



# Memorandum

**TO:** Steering Committee Members

**FROM:** Winston Rhodes, AICP, Planning Manager  
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**SUBJECT:** Draft Housing Element Review and Residential Land Use Densities

**DATE:** October 13, 2009

## Draft Housing Element Review

The Steering Committee discussed the Draft Housing Element document on September 28, 2009. The draft document (attached) has been revised to reflect input received.

The Housing Element identifies and analyzes existing and projected housing needs and includes a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The Housing Element is the only General Plan Element that requires a detailed review by the State prior to adoption. The City is required to send the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) a copy of the draft element prior to and after adoption for assessment of compliance with extensive State statutory requirements.

A key provision of the Housing Element is the City's plan to satisfy the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) that is established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) for each city and county within the San Francisco Bay Area. The City's RHNA allocation and current progress by housing affordability level is summarized below.

**Pinole Regional Housing Needs Progress (2007- 2014)**

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
<b>Allocation</b>	83	49	48	143	323
<b>2007 – 2008 Units Built &amp; Approved</b>	2	1	10	48	61
<b>Remaining Need</b>	81	48	38	95	262

Source: ABAG and Pinole Community Development Department.

The City is considered a suburban jurisdiction under State Housing Element law and must comply with a requirement that future sites be identified to satisfy the remaining RHNA at all levels of affordability. Further, sites identified in the Housing Element to meet the very low and low income housing must be zoned to allow a minimum of 20 dwelling units per acre by right. The Draft Housing Element identifies vacant residentially zoned sites as well as housing opportunity sites (both inside and outside of the Corridor Specific Plan) to demonstrate how the City plans to accommodate 262 additional dwelling units. State law requires that the minimum density of an allowable range be utilized to calculate the dwelling unit potential for a given site. No vacant residential sites currently meet the minimum density requirements for very low and low income housing. The draft Housing Element currently includes underutilized sites that may be rezoned to accommodate 20 dwelling units per acre to plan for the remaining 129 lower income housing unit need during this RHNA cycle (2007 -21024) .

Staff is seeking Steering Committee authorization to forward the attached draft Housing Element with any further changes to HCD for mandatory review. Once HCD comments and wider public comments are received, the draft document will be edited further and discussed with the Housing Subcommittee, Economic Development and Housing Advisory Committee (EDHAC) and brought back to the Steering Committee prior to City Council action.

Residential Densities

The Housing Subcommittee discussed what the allowable residential density ranges and maximum density should be for several of the future development sites both inside and outside the proposed Corridor Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way. The Steering Committee requested further information about existing multi-family development densities within the City prior to considering changes to proposed residential density ranges. Below is a list of existing multi-family development projects within the City and accompanying densities.

<b>Existing Multi-Family Housing</b>	<b>Site Location</b>	<b>Unit Count</b>	<b>Site Acreage</b>	<b>Density</b>
East Bluff Apartments	1813 Marlesta Ct.	144 units	8.13 acres	18 units/acre
Alvarez Court Apartments	760 Alvarez Ave.	19 units	1.02 acres	19 units/acre
Pacific Crest Apartments	1001 Bayview Farm Rd.	42 units	2.14 acres	20 units/acre
2401 San Pablo Ave. (Gozzano Bldg.)	2401 San Pablo Ave.	24 units	.99 acres	24 units/acre
White Terrace Apartments	801 Alvarez St.	52 units	2.17 acres	24 units/acre
Bayside Willow Apartments	520-565 Sunnyview Dr.	148 units	6.12 acres	24 units/acre
Pinole Grove Senior Housing	800 John St.	70 units	2.59 acres	27 units/acre
Pinole Assisted Living Center (PALC)	2850 Estates Ave.	91 units	2.95 acres	31 units/acre

The list above includes properties that currently have General Plan designations of Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), and Mixed Use High Density Residential / Downtown Commercial. These projects illustrate that project design features rather than project density is a greater indicator of project attractiveness and neighborhood compatibility. It should be noted that regardless of adopted maximum project densities, proposed developments will be required to undergo design review by the Planning Commission where design features can be scrutinized to improve project appearance and address specific neighborhood compatibility issues.

Attached is a draft PowerPoint Presentation for this item (see Attachment B). Staff has added land use density change recommendations to help accomplish the following objectives:

- Encourage market-driven parcel assembly and private investment by increasing maximum densities;
- Encourage viable non-automobile travel for occupants of future residential or mixed use developments that include residential development;
- Allow for a variety of housing products to meet diverse housing needs;
- Provide greater clarity and consistency about allowable residential densities for the General Plan and Corridor Specific Plan; and
- Provide for decision-making flexibility during environmental review.

The recommended residential density changes are summarized below.

1. Replace the Low Density Residential district with the Suburban Residential (SR) General Plan land use category and change the maximum density from 7.0 dwelling units per acre to 10.0 dwelling units per acre. The recommended SR category would have a range of 1.1 to 10.0 units per acre.
2. Modify the Medium Density Residential (MDR) district in the Specific Plan to allow a minimum of 10.1 and a maximum of 20 dwelling units per acre.
3. Modify the minimum High Density Residential (HDR) in the proposed General Plan to allow a minimum of 20.1 and a maximum of 35 dwelling units per acre.
4. Modify the minimum Residential Mixed Use (RMU) district in the proposed Specific Plan to allow a density range of 20.1 to 35.0 dwelling units per acre. Include a provision to allow less than 20.1 dwelling units /acre for special needs housing projects.
5. Modify the minimum Commercial Mixed Use (CMU) and Office Professional Mixed Use (OPMU) districts in the proposed Specific Plan to allow a density range of 10.1 to 35.0 dwelling units per acre. Include a provision to allow less than 10.1 dwelling units/acre for special needs housing projects.
6. Change the maximum density to allow 35.0 dwelling units per acre for the proposed Specific Plan Service, Old Town, and Mixed Use Sub-Areas. Anticipate mandatory State density bonuses of up to 35 percent above maximum residential densities established in the General Plan.

When considering these land use recommendations it is helpful to think about the two major types of local land use regulations, namely the General Plan designation and zoning requirements. The General Plan provides broad policy direction and the zoning provides very specific requirements and development standards. The Corridor Specific Plan includes both broad policy direction and specific requirements. Within the Specific Plan the broad land use categories are referred to as Sub-Areas (i.e. Service, Old Town, Mixed Use, Corridor, and Residential). These Sub-Area designations are described in the proposed General Plan to provide greater clarity for readers and ensure consistency with the proposed Specific Plan. Within these Sub-Areas are land use districts that communicate in more detail the range of allowable uses and pertinent development standards that would apply to property within the City.

**Proposed Residential Density Ranges (dwelling units per acre)**

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Existing General Plan</b>	<b>Proposed Specific Plan</b>	<b>Proposed General Plan</b>	<b>Housing Subcommittee</b>	<b>Land Use Recommendation</b>
<b>Low Density Residential (LDR)</b>	1 to 7	4 -10	0.21 to 1.0	0.21 to 1.0	<b>0.21 to 1.0</b>
<b>Suburban Residential (SR)</b>	N/A	N/A	1.1 to 7.0	1.1 to 7.0	<b>1.1 to 10.0</b>
<b>Medium Density Residential (MDR)</b>	8 to 15	10.1 – 20.0	7.1 to 15.0	7.1 to 19.9	<b>10.1 to 20.0</b>
<b>High Density Residential (HDR)</b>	16 to 25	20.1 - 35.0	15.1 to 30	20 to 30	<b>20.1 to 35.0</b>
<b>Mixed Use (includes RMU, CMU, OPMU)</b>	Allows MDR or HDR densities above with commercial and light industrial uses on a site and maximum building height of 50 feet	10.1 - 35.0 for RMU  10.1 - 30.0 (CMU and OPMU)	Up to 35	20 to 30	<b>20.1 to 35.0 for RMU</b>  <b>20.1 to 35.0 for CMU and OPMU</b>  <b>Include provision to allow lower densities for special needs housing groups</b>
<b>Corridor Specific Plan Service Sub-Area</b>	N/A	See RMU, CMU, and OPMU	Up to 20.0 (TOD incentive up to 30.0)	20 to 30	<b>20.1 to 35.0 with TOD incentive up to 50.0</b>
<b>Corridor Specific Plan Old Town Sub-Area</b>	N/A	See RMU, CMU, and OPMU)	Up to 25.0 (TOD incentive up to 35.0)	20 to 30	<b>20.1 to 35.0 with TOD incentive up to 50.0</b>
<b>Corridor Specific Plan Mixed Use Sub-Area</b>	N/A	N/A (See RMU, CMU, OPMU, and VHDR)	Up to 35.0 (TOD Incentive up to 50.0)	20 to 30	<b>20.1 to 35.0 with TOD incentive up to 50.0</b>
<b>Corridor Specific Plan Residential Sub-Area</b>	N/A	N/A (See LDR)	1.0 to 7.0	1.1 to 7.0	<b>1.1 to 10.0</b>

The land use recommendations above include a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) density incentive. The intent of this incentive is to attract private investment, encourage transit viability and lower vehicle miles travelled as well as to anticipate development requests made under

State Government Code Section 65915 for density bonuses of up to 35 percent for developments that include certain percentages of very low-, low, or moderate income housing. Staff recommends that these highest potential densities be analyzed in the environmental impact report (EIR) in order to analyze a wider range of alternatives and help identify environmental impacts if eligible property owners requested maximum density bonuses. This effort will help provide for a more legally adequate EIR and provide the public, Steering Committee and City Council with more complete information to help determine the maximum residential densities that are ultimately adopted.

Staff is seeking Steering Committee feedback on the recommended residential density changes described above to assist with the preparation of the General Plan, Specific Plan, and Zoning Ordinance Update and the accompanying Program EIR.

Attachments:

- A. Draft Housing Element – Steering Committee Review Draft 10-13-09
- B. Draft PowerPoint Presentation
- C. August 24, 2009 Draft General Plan Land Use Designations and Standards