

2007-2008 Grand Jury Report
No County for Old Boomers: When Orange County Baby Boomers Retire,
Where Will They Live?"
Responses to Findings and Recommendations

Response to Findings

- F-1 Affordable Senior Housing:** The Housing Elements for the cities and County of Orange do not reflect that the number of affordable senior housing units in Orange County will not accommodate the projected population.

Response: *Agrees with finding.*

The County's Housing Element does not currently include a discussion that specifically addresses the number of affordable senior housing units that will be needed in the future to accommodate the anticipated increase in the senior population.

- F-2 Senior Population Growth:** The Housing Elements for the County of Orange and the cities do not focus sufficiently on or analyze the population growth and housing needs of the aging baby boomer generation.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F-3 Online Access:** Not all Housing Elements are available online for easy access by the public.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding.*

The County's General Plan, including the Housing Element, is available through the OC Planning website at: ocplanning.net. In addition, the Draft 2008 Update to the Housing Element and associated documents are also available on the website.

- F-4 Senior Housing Development:** Municipalities are not proactive enough in encouraging the development of affordable senior housing.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding.*

Affordable Housing is a County strategic priority. The County is active in encouraging developers to apply for a variety of funding available for the development of affordable rental housing for all types of housing (families, seniors, special needs, etc). The County utilizes Federal, State and local funds to finance affordable rental housing throughout Orange County. The County recognizes there is a need for all types of affordable housing including senior housing. Since 1999, the County has financed 598

units of affordable (at or below 60% of the Orange County Median Income) rental housing for seniors throughout Orange County. In total, the County has financed 2,024 affordable rental units, which although not restricted only to seniors, are also available to low-income seniors. In recognizing that many seniors are on fixed incomes, the County's Affordable Rental Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) requires a minimum of 20% of all affordable rental units financed for seniors be restricted at extremely low-incomes (at or below 30% of Orange County Area Median Income). The County will continue to encourage developers to apply for financing available to develop affordable rental housing throughout Orange County.

In addition to making financing available for developers wishing to build affordable senior housing throughout the County, the County also has implemented specific zoning regulations to facilitate the development of affordable housing in unincorporated areas. The County has established the Housing Opportunities Overlay Zone regulations to facilitate the development of affordable housing in areas not previously available for residential development. These affordable housing developments are approved through an administrative site development process and are not subject to a public hearing. All units are required to be affordable to low and very low income households. Although these units are not required to be age-restricted, the Overlay Zone regulations can be utilized to develop affordable senior housing. In addition, all Overlay Zone housing developments are eligible for density bonuses pursuant to State density bonus law.

Response to Recommendations

- R-1 Affordable Senior Housing:** Include the current and projected affordable senior housing inventory by type, location and cost in the 2008 and future years' development of the Housing Element.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

- R-2 Senior Population Growth:** Include sufficient data in the Housing Element to acknowledge the imminent growth in the county's aging population. This data is to include the current population and the growth trend of the aging baby boomer generation as well as the current median income and income trend of the senior population.

Response: *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.*

The County is currently undertaking its 2008 Update to the Housing Element and will take the opportunity to include a discussion that addresses the aging baby boomer population. This will include available data regarding current and future population and income trends for seniors in the unincorporated area.

R-3 Online Access: Put all Housing Elements online on each city's website.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

The County's General Plan including the Housing Element are available through the OC Planning website at: ocplanning.net. In addition, the Draft 2008 Update to the Housing Element and associated documents are also available on the website.

R-4 Senior Housing Development: Confer with developers to establish the needs for affordable senior housing and to encourage investments in future projects.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

Affordable Housing is a County strategic priority. From a financing perspective, the County is active in encouraging developers to apply for a variety of funding available for the development of affordable rental housing for all types of housing (families, seniors, special needs, etc). The County utilizes Federal, State and local funds to finance affordable rental housing throughout Orange County. The County recognizes there is a need for all types of affordable housing including senior housing. Since 1999, the County has financed 598 units of affordable (at or below 60% of the Orange County Median Income) rental housing for seniors throughout Orange County. In total, the County has financed 2,024 affordable rental units, which although not restricted only to seniors, are also available to low-income seniors. In recognizing that many seniors are on fixed incomes, the County's Affordable Rental Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) requires a minimum of 20% of all affordable rental units financed for seniors be restricted at extremely low-incomes (at or below 30% of Orange County Area Median Income). The County will continue to encourage developers to apply for financing available to develop affordable rental housing throughout Orange County.

From a planning perspective, the County has been active in working with landowners such as the Rancho Mission Viejo Company (RMV) in planning the Ranch Plan Planned Community, the last, large residential development scheduled for construction in the unincorporated area. The Development Agreement (DA) negotiated and entered into between the County and RMV for The Ranch Plan Planned Community includes the requirement for the provision of affordable housing. RMV is obligated to provide 60 acres to the County for the development of up to 1,500 affordable housing units, a number of which could be age-restricted. RMV has expressed a willingness to strategize with the County to develop strategies to encourage the development of affordable senior housing. It is anticipated that 5,000 of the units in the 14,000-unit Ranch Plan Planned Community will be age-restricted so the addition of affordable senior housing units in the community should be seamless.

The County's OC Planning has also identified an "affordable housing project manager" on staff who will assist affordable housing developers through the planning application approval process. This is intended to encourage and facilitate the development of affordable housing units including those for seniors.