
MEETING SUMMARY – TAC 5

Thursday October 16th, 2008
10:15 am – 12:30 pm
SamTrans Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos

Introduction and Meeting Purposes

Members of the 21 Elements Technical Advisory Committee met on October 16th to continue their work. The agenda for the meeting included discussions about the following items:

- Website and listserv
- Current Housing Elements review forms
- Existing housing need/background data
- Countywide surveys
- Constraints
- Project schedule
- Second units
- SB 2
- Community outreach tools
- County tours

Additionally, there was time for jurisdictions to meet and talk in small groups.

Overview of Completed Products

Following are products that have been completed since the last meeting.

Website

There is a new tab called "Local Planning Efforts". Each jurisdiction can have its own website/link on the 21 Elements website. As soon as the design is complete, it will be open to the public. This can be simple, basic or more complicated. For example, South San Francisco has its own URL and a link is on the local planning tab.

Reviewing Current Housing Elements

The Microsoft Access database is now on the website and is ready to use. The programs and policies from current Housing Elements have been entered into a Microsoft Access database and reports have been developed for all jurisdictions (with current Housing Elements).

The Access database can be used to query policies and programs from other jurisdictions using a keyword. For instance, it is possible to do a search for all policies related to inclusionary zoning for all cities. It can also be exported into Excel if Access does not work. Currently, there are reports by jurisdiction or by keyword already on the website.

Existing Housing Needs/Background Data

The 21 Elements staff is still working on information for seniors, sustainability, affordability, special needs population. This information will be available soon.

Countywide Surveys

The Zoning and Processing Time Survey is underway. This survey is taken directly from HCD requirements. Jurisdictions were encouraged to respond to this survey so that a thorough summary can be prepared to draw conclusions.

Final summaries comparing parking standards, development fees and inclusionary requirements are available on the 21 Elements website.

Josh Abrams gave everyone two more weeks to complete and return their Zoning surveys.

Constraints

The Housing Supply Constraints Overview handout was discussed and it was recommended that each jurisdiction use this model as a starting point. A lot of this must be tailored to each jurisdiction. For instance, the Land Use Controls will require some writing because HCD recommended a summary of zones. Other sections can be prepared with sample language. Everything was straight from HCD except a section on Community Opposition was added to the Non-governmental Constraints section.

Timeline, Updating Products, Check-in

Project Schedule

The project schedule was discussed to look at the bigger picture of deliverables. In looking at the schedule, the jurisdictions should be wrapping up the first round of constraints, housing needs, and site inventories in November. Then the final distribution of deliverables is planned for the end of December. After the New Year, the project will shift and the 21 Elements staff will be responding to questions and special topics and having best practices discussions.

A survey was handed out to answer some questions about everyone's status in order to prioritize materials and provide appropriate materials at appropriate times.

The 21 Elements staff has a commitment to provide deliverables for the project to be as useful as possible. Everyone is on a different schedule so it is important to work with the jurisdictions that are ahead to make sure all needs are met. A call will be set up to discuss how to bridge the gap.

There was a suggestion that information on CEQA would be useful. Since there are six jurisdictions that are preparing a General Plan update along with their Housing Element update, the CEQA issues and timing of two EIRs are a concern. Jeff Baird stated that there are strategies to avoid doing an EIR, such as approaches to add programs not to trigger an EIR, and still be responsive to needs of CEQA related issues. There are ways to carefully describe land use issues that will be approvable by HCD.

21 Elements staff spoke to Paul McDougal about how to strategically fold the Housing Element into the General Plan. They learned that there is no statutory ability to extend deadline. However, there are approaches to postpone the Housing Element EIR until the General Plan adoption, such as adopting the Housing Element and then readopting it at the time of entire General Plan adoption. The 21 Elements staff can provide the jurisdictions with a memo to summarize CEQA issues and requirements as well as describe different approaches.

Portola Valley stated that they would like to see more information on second units. They are moving ahead without a lot of options for housing and they have a lot of constraints.

Special Topics

Second Units

In response to requests, the 21 Elements staff drew up a memo that provided TAC members with guidance about typical rents and usage patterns of second units. The memo discusses affordability of second units based on information taken from Craigslist, US census, surveys and RealFacts. Staff is working with HCD to get their approval on the methodology.

The basic conclusion is that second units are very affordable. Oftentimes, people living in second units aren't paying rent, such as domestic help or a relative, which would fall under the category of extremely affordable.

SB2 Report

Kate Bristol provided a memo with policy content, history, and legal requirements of SB2. The second half of the memo is template language for including into the Housing Elements. There is also room to allow freedom of interpretation by the different jurisdictions. The 21 Elements staff has been working on the next steps to make this information more useful. A conference call will be scheduled about the memo in depth.

Duane Bay suggested that the TAC group read through the SB2 information and discuss specific questions and share ideas on the listserv.

The 2007 homeless inventory was also discussed. This information is obtained based on a sampling on a particular day, prepared every two years with the next being in January 2009. It is obtained by census tract rather than jurisdiction which can be confusing.

One issue is how many people to accommodate. It is a challenge because it can be difficult to build more beds. The proper steps are to figure out the methodology about what the need is and then determine how to fulfill those needs. Other methodology can be used with HCD approval. The big picture is the support of the actual housing.

Regional and local programs were also discussed. Questions were raised about how certain programs can be counted towards goals and how the county efforts and goals can help towards solving issues. A suggestion was made to survey the jurisdictions to determine what programs they fund. It was noted that there is not a city in San Mateo County that could make an argument that they can get around zoning for the emergency shelters. The only emergency shelters in San Mateo County are on County property. All the jurisdictions fund and support them but they are compacted in one or two jurisdictions. It is critical to provide the necessary space. Duane suggested that some jurisdictions can note in their policies and

programs that they give General Fund monies to organizations. County programs that the jurisdictions all participate in would be worth noting.

Community Outreach Tools

The next item on the agenda was Community Outreach Tools and the discussion started with the listserv. Duane stated that the listserv does not get a lot of traffic and suggested that it is not fully utilized. It should be used as a mechanism to communicate whereas the reason for the meeting is to fine tune to make the project as useful as possible.

The 21 Elements staff wanted to determine what information and materials would be most useful. Perhaps Powerpoint presentations could be developed and translations could be made depending on costs and need.

Suggestions for key topics of useful materials were:

- Affordability based on income levels.
- Needs of seniors.
- Myths of transitional and supportive housing.
- Attracting people to a community meeting.
- Summary of state law.
- Reprint of Don Weden's "Making it matter".

Redwood City is looking at corridors within the City and discovered some really useful information on traffic modeling. Assumptions can be off base about affordable housing when in actuality it can be better for sustainability and the overall footprint. Perhaps some generic information on Transit Oriented Development, car trips and climate change impacts could be informative.

An Advocates section will soon be on the website. An example was given of three advocacy groups that are coordinating their work to make community conversations available - The Housing Leadership Council, Sustainable San Mateo County, and Threshold 2008. These groups are interested in facilitated conversations around housing issues and could use the housing element process as an advocacy opportunity because it is a robust community input process.

There is also a tab on the website being developed to include jurisdictions' website links as well as an Outreach tab. These are all Outreach tools to check off on the HCD list for an adequate outreach process.

County Tours

The topic of a county tour with HCD was discussed and most cities showed an interest in such a tour. There was discussion on the best way to coordinate it. Much of this is determined by how much time Paul McDougal has to offer. The objectives should be to show constraints, accomplishments and the character of the community

as well as to establish a good working relationship with HCD. It was stressed that successes should be focused upon and a specific itinerary would also be valuable.

It may be advantageous for the 21Elements staff to coordinate the tours and to group them jurisdictionally to make the best use of Paul McDougal's travel time. A query will be sent out to see who is interested in this arrangement. It was suggested that each jurisdiction get approximately two hours for their portion of the tour.

Additional Special Topics

SB375 and how it will affect future housing is another topic to address at upcoming meetings.

Small Group Discussion

The attendees broke into small groups and had an opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues.

HCD Questions and Answers

There were no questions for HCD at this time.

Next TAC Meeting

Next meeting:

TAC 6

10:00-12:30pm, December 18th, 2008

SamTrans Building, Second Floor

1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos