

This material has been reviewed
by the Town Manager



CORTE MADERA TOWN COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT

Report Date: March 12, 2014
Meeting Date: March 18, 2014

TO: TOWN MANAGER, MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: DAN BELL, PLANNING DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: 5th CYCLE HOUSING ELEMENT – STAFF WORK PLAN AND
REVIEW PROCESS

PURPOSE:

Town Council review of a process to formulate the next Housing Element update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Council approval of the staff work plan and proposed initial process for preparation and review of the Housing Element for the 2014-2022 Housing Element cycle.

OPTIONS:

The following options are available to the Town Council:

1. Approve the staff proposed plan.
2. Approve the staff proposed plan with amendments.

TOWN MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION: Support Staff's recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

CEQA REQUIREMENTS

The housing element update will be subject to CEQA when considered for adoption. Approval of the staff work plan and process is not itself a project subject to CEQA.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Corte Madera's 4th Cycle Housing Element was adopted by Town Council on April 5, 2011 and certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on July 18, 2011. The 4th Cycle Housing Element covered the time period from 2007 to 2014.

6b.

Corte Madera's 4th Cycle Housing Element included a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from HCD for 244 dwelling units.

Efforts to formulate and adopt Corte Madera's 5th Cycle Housing Element (planning period January 31, 2015 to January 31, 2023) will begin this year. Corte Madera's RHNA for the 5th Cycle is 72 dwelling units. With this relatively low RHNA obligation, staff believes the town can take advantage of a new Streamlined Review Process offered by HCD, which is explained in more detail below. This new process will likely require only minor revisions and/or updates to the 4th Cycle Housing Element, thereby avoiding an intensive, lengthy and costly effort to formulate and adopt the 5th Cycle Housing Element which is due to HCD by January 31, 2015.

Staff also believes the formulation and adoption of the 5th Cycle Housing Element would not require any rezoning actions by the Town Council to increase allowable densities to meet the 5th Cycle RHNA. This is a significant departure from the required rezoning actions that were part of Corte Madera's 4th Cycle RHNA.

For Corte Madera like many other local governments, much of the information in housing element found to be in compliance with the statute for the previous planning period is still current and/or particular conditions and circumstances have not significantly changed since the last update. To provide a streamlined approach, both in the preparation of the updated element as well as in HCD's review, jurisdictions that adopted a housing element in the fourth cycle that HCD found in substantial compliance with State law may opt to use the Streamlined Update process to show where changes were made in the previously adopted housing element. Please note, however, the statute requires certain areas to be completely updated. These areas must be newly addressed every planning period. The areas which must be specifically reviewed include:

Review and Revise

Public Participation

Programs and Quantified Objectives

Any new statutory requirements since the prior update.

The Town must also have addressed certain specific prerequisites resulting from the previous housing element cycle including:

- 1) Adoption of Zoning Ordinance Amendments listed as Implementation Programs in the 4th Cycle Housing Element –
 - a) Program H-1.5a.a. Transitional / Supportive Housing – Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow these uses in all residential districts so long as the facility conforms to the same development standards as all other housing types in that same residential district (consistent with State law).
 - b) Program H-1.5a.b. Emergency Shelters – Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow Emergency Shelters “by-right” in the Public and Semi-public Districts for implementation by participating churches.
 - c) Program H-1.5.b. Reasonable Accommodations – Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide exceptions (similar to Variances) for ADA access structures, e.g. allow the structure within setback areas.

- d) Program H-2.3.a. Extremely Low Income Housing – Amend sections the Zoning Ordinance that address specific income categories to now include extremely low-income households.

Staff has begun work on these implementation programs which are anticipated to be brought forward in public hearings in 2014.

Suggested Staff Work Plan and Review Process

As mentioned above, proceeding with the Streamlined Review process is a significantly reduced effort, which is unlikely to result in the requirement to look at significant rezoning efforts as had been required with previous cycles. Staff's proposed work plan for 5th housing element cycle includes the following:

- 1) Engaging contract staff to assist in the preparation and implementation of the Housing Element update process.
- 2) Staff preparation of a public memorandum explaining the process and including analysis of the previous Housing Element and a brief summarization of actions to date and a general overview of the plan for the update.
- 3) Conduct public outreach efforts, including, but not necessarily limited to, (a) preparation of a section of the Town's webpage for the public to access all information about the update on an ongoing basis, (b) conduct of 2 initial public workshops to take input from the public prior to beginning any draft amendments, (c) distribution of extended public noticing including: notice on the Town website, newspaper notice, inclusion of notice in the monthly newsletter, notice on the Town readerboard, expansion and use of the Friday e-mailer program.
- 4) (Optional) Formation of a subcommittee of the Town Council and/or Planning Commission to review a staff outline of proposed amendments and to refine and adjust the minor revisions and/or updates as needed.
- 5) Staff preparation of the draft of the minor revisions and/or updates to the 4th Cycle Housing Element that would be necessary to adopt the 5th Cycle Housing Element.
- 6) Conduct of additional public outreach efforts, including, but not necessarily limited to, conduct of 2 additional public workshops to take input from the public on the draft prior to beginning any necessary environmental review.
- 7) Preparation of initial environmental review analysis to determine level of necessary environmental review.
- 8) Conduct of formal Planning Commission public hearing(s) and subsequent Town Council public hearing(s) would be scheduled for final review, editing and adoption of the 5th Cycle Housing Element prior to the January 31, 2015 due date.

Staff notes that the proposed strategies for public participation should remain flexible and adaptive to the will of the community. In the event that additional workshops, meetings or other public participation are needed they can be added at any point in the process.

If Town Council agrees with the proposed staff work plan and process, staff will begin the work effort as soon as possible.