



STAFF REPORT

CITY of YORBA LINDA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2023

TO: HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID BRANTLEY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BY: NATE FARNSWORTH, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: HOUSING ELEMENT WORKSHOP

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission direct staff to present the draft revised 2021-2029 Housing Element to the City Council for consideration.

BACKGROUND

The Housing Policy Resident Working Group

The failure of Measure Z in November 2022 left the City on a pathway toward losing its conditional certification of its housing element, which would have other potentially negative impacts on overall land use policy in the City. In an effort to evaluate next steps and to expand overall resident engagement on this important and complex housing policy issue, the City determined that a robust and extended resident engagement effort with a broad swath of residents would be helpful; hence, the idea of forming a grass-roots group of residents (i.e., a Working Group) to study this issue and formulate potential solutions began to take shape earlier last summer.

The City Council gave no mandate pertaining to the Working Group. City staff's concept was to talk directly with residents about the background, policy choices and tradeoffs of land use policy, and to listen deeply to their ideas and suggestions for how to best address land use in the future of Yorba Linda. Additionally, the hope was to start with a group of these residents who were willing to dedicate several hours to discussion and learning in order to gather effective feedback that recognized the policy challenges in addition to general resident sentiment.

From mid-May to late June 2023, the City convened six meetings with a "Housing Policy Resident Working Group" made up of 17 residents. Monday, June 26th, was the conclusion of six meetings with this group. Participants in the Working Group were selected by City staff on the basis of the following criteria: 1) geographic diversity (include representatives from the entire City); 2) had previously engaged or shown interest in housing or other City

issues; 3) diverse experiences and viewpoints; 4) reputation for being open-minded, thoughtful and collaborative; and 5) no prior service as either an elected or appointed City official.

DISCUSSION

The Group's Findings and Recommendations

The Working Group came to a unanimous consensus on six key observations and suggestions for the City Council to consider as it advances a new Housing Element approach for the City:

1. Retaining local control with a November 2024 ballot vote is important.
2. The City should pursue a November 2024 ballot measure to adopt zoning changes, and residents should seriously weigh the consequences if that ballot measure fails.
3. The City should deploy more tools to connect with residents on the need for adopting a Housing Element and perform the education necessary to ensure the public is informed on this complex subject. This may include engaging additional consulting resources to supplement the City's outreach efforts for this acute need.
4. A resident survey on housing issues could better inform the City's engagement efforts and should be pursued.
5. The City should leverage Savi Ranch (to a reasonable extent) to create a new residential and mixed-use Downtown-like space for Yorba Linda.
6. That the City should generally view mixed-use development as a positive and make it available where it is appropriate throughout higher density sites in the City.

Based upon numerous voices and viewpoints shared, staff assembled a model plan and presented it to the Working Group on June 26th. The net result was a more balanced RHNA allocation plan, which did not add any new sites other than within Savi Ranch and met both the income bracket requirements for housing viability while also meeting the total unit threshold required by the State. Although there was some healthy debate about certain elements of the initial model plan, clear consensus developed around the following specific recommended modifications to the housing sites/rezone plan as a starting point for guiding revisions to the Housing Element for consideration on a future ballot measure in November 2024:

1. Increase the allocation of residential units in Savi Ranch from 200 to 800 housing units.
2. Increase a Savi Ranch allowable density to 60 dwelling units per acre with a maximum five-story residential height limit. This density also includes a mixed-use overlay that would promote the integration of retail and high-density residential units.
3. Add an additional 8 acres of land from Bac Tran, an individual who owns several large commercial and retail properties in the Savi Ranch area, to the high-density residential zoning plan.
4. Reduce the zoning density on the site commonly known as Christmas Tree or Richfield Pines Christmas Tree Farm to 10 dwelling units per acre - a unit density reduction of over 70%.

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5. Retain zoning on Fairmont site at RM-10 and reduce the developable land to 3 total acres and also affirm the preservation of the open space adjacent to Chino Hills State Park - a unit count reduction of over 80%.
6. Reduce zoning on Bryant Ranch Shopping Center to RM-10 which would allow up to 78 housing units on the property and retain a portion of the property to remain commercially zoned. Commercial zoning on Bryant Ranch Shopping Center was identified by the Working Group as needed given the overall lack of commercial services within this area of Yorba Linda - a unit count reduction of over 70%.
7. Remove Site S3-033 (Islamic Center), Site S3-210 (Shinnyo-En USA), and Site S4-204A (Chabad Center) - congregational overlay sites.
8. Remove Site S3-034 (Eureka Property northwest of Islamic Center), S3-205A (Highland property), and Site S3-074 (Yorba Linda Preschool).
9. Retain existing zoning capacity from sites removed where residential zoning capacity already exists.
10. Add in additional existing zoning capacity without rezoning from certain single-family zoned properties and churches that are not part of the Congregational Lands Overlay.
11. Leave all other zoning unchanged, including the Congregational Lands Overlay District.

The findings and conclusions of the Working Group are reflected in the *Housing Policy Resident Working Group Report* attached hereto for reference.

On July 18, 2023, the Working Group's Report was presented to the City Council for consideration. The City Council applauded the hard work of the Working Group and directed staff to move forward with presenting the recommendations of the Working Group to the public for further public input and review.

The Beginning of Public Engagement - Not the End

The Housing Element adoption process and the process of revisiting a modified Housing Element has involved an extensive, formal outreach process. The City has engaged in one of the most robust, communitywide outreach programs in recent history to garner feedback from all members of the community. The work of the Housing Policy Resident Working Group was intended as a starting point for public engagement. Because of the informal nature of this group, it created a more natural back-and-forth process and more of a collaborative effort than a traditional large group public hearing offers.

To date, the City has conducted five public workshops related to this topic with approximately 250 attendees (not including staff and Working Group members) between all sessions:

- September 14 – Virtual Q&A Session – Over 60 attendees participated in this event and the recorded webinar is also available on the City's new Housing Element website (see www.YLLocalControl.com/Workshops).
- October 5 – In-Person Workshop at East Lake Village Association (Central Location) with approximately 50 attendees.

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- October 7 – In-Person Coffee and Housing Policy Chat in Savi Ranch with approximately 15 attendees.
- October 10 – In-Person Workshop at Travis Ranch School (East Location) with approximately 50 attendees.
- October 12 – In-Person Workshop at Community Center (West Location) with approximately 75 attendees.

Prior to launching the workshop series, the City sent a direct-mail, three-color postcard invitation to every mailable address in the City. Importantly, the City will continue to offer additional formal public hearings and less-formal workshops in the coming months to seek broader resident feedback. Communication from the City has included or is anticipated to include:

- A dedicated informational website (www.YLLocalControl.com)
- A recorded "webinar" (see www.YLLocalControl.com/Workshops)
- Direct mail piece(s) mailed to every mailing address in the City announcing the five public workshops
- Social media posts and advertisements
- A scientifically valid community survey to be conducted
- Educational video(s)
- Pop-up informational booths at community events

Through the broader public input process, staff has fielded many questions and comments from residents. To date, there have been a couple of requests received to modify the revised Housing Sites Inventory recommended by the Working Group. It is important to note that the recommendations from the Working Group came after more than 12 hours of robust discussion, debate and compromise over six meetings. Any material changes to the Working Group's recommended revisions to the Housing Sites Inventory would necessitate relocating units to other sites and could potentially compromise the support of the Working Group. Therefore, it is recommended that any changes recommended by the Planning Commission to the City Council are carefully considered. The requested adjustments/concerns received include the following:

1. Remove the three properties (former CRK stable, Carmona and Gran properties) at the northeast corner of Bastanchury and Plumosa (approximately 2.6 acres) from Site S3-203 – This would remove 22 units from Site S3-203. The existing zoning for these properties is consistent with the RA zoning standards and allows for a density of 1 dwelling unit per acre. Therefore, if these parcels were removed from the Housing Sites Inventory, it would result in a net loss of 20 housing units. Staff has reached out to the Working Group related to this request and it seems that many of them would be supportive of removing these parcels and accommodating the shortfall of units with the addition of a couple other sites that already have existing zoning capacity (i.e., no upzoning required).
2. Reduce the remainder of Site S3-203 from 10 dwelling units per acre to a density of 4 dwelling units per acre (similar to the RU Zoning Code standards). This would reduce the remainder of Site S3-203 from 172 units to 68 units, a loss of 104 units. Staff has reached out to the Working Group on this request; however, there seems

to be significant concerns with this major reduction in housing units as they would need to be replaced on other sites. Furthermore, 10 units per acre is the lowest density that has been proposed on any site through the Working Group recommendations. Any reduction of density on this site would likely result in requests for reduction of density on other sites proposed to be rezoned at 10 units per acre, which likely would lead to a dismantling of the delicate compromise that underlays the Working Group’s achieved consensus. It is important to note that the RM zoning standards (10 units per acre) have a two-story height limit. This zoning standard supports attached townhome and smaller-lot single-family detached housing types, like recently constructed, existing project examples located across Yorba Linda Boulevard from the Richard Nixon Library (i.e., Covington Townhomes) and on the east side of Richfield Road, just south of Yorba Linda Boulevard (i.e., Provence), respectively.

- General concerns are still being raised about wildfire risk and emergency evacuation from the east side of the City. It is important to point out again that the Working Group has recommended reducing the Bryant Ranch Center (Site S7-001) site by over 70% in comparison to the plan previously recommended by the City, or to a total of 78 market-rate housing units with a two-story height limit. It is also important to understand that the daily traffic/trip generation for a mixed-use project consisting of 78 housing units and 10,000 square feet of commercial retail would generate one-sixth (1/6) of the traffic generated from the existing 90,000 square foot Bryant Ranch retail center operating at full capacity. In other words, the proposed zoning should reduce traffic congestion in support of better emergency evacuation conditions. The table below is the trip generation report prepared by Urban Crossroads:

Land Use ²	Units ¹	ITE LU Code	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour			Daily
			In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
Trip Generation Rates									
Multifamily (Low-Rise) Residential	DU	220	0.10	0.30	0.40	0.32	0.19	0.51	6.74
Shopping Center (40K-150K SF)	TSF	821	1.07	0.66	1.73	2.54	2.65	5.19	67.52
Strip Retail Plaza (<40K SF)	TSF	822	1.42	0.94	2.36	3.30	3.29	6.59	54.45

¹ DU = Dwelling Units; TSF = Thousand Square Feet

² Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (11th Edition, 2021)

Land Use	Quantity Units ¹	AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour			Daily
		In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
Trip Generation Comparison:								
Existing: Bryant Ranch Shopping Center	90,000 TSF	97	59	156	229	238	467	6,078
Proposed: Townhomes	90 DU	9	27	36	29	17	46	608
Proposed: Strip Retail	10,000 TSF	14	9	23	33	33	66	546
Proposed Total		23	36	59	62	50	112	1,154

¹ DU = Dwelling Units; TSF = Thousand Square Feet

4. The Working Group recommended that staff discuss with HCD the possibility of utilizing the new housing development regulations established under Senate Bill 4, which were recently signed into law by the Governor to allow for by-right approval of certain affordable housing projects on church-owned properties. This could potentially allow the City to remove four sites from being rezoned; however, at this point, HCD has not provided any guidelines for how much RHNA credit they will accept, if any, pursuant to the provisions of SB 4. Staff is working on connecting with HCD to address this question.

Next Steps

Below is a tentative outline of the next steps for education and outreach around the City's revised Housing Element Plan:

- Dec 2023 – Tentative City Council Authorization to Submit to HCD
- Dec 2023 - Apr 2024 — HCD Review Complete (assumes two rounds of review — 120 days)
- Apr 2024 — Traffic Commission Review
- May 2024 — Planning Commission Review
- Jul 2024 — City Council Policy Direction and Ballot Measure Resolution
- Aug - Nov 2024 — Voter Outreach and Education Information
- Nov 2024 — Ballot Measure Vote

Staff requests the Planning Commission solicit public input and provide feedback on the draft revised Housing Element and direct staff to present its recommendations to the City Council prior to submitting to HCD for their formal review. HCD will take no more than 60 days to review the City's revised Housing Element and provide feedback. HCD could determine that the revised Housing Element is in substantial conformance with State Housing, which would allow the City to move forward with formal adoption of the General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments necessary to implement the draft revised Housing Element programs. If HCD determines that the draft revised Housing Element is not in substantial conformance with State law, then the City will need to make further revisions and resubmit to HCD for another 60-day review.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Draft Redlined 2021-2029 Housing Element
 - 2) Housing Policy Resident Working Group Report
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