

HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE HOUSING CITY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

Format: In-Person & Zoom Virtual Meeting | June 20, 2022 - 5:30pm

The purpose of the City Council meeting on June 20, 2022, was to present the City of Piedmont Draft 6th Cycle Housing Element and the proposed changes to the Draft Housing Element, and to provide a forum for feedback and discussion from members of the City Council, Piedmont residents, and the general public. Feedback received will be considered by the City Council in making their recommendation on whether to submit the Draft Housing Element to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with or without additional changes.

The City Council meeting was held both in-person and virtually via the Zoom virtual meeting platform on Monday, June 20, 2022, starting at 5:30pm. City staff and the consultant team (Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. and Plan to Place) participated in the meeting. The agenda, presentation, and staff report were posted on the City website and project website: piedmontishome.org. Approximately 60 members of the public attended. The meeting agenda is outlined below:

1. Housing Element Overview
2. Sites Inventory
3. Goals, Policies, and Programs
4. Next Steps
5. Public Comment
6. City Council Direction

ATTENDANCE

Meeting participants: approximately 65 attendees

City Council

- Teddy Gray King - *Mayor*
- Jen Cavanaugh - *Vice Mayor*
- Betsy Smegal Andersen - *Councilmember*
- Conna McCarthy - *Councilmember*
- Jennifer Long – *Councilmember*

City Staff

- Sara Lillevand - *City Administrator*
- Kevin Jackson – *Planning and Building Director*
- Pierce Macdonald– *Senior Planner*

Consultant Team

- **Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. (LWC)** – David Bergman, Kathryn Slama, Stefano Richichi
- **Plan to Place** – Paul Kronser, Rachael Sharkland

MEETING SUMMARY

Mayor Teddy King welcomed public attendees, and the meeting moderator, John Tulloch, gave an overview of the format of the meeting, including the protocol for the public comment section which occurred both in-person and virtually. Kathryn Slama (LWC) and David Bergman (LWC) began the presentation with a high-level review of the Housing Element, including background, components, document organization, key findings, community outreach and noticing, and common public comment topics. Following the overview, the presentation was organized into three sections: 1) Sites Inventory; 2) Goals, Policies, and Programs; and 3) Next Steps. After each section concluded, time was given to the City Council to offer comments and ask any clarifying questions. After the presentation, the City Council heard public comment. Speakers were allowed up to three minutes to voice comments, and there was no cut off on the number of speakers. Following the public comment period, members of the City Council were invited to make comments, ask questions of City staff and the consulting team, prior to giving direction. After comments and discussion among the Council members, City staff and the consulting team, the City Council requested City staff to make revisions to the draft Housing Element, conduct additional analyses, and return to Council with information for consideration at a future date.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS AND CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

For a summary of City Council questions and discussion, please see the City Council Meeting Minutes, available [here](#).

PUBLIC COMMENT

The table below includes public comments in the order they were received.

Commenter	Comment
Winston Street	Live in town and grew up here; if you implement HE is it lawful? Our City charter says any changes in zoning needs to go to a vote. I would comment that the town halls and the maps didn't allow for negative comments. Who is doing the EIR? Fire LWC, their one-size fits all approach isn't working. Need to reach for Olmsteads.
Pam Hirtzer	I live on Scenic Avenue. Most of my property is on Moraga Canyon - you are going to kill people with the proposal to put 150 units in the Canyon; it is endangering over 200 families. Realistic capacity has been incorporated into that proposal, 200 apartments translates to 600 people and 300 cars and I can't see people living in Moraga Canyon. It is so dry, so fire danger is high. You are offering low income families an education at Piedmont schools but have not thought out how those people would get to school. Mitigate Blair Park traffic. Children crossing from Blair Park and building a bridge over a street is not feasible, instead they dart across the road. Consider the consequences of families living in the Canyon.

City of Piedmont

Housing Element Update

Jill Lindenbaum	The goal is to produce more housing, I would like to address the issue of affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) and segregation. I and other community members want to bring more affordable housing and want to bring more attention to environmental justice and how higher opportunity neighborhoods influence someone's life expectancy. Building more densely can mitigate this issue. Takes economy of scale for projects to be feasible. All of Piedmont is a high opportunity area so we should be supporting all housing on all sites. We should stop arguing where it should go within our City borders.
Ted Kinch	I would like to speak up against rezoning the civic core area. I have safety concerns for our children going to school and the amount of congestion created by the new housing. In the early 2000's we put in a similar project and parking becomes a problem, getting out of the city becomes an issue. Elementary, middle, and high school are all within a block of what we are thinking of developing. That being said, there are opportunities to develop other areas such as Blair Park and other areas that are easy to get in and out of the community. Once we rezone, if there is a viable offer from a developer, the state bonus of density would be applicable, which means development would be potentially 50% over what was proposed within the specific area.
Christina Maybaum	I know you have attempted to engage the community; many of us have just learned about it in the last month. Take a little more time to engage the community.
Lawrence Siskind	When we started this proceeding, we spoke eloquently about Juneteenth. The plan proposes a disproportionate number of people being segregated in and around Moraga Canyon and the safety issues involved in that. Our daughter/husband were injured on that road and children that would have to cross the street would add to that danger. Issue of segregation and putting a disproportionate number of people in one area who would feel segregated and we need to do a better job of integrating.
Liz O'Neill	This has not felt like an inclusive process. There were only banners on Highland. Notices and emails would be useful. Property values are impacted if low income housing is segregated and concentrated. What are the two units on Maxwellton? We feel targeted. I hope that sound impacts will be included in EIR.
Marsha Lane	Thank you for your work. I learned about this about 10 min ago and feel there has been lack of outreach. I was born and live in Piedmont. I have not heard about the details of the proposal until today. Regarding the civic center, I can't leave my house because of schools, and it does not seem feasible to put high density housing there. This should go to a City vote. Lived through the 1991 fire, and it took my father 1 hour to get from there to the freeway. So if they are going to build those units, where would we get out?
Ellen Greenberg	PREC: Echo Jill, supporting production of additional housing in the community. Deeply concerned about housing affordability and our housing crisis. Blair Park should be considered for an affordability project that takes advantage of A1 funding. Support civic center becoming mixed use, including housing and public uses. I would encourage the City to propose a car-free civic center as a response to citizen's safety concerns for young people. Wildfire comments: we are a community with access to resources, and our cities allow us to live more sustainably.

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Catherine Rongey	Reality is we are missing moderate builds, the task is to find this. Low income homes impact housing values, so the City should look for dispersing density by evaluating ADUs and project ADU numbers more than what you have in order to increase density. Qualitative analysis - mentioned full name of public participant in report; this needs to be redacted. Not in favor of high density builds, better for centers with existing commercial uses. Our civic center is not equipped for large, dense builds.
Rajeev Bhatia	Providing an economic analysis is moving in the right direction; SB9, if we show sites that are viable, ask Veronica Tam. Share examples of density that we can get if we add 1-2 more stories to proposals, we don't need to go to the civic center.
Christine Brozowski	I am disappointed that the proposal of 587 new housing units has never been put on a ballot. I saw a banner which was the first time I've heard about it. We are not excited to have a parking lot turn into housing. Easier to get on board if we were voting on this. Encourage this to be put on the November ballot, or ask for a reduction/exemption. Stick it on a ballot
Georgina Russell	Anxiety around fire in 1991. How can we obtain an exemption? What will happen if we don't comply? Examples of projects that include towers to accommodate 500 units.
Moira Chapman	Thank you council and commissioners, I lived in town for 7 years. Grew up in Marin, Tiburon. Piedmont has not been a city that has been welcoming to different populations to live here. I support more housing for more income levels. HEU regulations came to be to promote civil rights for all. I support an option to explore other options. As the climate crisis continues to worsen, new development needs to be built with solar and regenerative landscaping.
Brett Snyder	I am an architect and resident supportive of affordable housing, we should leverage all our resources. One site to consider is the skate park, this site is underutilized, not designed well.
Max Davis	Speaking as a member of East Bay for Everyone, and would like to comment on the buffer on sites - 12% for above minimum and HCD recommends 15%, would recommend pushing to 30% to build for better housing. Seems you were backed into the sites. Many single family homes are split across two lots. Take some of those sites off. A lot of civic sites don't seem proposed to be built on, go big. Any housing not built in Piedmont will be built out further away.
Rebecca Posamentier	Complicated issue. The City has pushed out lots of information in lots of different ways. Piedmont Puzzle was very eye opening and revealed some of the process. Difficult to engage folks, and I applaud the City. There are no good sites, some better than others. City of Berkeley has examples of civic uses with apartments above. Civic center is unsafe now, a great design could make things more safe for our kids. We are just identifying opportunities we aren't actually building at this time.
Elise Marie Collins	Voice my support for building affordable housing. It's scary how the government conspired with realtors in the past - read up on history, we are part of the Bay Area. Piedmont was segregated in the past. Our population is down about 600 people, and we shouldn't worry about population going up. Older, higher income people can live in Piedmont. We need younger families and more children.

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Michael McConathy	Voting issues. HEU proposes low and very low should be located in Zone B park and municipal lands, Coaches Field and Blair Park (342 units, not residents). That plan violates City charter. Proposed HEU says the City can make changes and ignores the charter that requires a ballot measure. Classification of MU parcels, and allow C and D lands, how is that not a reclassification under the charter? City needs to follow its own rules.
Naomi Stein	I represent the synagogue and am concerned about the homeless population. We appreciate the City undertaking this HEU. Less than 2% of Piedmonters are black. We're discussing what role the government has in developing more housing, not developing the housing itself. What are we doing with our resources in our city?
Ray Catalano	This is not new business, but a continuation of a meeting from a century ago where the City directed an African American family out of the community. History has also repeated itself, and the proposed locating all of the 215 low income housing in the Blair Park neighborhood. Putting low income housing in Blair Park, this would be stigmatizing.
Carol Galante	This is not a segregation issue. There is no housing being proposed in Piedmont that is segregating people. and we believe in dispersing of housing. If not here, where? We're not going to solve our moral obligation to housing exclusively through ADU's, which don't go to people of lower income. We need to look at public sites and plan to build on multiple sites. New housing and new families are an asset to Piedmont.
Deborah Leland	I've seen how beautiful affordable housing can be. Concerned that Moraga Canyon may meet the letter of law, but does not enable housing development for our community. Proud to have affordable housing in our neighborhood. New development would provide better pedestrian access and safety.
Marjorie Blackwell	Considered consequences of building in certain sites such as Blair Park, Moraga Canyon. Moraga Avenue carries heaviest traffic and fastest moving cars. No place for safe crossings. Environmental Hazards chapter of General Plan lists out changes of hazards. Blair Park made of filled land. Construction in Blair Park could trigger landslides. Stated goal in General Plan is to restrict development on unstable sites.
Rick Schiller	SB9 fact sheet states HEU law allows cities to utilize projections. SB9 signed into law a half a year ago. Embracing SB9 is a realistic approach to meet the needs.
Garrett Keating	Questions about two items: 10: other affordable housing types, could you elaborate on that? 17: Short term new housing construction - new units quickly. What are these two items about, what would the new housing look like? Online survey needed to get public opinion. Add abstract of the Draft Housing Element plan. 877 survey responses. GP update had over 1200. Civic center sites were put in the Draft Housing Element document to meet a number.
Andrea Ruiz-Esquide	Made a lot of progress. Climate action, we need to put more people in urban centers. Piedmont can grow reasonably. Implement SB9 sooner - law has been in effect, and there are applications everywhere. City shouldn't lag behind much more. Subdivide housing into more units rather than SB9 lot split. Continue to investigate civic center sites. Don't remove tennis courts.

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Meghan Bennett	Appreciate all the signs and all the communication for this. Love to see more affordable housing. There is a lack of students and low income seniors in Piedmont. Grand Avenue doesn't have a problem with traffic. Rare instances of earthquakes and fires. Piedmont will always be changing.
Dan Saper	I speak to principles, and this is the right thing to do. We have an obligation to add more housing. We need to do our part. Seeking any sort of exemption would put us on the wrong side of history. More important to support triplexes done in a nice way. We can add a lot more housing in Piedmont.
Claire Parisa	Moral issue, equating the inclusion of Blair Park to what happened a century ago is inaccurate. To preclude the possibility of housing would lead to segregation. These arguments are distracting us from the core issues of building housing in Piedmont. Include multifamily housing and pair local money with County A1 funds. Move Blair Park out of the SP and put A1 funding to good use there.
Andy Madeira	I work in affordable housing and development. Yes, we need a housing element to be approved by HCD but more importantly we need affordable housing. Developing in Blair Park is not segregation.
Irene Cheng	Spreading density throughout the town. SB9 on its own won't get us far, only feasible for a small portion of lots. Doesn't fit Piedmont in a way - converting to duplexes but not triplexes. HCD doesn't want to count SB9 units. Need to tailor City's SB9 program to conditions in Piedmont. Zones A & E comprise over 2/3rd of our land, so need to do more about adding housing in those areas. SB9 will be market-rate, but not affordable, which the state is asking us to build.