



Town of Corte Madera Housing Element Update

SUMMARY REPORT

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Monday, June 30, and Thursday, July 24, 2014

Overview

On Monday, June 30, and Thursday, July 24, the Town of Corte Madera held two public meetings to provide information and receive input on the Town's Housing Element Update. The July 30 workshop was held at the Corte Madera Recreation Center and had approximately 60 attendees. The July 24 meeting was held at Corte Madera Town Hall and had approximately 20 attendees, some of whom also attended the June 30 workshop. Both meetings were noticed to the public via the Town's e-notification system, the Town's website, advertisements in the Marin Independent Journal and the Twin Cities Times, and the Corte Madera Recreation Center reader board.

The meetings were identical in scope and content. Meetings began at 7 pm and concluded at 9 pm. Adam Wolff, Corte Madera Planning Director, provided introductory remarks, and Christine O'Rourke, contract housing element planner, presented a slide show that covered the following material:

- Background on housing element requirements and the Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) process.
- Historical and current RHNA, broken down by income categories for the 2015-2023 planning period.
- Housing production over the 2007-2014 planning period.
- Demographic statistics, including population and



- employment trends, age group trends, and household types and characteristics.
- Current rents and sale prices for housing, and how these prices relate to the various household income categories (very low, low, moderate and above moderate).
 - Existing affordable housing in Corte Madera, both rental and ownership.
 - Strategies to meet the RHNA for the 2015-2023 planning period, including the retention of housing opportunity sites identified in the prior Housing Element, adopted in 2011.

Participants asked questions following the presentation and engaged in a group discussion. Staff posed the following questions to the group:

- Are there any additional housing strategies the Town should pursue to meet its affordable housing needs and Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements?
- Are there other housing issues or concerns that should be addressed?

The agendas, presentations and minutes are available on the Town's website at <http://www.ci.corte-madera.ca.us/planning/HousingElementUpdate2015-2023.html>.

Summary of Comments and Input

While concerns were raised about state housing requirements and the accuracy of the RHNA numbers (particularly in the prior cycle), development patterns, and traffic in general, there was a general understanding that meeting the 2015-2023 RHNA requirements would not require endorsing major new housing projects or significant new housing policy. As presented, housing potentially developed through the continued production of second units, the proposed project at 1421 Casa Buena Ave., and the remaining sites identified in the 2007-2014 Housing Element Update would sufficiently meet the Town's RHNA requirements and would not require any rezoning actions.

Discussion related to housing policy and strategies focused on facilitating second units and junior second units as a way to address affordable housing needs and evolving housing demand, while the resulting traffic from any new housing production remained a concern. Participants also noted that the Housing Element Update should address the Town's jobs/housing imbalance and expanding senior population.



Comments from Participants

The following comments were provided both during the meeting and on submitted comment forms and letters.

Housing Policy

- Since the Town can meet its RHNA with the existing housing opportunity sites, the Town has a chance to identify priorities people want to see in housing, senior housing and second units.
- Provide housing so that people who work in Corte Madera can also live in the community.
- Corte Madera has twice as many jobs as housing units. Housing element polices should promote development that addresses the jobs/housing imbalance and reduce commuting.
- Corte Madera's aging population presents both challenges and opportunities for the community. Many are empty nesters, which means a good portion of the already built environment is underutilized and could possibly be converted to second units. The community should also consider adding another senior residential facility, although this would require a larger parcel with enough units to make the project economically feasible.
- The housing element should advance sustainability goals, e.g., encourage housing within walking distance of transit and major destinations, and promote home offices and live-work spaces.
- Limit future housing density to less than 20 units per acre and two stories. Require new development to include enough low income units to meet RHNA requirements. Require sufficient green space and landscaping to beautify the transition from the street.
- The Town should limit the size of units in multifamily developments in order to reduce FAR and require 20% of the units to be affordable.
- Do not build housing in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Return to having representation in ABAG and fight for zero regional requirements.

Second Units

- Allow amnesty for second units and relaxed zoning for second units.
- Consider traffic impacts if second units are allowed in certain neighborhoods.
- Adopt an ordinance to allow junior second units which would create a less expensive, more energy-efficient and less intrusive housing option for the community. Several participants supported the concept of junior second units, while others were concerned about traffic and parking impacts.
- Fees for second units are very high and keep property owners from adding second units to their homes. Consider reducing building permit and development fees.
- Consider Town subsidies for low-income second units.
- Rental income generated from second units can make it possible for homeowners to keep their homes.
- Rely on second units to meet RHNA requirements and take the Wornum Drive Extension parcel off the list of housing opportunity sites.
- Encourage property owners to divide their large homes into duplexes.

Housing Sites

- There are some underutilized commercial areas that could be designated for redevelopment and housing – in particular, the area at the corner of Paradise Drive and Madera Del Presidio where the Town must provide flood protection. These buildings are very old and could be renovated for mixed use with housing on the second floor, and the area could be elevated above the base flood elevation.
- An additional potential site may be the triangle formed by Paradise and San Clemente Drive, which currently has some residential.
- Traffic congestion around Madera Gardens, and particularly around the schools, is a major concern.
- Consider mixed-use housing at Corte Madera Square and Park Madera Center.
- Preserve the bicycle/pedestrian pathway on the Wornum Drive Extension site.
- The Wornum Drive Extension site is a sensitive ecological area.
- Development of the Wornum Drive Extension site will make traffic unbearable in the area.

Next Steps

In response to the input gathered from the community, staff will consider policies related to the concept of junior second units. Existing programs and policies will be reviewed to determine if any modifications are needed to support identified needs for senior housing, live/work opportunities, and sustainability goals. Existing development standards and inclusionary requirements will also be evaluated. A draft Housing Element Update is scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission and Town Council in October.

