

# MEMO

To: Ellen Clark | Director, Community Development Department - City of Pleasanton  
From: Jennifer Murillo | Senior Associate - Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc.  
Date: September 9, 2021  
Subject: Pleasanton 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update - Stakeholder Groups Summary

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## Stakeholder Groups Overview

The City of Pleasanton conducted three stakeholder group meetings as part of the preparation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update. The three stakeholder groups consisted of the following:

1. For- and non-profit housing developers
2. Community and housing advocates
3. Local institutions and businesses

Two stakeholder group meetings, one with housing developers and one with community and housing advocates, were led by the City's consultant, Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. (LWC). In addition, staff attended and presented to local institutions and businesses at the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development & Government Relations (EDGR) meeting. This memo summarizes the feedback received during these stakeholder group meetings.

### For- and Non-Profit Housing Developers & Community and Housing Advocates

The housing developers and community and housing advocates meetings were conducted virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 and Thursday, August 12, 2021, respectively. 23 individuals with special knowledge and interest in housing issues in Pleasanton participated. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the Housing Element update process and solicit feedback on housing related issues and opportunities which will inform and support the development of Housing Element policies and programs.

Each meeting began with a presentation by LWC on the Housing Element, including purpose, components of a Housing Element, and overview of State requirements. Following the presentation, LWC facilitated a discussion guided by open-ended questions about fair housing issues, market characteristics, development constraints, housing needs (including special needs groups), and unique housing conditions and opportunities in the city. Participants were encouraged to respond to the questions verbally, but the chat function was also available for use, if preferred. The presentation is included in Attachment A and the questions are provided in Attachment B.

The participants were invited to join a meeting based on their industry and area of familiarity. The City identified and sent email invitations to 147 individuals, with reminder notifications sent closer to the date. Of the 147 invited individuals, 33 RSVP'd, and 23 individuals participated (7 in the housing developers meeting and 16 in the community and housing advocates meeting).

### Local Institutions and Businesses

The Chamber of Commerce's EDGR meeting was held on Tuesday August 24, 2021 and was held with attendees both in person and over Zoom. The purpose of staff's presentation was to introduce the Housing Element update process and solicit feedback on housing related issues and opportunities which will inform and support the development of Housing Element policies and programs. The general consensus of comments indicated that local businesses are having a difficult time recruiting employees and young

professionals recently out of college or just entering their fields due to the lack of housing affordable to entry level workers. In addition, many members commented on the need to focus on workforce housing (such as smaller units) to meet the needs of local employees.

## Summary of Feedback

The following is a summary of the input received from all participants, in aggregate format.

### A. Housing Needs

1. Underserved groups tend to be low-income individuals, senior individuals with fixed income, special needs population (e.g., those with intellectual and developmental disabilities) with fixed income, chronically homeless families, single-income families, and veteran families.
2. There is a need and an interest in creating workforce housing, especially for essential workers (e.g., full-time workers making \$20 per hour or less), non-profit staff, service industry, caregivers, and commuters.
3. Housing affordable to entry level workers is needed. Consider smaller units to meet the needs of local employees.
4. Rental units that actively accept Section 8 vouchers are needed.
5. There is an ongoing struggle for lower-income households with fixed incomes to hold on to units due to rising rents. This can result in a choice between paying for rent and paying for utilities/groceries.
6. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are growing in demand for market-rate residents, but multi-generational housing needs to be encouraged.
7. A diverse range of housing types with different unit types (studios and one to three-bedroom units), multi-story apartment buildings, tiny homes, and long-term transitional housing are needed.
8. Deeply affordable one to two-bedroom apartments with rent lower than market rate are needed.
9. Below market rate (BMR) apartments are still priced too high. After someone qualifies and moves in to a BMR unit, they may be unable to pay rent, utilities, and other bills and return to being homeless.
10. Affordable and mixed-income housing near public transportation and essential services is needed.
11. Neighborhoods need better integration of housing opportunities across all income brackets.
12. Strong need for co-living and congregate care facilities for developmentally disabled adults.

### B. Housing and Development Constraints

1. There is a lack of land suitable for residential development.
2. Affordable housing development is challenging on expensive land and require outside funding. Need strong, local, and new funding sources to support affordable development.
3. Fees in Pleasanton, both City and other agency/district fees, are high.

4. The current fee schedule is a disincentive to building smaller, more affordable units; the fee schedule charges on a per-unit basis, regardless of unit size.
5. Higher density projects (i.e., podium construction) are too expensive to build in the Tri-Valley area.
6. Development standards need to be reevaluated to increase flexibility in housing production, especially maximum height standards and parking regulations Downtown. The Downtown height limit of two stories combined with parking requirements makes vertical mixed-use projects challenging.
7. The Planned Unit Development (PUD) process is inefficient and time-intensive, often taking over a year (i.e., 14 to 16 months); some applicants hire consultants to help navigate the process. The same PUD process applies to all residential projects regardless of size.
8. City staff capacity is limited to process development applications, which also extends the entitlement process.
9. A clear and concise set of rules should be established for development.
10. The political environment regarding new housing in Pleasanton is challenging. There is a perception that there isn't a "need" for more affordable housing because lower-income households still find ways to remain.
11. The preference for developing larger homes limits the ability of essential workers, non-profit staff, and commuter populations from moving into the city.
12. It is difficult to get connected to the proper persons at service and support organizations. This is critical to provide accurate information and guidance to support underserved groups.

### **C. Policy/Program Recommendations**

1. Educate all renters and potential eligible populations about available housing programs and services. Provide services and support in multiple languages.
2. Improve collaboration and communication between the City, non-profit organizations, service providers, and social workers to have processes in place and to educate qualifying population about affordable housing programs and services. Replicate what has been done in Livermore, which has been effective.
3. Develop policies that generate funds to build needed housing types. The City should consider research into more innovative funding sources (e.g., raising taxes on market-rate housing for the affordable housing trust fund).
4. Explore various programs and policies that encourage equal opportunity to housing such as permanent affordability and inclusionary zoning.
5. Proactively work with non-profit developers to understand barriers to development and how to reduce those barriers.
6. Streamline the permitting process to reduce cost of development and time spent on entitlement. An expensive development process will defeat any well-intentioned policy due to excess time and money spent on the administrative process and approval procedures.

7. Streamline affordable housing development on faith-based institution properties. Educate faith-based communities on the process and benefits of providing housing; these properties are interested in building housing.
8. Streamline development and approval for ADUs.
9. Provide ongoing support through financial education and resources for families struggling to maintain a stable living situation.
10. Provide programs to remove linguistic isolation and discrimination due to race, language, or overcrowding.
11. Provide additional rental subsidies to help address need considering the overloaded Section 8 program.
12. Protect Section 8 voucher holders from discrimination in using the vouchers.
13. Expand Goodness Village (affordable permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness located in Livermore) and funding sources for Housing Consortium of the East Bay.

# Attachment A: Stakeholder Group Presentation

# Housing Element Update

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*Stakeholder Meeting – Housing Developers*

*August 10, 2021*



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## Introductions

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### **City of Pleasanton Staff**

- Ellen Clark, Community Development Director
- Shweta Bonn, Senior Planner
- Jennifer Hagen, Associate Planner, Project Manager

### **Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc.**

- David Bergman, Director
- Jen Murillo, Senior Associate



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## Agenda

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- **Welcome & Introductions** (10:30 - 10:40 a.m.)
- **Presentation** (10:40 - 10:50 a.m.)
- **General Questions** (10:50 - 10:55 a.m.)
- **Discussion** (10:55 - 11:55 a.m.)
- **Wrap Up & Next Steps** (11:55 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)



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## Introductions

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### Stakeholders

- Please give a brief introduction
- What type(s) of housing does your organization specialize in?
- What role does your organization play in helping provide housing in Pleasanton?



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# Presentation

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## Purpose of Stakeholder Meetings

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### Purpose:

- Discuss housing opportunities and constraints
- Gain deeper understanding of available resources
- Gather policy and program recommendations



### Who:

- Community and housing advocates
- Housing developers (for-profit and non-profit)
- Local institutions and businesses



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# What is the Housing Element?



**The Housing Element is a State-mandated section of the City's General Plan. It must:**

- Assess community housing needs and housing stock conditions
- Establish a roadmap to accommodate projected housing demands
- Set citywide housing-related goals, objectives, policies, and programs
- Show how the City will meet demand for housing at all income levels

## Other General Plan Elements



Land Use



Mobility



Conservation



Open Space



Safety



Noise



# Housing Element Components



**Policy and Programs Review:** Evaluation of policies and programs from the current housing element



**Housing Needs Assessment:** Review of the existing and projected housing needs; consider special needs populations



**Adequate Sites Inventory:** List of land suitably zoned to accommodate the City's share of regional housing need



**Housing Resources Assessment:** Resources that support the development, preservation, and rehabilitation of housing



**Housing Constraints Assessment:** Assessment of governmental and non-governmental constraints to housing development



**Implementation Plan:** Goals, policies, and programs for addressing the City's housing need

## Regional Housing Needs Allocation

### Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

- Projected number of new housing units needed
- Each jurisdiction must show it can **accommodate** its total RHNA number, and its allocations by income level
- Mandated by State law

City of Pleasanton's Draft RHNA		
Income	Number of Units	Percent
Very Low < 50% AMI	1,750	29%
Low 50-80% AMI	1,008	17%
Moderate 80-120% AMI	894	15%
Above Moderate > 120% AMI	2,313	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,965</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* AMI = Area Median Income (Alameda County)  
Area median income 4-person household: \$125,600



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## How does the Housing Element help?

The Housing Element must:

- Identify local housing needs and constraints
- Include programs to help provide housing for all (seniors, persons with disabilities, homeless, etc.)
- Include actions to expand housing production at all income levels
- Identify sites that can accommodate the RHNA (housing units at all income levels)



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# Housing Element Update Process



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# Stakeholder Meeting Protocols

## Group Norms

- Each participant will be treated with respect
- Please be mindful of time
- Allow other participants to finish speaking before beginning to speak

## Format

- Open discussion with guided questions
- While chat function will be available, focus will be on the dialogue

## Recordation

- Chats will be saved
- Summary notes will be prepared



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## General Questions?

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## Discussion

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**Question 1:** What are the unique challenges with building housing in Pleasanton?

- a. What are the unique challenges with building ***affordable*** housing in Pleasanton?



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## Discussion

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**Question 2:** Are there any specific constraints with residential development standards and/or approval procedures in Pleasanton?



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## Discussion

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**Question 3:** What are the most in demand types of housing products in Pleasanton, and how do you see those needs changing over the next few years?

- a. What can the City do to facilitate these types of housing developments?



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## Discussion

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**Question 4:** Where (geographically) do you see opportunities for housing in Pleasanton?

- a. Which of these areas would provide the best opportunities for ***affordable*** housing?



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## Discussion

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**Question 5:** Tell us about your most successful housing project in Pleasanton or nearby communities. Why was it successful, and what are the key factors for that success?



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## Wrap Up

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Thank you for your input! We will use what we heard today to inform our analysis and outreach going forward.

We may reach out for follow up calls.



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## Next Steps

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### Take the On-line Survey!

Link posted in the chat, or you can find it on our project website ([www.pleasantonhousingelement.com](http://www.pleasantonhousingelement.com)) or directly at: <https://bit.ly/HEUCommunitySurvey>



### Behind the Scenes: Summer 2021

- Continue technical analysis (housing needs assessment, policy and program review, etc.)
- Initiate site selection criteria and inventory analysis

### Upcoming Meetings

- Housing Sites Selection Criteria - Late August/September
- Preliminary Report - September/October



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## Stay Informed and Involved!

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**Pleasanton Housing Element Update Webpage:**  
[www.pleasantonhousingelement.com](http://www.pleasantonhousingelement.com)

**City Project Contact:**

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# Attachment B: Stakeholder Group Discussion Questions

## **For- and Non-Profit Housing Developers**

1. What are the unique challenges with building housing in Pleasanton?
  - a. What are the unique challenges with building *affordable* housing in Pleasanton?
2. Are there any specific constraints with residential development standards and/or approval procedures in Pleasanton?
3. What are the most in demand type of housing products in Pleasanton, and how do you see those needs changing over the next few years?
  - a. What can the city do to facilitate these types of housing developments?
4. Where (geographically) do you see opportunities for housing in Pleasanton?
  - a. Which of these areas would provide the best opportunities for *affordable* housing?
5. Tell us about your most successful housing project in Pleasanton or nearby communities. Why was it successful, and what are the key factors for that success?

## **Community and Housing Advocates**

1. What groups or types of individuals/households are most in need of adequate and/or affordable housing in Pleasanton?
2. What type(s) of housing is most needed/in short supply in Pleasanton?
3. Do you see any disparities or concerns in housing patterns or trends in Pleasanton among different groups/populations?
4. Are you concerned about concentration or segregation in housing and access and opportunity in Pleasanton?
5. What are the most critical gaps in housing services/options in Pleasanton?
  - a. What are the challenges or barriers to filling these gaps or providing adequate and sufficient housing?
6. Have you partnered with developers (e.g., non-profit/mixed income) to pursue affordable or special needs housing in Pleasanton?
  - a. If yes, what were the most significant challenges and opportunities based on your experience?
7. What would be your top policy or program recommendations to the City to help address the needs of the groups and populations you serve?