


MEMORANDUM

Date: February 20, 2009

To: Tom Burns, Planning Director 

From: Housing Advisory Commission Members

Re: 2009 Housing Element Development and Review Process

It has come to my attention that the Commission had a spirited discussion at your last meeting about the next Housing Element and I am concerned that there were some misunderstandings about the process of developing and reviewing the Housing Element, and the HAC's role in that process. To this end, I wanted to clarify some important issues about the Department's current thinking about the next Housing Element, and propose that we more fully discuss this issue at the next HAC meeting on March 4th, which I plan to attend.

As you know, preparing a Housing Element requires extensive effort and research on the part of County staff in developing a document that reflects the community's concerns about housing and addresses the State's legal requirements for the contents of the document. The Policy section of the Department, under my direct supervision, handles the preparation of the Housing Element.

As part of preparing the draft document, it is necessary to solicit input from the community at large about the wide range of housing needs in the community. To this end, we believe that it would be appropriate for the Housing Advisory Commission to play a key role in providing input to the staff and participating in these public meetings. I anticipate that these meetings would be held in late March and April, and occur in the north and south County. The input received at these meetings, as well as additional ideas provided by the HAC as part of the normal HAC meeting process, would be used to inform the staff in the preparation of the Draft Housing Element. In order to address the required State review process, we are suggesting that the Draft Housing Element would first be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance to start the formal review process by HCD. Once the Housing Element has been forwarded to the State, the County will initiate its formal public review process, which involves HAC, the Planning Commission, the public at large, and ultimately public hearings before the Board of Supervisors. Attached is a draft of what this timeline looks like.

We look forward to working with your Commission in developing the Housing Element and hope this memo better clarifies HAC's role in the process. I look forward to meeting with you on March 4th to more fully discuss these matters.

Attachment

A rough timeline for this process is outlined below:

- March-April 2009: Public meetings to solicit public comments on housing issues
- March – May 2009: Initial policy-level discussions with the HAC.
- March – May 2009: Staff prepares Draft Housing Element
- June 2009: Board acceptance of Draft Housing Element, initiating review process by HCD (a mandatory 90-day review period), referral to the HAC, environmental review and meets the June 2009 deadline.
- June-August 2009: Review of the draft Housing Element by HCD and HAC.
- Fall 2009: Revisions, if necessary, from HCD comments and HAC input; preparation of the Initial Study for environmental review.
- Fall 2009: Updates and further discussion with the HAC.
- Late 2009: Planning Commission public hearing(s).
- Early 2010: Board of Supervisors public hearing(s) for final adoption.
- Early 2010: Adopted Housing Element submitted to HCD for certification.