

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION No. 3

For Planning Commission Agenda of:
July 11, 2019

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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Administrative Agenda Item | } |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Continued Hearing Item | } [G-2] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New Hearing Item | } |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Old Business Item | } |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | New Business Item | } |

Attached for the Planning Commission's record and review are the following supplementary information items:

1. Comment from Nancy Johnson, received via email July 8, 2019.
2. Comment letter from George Clark, received via email July 8, 2019.
3. Comment letter from Linda Lee, received via email July 9, 2019.

By email, received July 8 2019 (in subject line):

I want to express my support for this 2019 Housing Element Draft Report, in particular items H-1M57,58 on page 16. Thank you for your work on these important issues, Nancy Johnson, Redway, CA.

July 8, 2019

Michelle Nielsen

George Clark

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**RE: PUBLIC COMMENT
HUMBOLDT COUNTY HOUSING ELEMENT 2019**

Dear Ms. Nielsen:

Please include my comments below as part of the public comment portion of the 2019 Housing Element.

It is encouraging to see more proposals for addressing our region's continuing long-term and short-term crises of affordable and accessible housing, however, there is little explicit language that would effectively alter the results of previous Housing Elements that also addressed the housing crises and that consistently fail to produce building permits above a small fraction of the Regional Housing Needs Assessments for low and very low income housing. The past and presently proposed policies allow permits to be issued for "moderate and above" priced housing to exceed RHNA distributions, sometimes as high as 200% over the assessed need, (2009).

Permit approval for the low and very low income housing, shelters, tiny houses, safe parking and SRO's listed in the 2019 Housing Element remains predicated on infrastructure resources that have also become a crisis due to unfunded liabilities from decades of unbalanced permitting allowing construction of moderate and above priced homes (sprawl) that are near or beyond inventory requirements, making expanded or new infrastructure facilities serving affordable and accessible housing problematic.

Subsidized, SRO housing is the most efficient of all proposals in meeting the largest category of housing accessibility needed by indigent residents; yet, it is relegated to "review" status under the Implementation section of the 2019 Housing Element.

In consideration of this history:

Why is there no language in the 2019 Housing Element that is needed to restrict "moderate and above" housing permits to its reported inventory needs assessment, or, a policy that effectively limits permitting sufficient to mitigate further infrastructure liabilities miles from downtown, to create a more balanced housing inventory and motivate development of low and very low income housing?

Why are "moderate and above" subdivisions being permitted that exacerbate crises in housing and in the economy, community, and unfunded infrastructure when this market repeatedly collapses leaving more local families destitute and in need of accessible and affordable housing alternatives that are unavailable? For example, the large "McKay" subdivision bordering Eureka has already cleared hundreds of trees in anticipation of expected permitting.

The Policy section of the 2019 Housing Element denotes action, for example, "implementing, regulating or legislating", however, it would be more accurate to title this section with one of the verbs it uses in addressing low and very low income housing, shelters, tiny houses, safe parking and SRO's, in effect, "Improvements, Considerations, Recommendations, Encouragements, Proposals, or Supports". Vague and ambiguous language has been ineffective in past Housing Elements and will, most likely, remain ineffective in the future.

H-IM14: "Housing Trust Fund" lists grants, banks, cities, surplus property, General Fund and donations as the sole sources of funding. This should be expanded to include:

A) "Vacancy taxes" that are growing in popularity throughout the state in regions proactively responding to numerous foreclosures in the aftermath of systemic collapses of moderate and above housing ("bubbles"). Increasing numbers of foreclosures are purchased by local and national investors in homes, apartments and commercial buildings that are too often used as "tax-sinks", i.e., exploiting the tax codes to offset tax liabilities incurred from other profitable businesses by maintaining losses from multiple "strategic vacancies".

B) In-lieu fees applied to all "moderate and above" home construction.

C) Nominal fees applied to all rental properties excluding low and very low income housing, tiny houses and SRO's.

D) Nominal fees applied to all residential and commercial construction permits, excluding low and very low income housing, shelters, tiny houses, safe parking and SRO's.

E) Ordinances applying penalties and fines for vacant buildings, homes and lots commensurate with their public costs in lost housing opportunities, vandalism,

arson and lower property values. To be effective, fines should increase incrementally, culminating with property seizure for chronic offenders through eminent domain to be either converted to affordable, accessible housing or sold to finance housing.

H-IM16-56: Refers to multiple surveys and inventories to be maintained by Humboldt County, for example, housing rehabilitation priorities; historic housing; assisted living; housing at risk of conversion; suitable parcels and locations for low and very low income housing, tiny houses, SRO's and shelters; owners of potential properties for safe parking; regional expenditures for tiny houses; farm-worker's housing needs and Marijuana worker's housing needs.

Humboldt County and its cities have unknown numbers of vacant or blighted homes, buildings and lots. Failure to maintain an inventory of these properties and to impose effective penalties, fines or taxes has enabled them to continue, in some cases, for decades. For example, the former "Downtowner Motel" next to the historic Eureka Inn remained blighted for 15 years.

Thank you for your consideration,

George Clark
Eureka

Linda Lee
July 9, 2019
lindaandvaden@gmail.com

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am happy with the progress the commission has made since the beginning of this process.

Up till now, "Housing First" has really meant housing last, as desperate folks wait years to move into an apartment that many of them don't even want or need.

I hope that our community will quickly begin to implement the recommendations of the Grand Jury that recognize the need for practical, low-impact and immediate solutions such as safe parking, and tent and tiny house villages. These low cost alternatives are integral to the eradication of homelessness.

What's called for now is will-power and action. Countywide, every civic meeting should have this item on the monthly agenda, task forces assembled, and progress reported.

Government-owned properties should be designated for these endeavors immediately, and construction begun. Zoning and codes need to be amended to reflect the realities and needs of today. The town of Manila could accommodate some form of housing in a corner of it's 11 acre property on the bay, which would require zoning and coastal commission adjustments. I hope that projects like these will be open to possibility within the new housing element.

I believe that less than a quarter of our homeless population is severely mentally ill or drug dependent, but I know that every day on the street makes this more likely, as folks seek relief from a seemingly unending situation.

It's hard for us to imagine a life where the very basics of self care are denied us. A dry place to sleep, access to fresh water, somewhere to relieve ourselves, or to get clean.

The homeless population is, in general, very resilient and resourceful, while forced to live like this. I have every confidence that sanctioned, well-organized camps will be successful both for the residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

People all over the world live in tent towns, from military personnel to displaced immigrants and war refugees. (I enjoyed the story of your own commissioner recalling his fishing days living in a tent.) We just need to open our minds to the realities of today.

I look forward to the exciting days ahead, as we finally begin to boldly shape our future as a thriving community.

Sincerely,
Linda Lee
Manila