



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 2/18/2009

Agenda Placement: 9B

Napa County Planning Commission Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Planning Commission
FROM: John McDowell for Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning
REPORT BY: Hillary Gitelman, Director - 253-4805
SUBJECT: Housing Element Draft EIR

RECOMMENDATION

NAPA COUNTY HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE - DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

CEQA Status: The Draft EIR identifies potentially significant environmental impacts (project-specific and/or cumulative) in a variety of topic areas including land use, population, transportation, cultural resources, visual/aesthetics, public services, biology, fisheries, hydrology and geology, human health, air quality (including green house gas emissions), and noise. Mitigation measures have also been identified where feasible.

Request: Public hearing to receive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared regarding the 2009 Housing Element Update. Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the Napa County Department of Conservation, Development & Planning and on the County website at www.co.napa.ca.us.

Recommendation: Staff will summarize the status of the 2009 Housing Element Update, including comments received from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and conforming amendments proposed to other sections of the General Plan, and requests that the Commission then accept public comments on the Draft EIR and provide their own comments to staff. All comments will be responded to in the Final EIR.

Staff Contact: Hillary Gitelman, 253-4805 hgitelman@co.napa.ca.us

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under State law, Napa County is required to adopt an updated Housing Element by July 1, 2009 and then to forward that Element to the State (HCD) for certification. Also pursuant to State law, the County cannot adopt the updated Housing Element until it meets requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

In July 2008, the County published a Notice of Preparation, indicating that it would prepare an environmental

impact report (EIR) assessing potential impacts of the Housing Element Update under CEQA. Following receipt of public and agency comments, County staff and consultants prepared a Draft EIR, which was made available for public and agency review starting on January 16, 2009. Written comments on the Draft EIR will be accepted until the close of business on March 9, 2009, and will be accepted orally at the Planning Commission's meeting of February 18, 2009.

Pursuant to CEQA, all substantive comments received during the public comment period will be responded to in writing as part of the Final EIR, which must be certified before County decision-makers can adopt the updated Housing Element, conforming amendments to other sections of the General Plan, or implementing ordinances.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared pursuant to CEQA.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) made available for public and agency review on January 16, 2009 assesses the potential physical environmental impacts of adoption and implementation of the draft Housing Element Update together with conforming amendments to other sections of the Napa County General Plan and implementing ordinances. In many instances, the Draft EIR assesses impacts at a general or programmatic level of detail, and assumes that additional site-specific environmental review will be conducted for the Napa Pipe housing sites and for site-specific programs such as redevelopment of mobile home parks and the addition of accessory residential units to commercially-zoned properties.

The following additional documents have been made available for public review and are attached to this staff report: (a) a draft of the Housing Element Update dated October 31, 2008; (b) the State's comment letter on the November 2008 draft of the Housing Element Update, and (c) a draft of amendments proposed to other sections of the General Plan to ensure internal consistency between and among the elements, and to comply with requirements of Assembly Bill 162 (2007) regarding necessary adjustments to the Safety and Conservation Elements of the General Plan. While the Planning Commission's hearing is intended to permit testimony on the Draft EIR, comments on these other documents would also be welcome. Formal public hearings on the draft Housing Element Update (revised to respond to the State's comments) and conforming amendments to other sections of the General Plan will be scheduled for later this spring after responses to comments on the Draft EIR are completed.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . Notice of Draft EIR Availability

- B . Draft Housing Element Update -- October 31, 2008
- C . Comment Letter from HCD -- January 12, 2009
- D . Conforming Amendments to Other GP Sections

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: John McDowell