the scope is acceptable to the municipalities, but several jurisdictions stressed that it was important to meet all the deadlines.

Several jurisdictions are updating their general plan and hope to align the timing of the housing element with the timing for the general plan. This includes:

- Belmont
- Daly City
- San Carlos
- San Bruno (completing environmental review)
- Redwood City (nearing completion)

Staffing

Some cities are using consultants and some are not. Of those we contacted, eight municipalities are using a consultant, and ten are doing the plan in-house.

The following cities are doing the Housing Element in-house:
- Atherton (using consultant for legal advice)
- Colma (Planning staff is a consultant)
- Daly City
- Foster City
- Menlo Park
- Portola Valley (Planning staff is a consultant)
- San Mateo County
- Woodside

The following cities are using consultants:
- Belmont
- Burlingame
- East Palo Alto
- Millbrae
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Mateo
- South San Francisco
- Redwood City
- Half Moon Bay

Communication

Almost all of the municipalities are comfortable using email and the website as the primary mode of distributing documents. One jurisdiction preferred hard copies over email.

Process and Public Participation

Many municipalities have not decided on the exact structure of the process. However, most jurisdictions are considering one of three options: creating a separate committee for the housing element, using City Council or some other standing body, or combing the Housing Element process into a General Plan update. While slightly more than half are considering holding specific public workshops for the housing element, a number of jurisdictions do not feel this is necessary in their case.

The following municipalities expressed interest in holding public meetings:
- Atherton
- Burlingame
- East Palo Alto
- Hillsborough
- Portola Valley (potentially)
- San Carlos
- San Mateo County

The following communities expressed interest in creating Housing Element Advisory Committee:
- East Palo Alto
- Hillsborough
- Portola Valley (potentially)
- San Bruno (potentially)
- San Mateo County

Some specific outreach related requests include:
- Provide general advice on outreach
- Clarify what the law requires for public outreach
- Hold multi-municipality meetings
- Make recommendations on which stakeholders to involve
- Develop general materials
- Provide materials to build support for higher density housing / explain the quality of life benefits of infill development

Special topics of concern

Nearly all cities are concerned about SB2 and would like more information about meeting the State requirements and opportunities to coordinate. Additional popular topics include second units, inclusionary housing, and mixed use development. Specific interests are summarized below with their top interest marked with an asterisk (*).

Second Units
- Atherton *
- Belmont
- Burlingame *
- Daly City *
- East Palo Alto
- Foster City
- Hillsborough
- Millbrae
- Portola Valley *
- San Mateo County
- South San Francisco
- Woodside*
- San Carlos (moderate interest)

Inclusionary Housing
- Burlingame
- Daly City
- East Palo Alto *
- Foster City *
- Portola Valley
- South San Francisco
- San Carlos (moderate interest)
- San Mateo County (moderate interest)

Mixed Use Housing Standards
- Daly City
- East Palo Alto
- San Carlos *
- San Mateo *
- San Bruno *
- Millbrae
- Portola Valley (moderate interest)

Housing Definitions (e.g. unrelated individuals)
- Atherton (moderate interest)
- Foster City (moderate interest)
- Millbrae (moderate interest)
- Portola Valley (moderate interest)

GIS/Housing Inventory
- San Mateo County *
- Millbrae (moderate interest)

Reasonable Accommodations
- San Carlos
- Atherton (moderate interest)
- Burlingame (moderate interest)
- Daly City (moderate interest)
- Portola Valley (moderate interest)

Public Health as related to TOD
- South San Francsico

Additional topics of interest include:
- Green building and energy conservation.
- Adequate sites
- Consequences of previous Housing Element non-certification
- Toolbox for policies for infill development along El Camino Real
- Information on consequences of not getting Housing Element certified this cycle
- CEQA requirements
- How to count units that are permitted by a Conditional Use Permit
- Financial resources for housing programs
- What role the Coastal Commission plays in the Housing Element update