



Humboldt County

November 3, 2009

Ms. Lynn Jacobs, Director
California Department of Housing & Community Development
1800 Third Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, California 95814

Ms. Cathy Creswell, Deputy Director
California Department of Housing & Community Development
1800 Third Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, California 95814

Mr. Paul McDougall, Program Manager
California Department of Housing & Community Development
1800 Third Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Humboldt County Housing Element

Dear Mrs. Jacobs, Ms. Creswell, and Mr. McDougall:

We are volunteer members of a group we refer to as "The FOL team". FOL (Find Our Lots) is not a formal or legal entity. It is merely a diverse group of professionals working as Humboldt County citizens who are committed to identifying land available for the development of housing.

We have worked with Humboldt County planners for the past two years to identify sites which meet the State mandate for the County's Housing Element Land Inventory. And we continue to donate our time to refine that inventory.

Collectively we have devoted over 1,000 hours of our time to this cause during the past 1 ½ years. However, the effort did not just commence the last couple of years. Those of us who are members of the Humboldt Association of Realtors were writing letters and pleading with the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for over 15 years to develop a legitimate land inventory. And as members of NCHB (Northern California of Home Builders), some of us have actively worked toward that same end for a decade. HELP (Humboldt Economic and Land Plan) has focused on the subject for almost six years. At this point, it appears to us that thousands of volunteer hours have apparently been wasted over the past 15 years in an attempt to convince the County to develop a land inventory which complies with State laws.

We are now at a point of such frustration that we respectfully appeal to you for help. Our aggravation with the effort includes, but is not limited to, the following issues:

- The numerous Excel spreadsheets the County has provided us to work from over the past 1 ½ years, do not represent the inventory the County used, or has included in the Housing Element which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 28, 2009. This has resulted in countless wasted hours.
- The FOL team toured about 400 sites to determine how many dwelling units could be developed. A County planner accompanied us and participated in the discussions on many of those site visits.
- In addition to those sites physically visited, we, as a team, analyzed approximately 8,000 sites using the County's GIS program. County Planner Michael Richardson participated in the majority of the FOL meetings.
- We know for a fact, infrastructure is a limiting factor which will keep several thousand sites from being developable within the next 5 to 6 years. When confronted with those facts, County planners disregard the realities and refer to the issue simply as "a technicality".
- As late as mid-August, the County was including 1,440 dwelling units in Shelter Cove in the inventory. When confronted with this distortion, planners arbitrarily changed the number to 1,088 dwelling units. This lacks any relationship to the fact that the service provider in Shelter Cove cannot commit to even one sewer hookup within the next 5 years. Five years ago, the HELP group gave the County the benefit of a doubt and identified as many as 400 dwelling units it thought could be built in Shelter Cove. However, we were told that HCD's best estimate was that perhaps 250 dwelling units could be built at that time. Now, five years later, for the County to claim there is the potential to build almost 6 times more dwelling units within the next 5 years than there were available 5 years ago, is nothing short of absurd. Some of us personally visited 325 sites in Shelter Cove during January this year. The County's assertion that 1,088 dwelling units could be built in Shelter Cove is ridiculous.
- A few weeks before the Housing Element was adopted, County planners included a list of about 2,500 sites in the inventory that had not been previously provided to FOL. And of course, there was not time to adequately research or analyze those properties prior to the Element being adopted. County planners tell us they didn't have time to analyze those sites either.
- The Housing Element states on page 8-6, there are no Agriculture Exclusive, or TPZ (Timber Production Zone) lands included in the land inventory. This is not true. There are actually 87 Ag Exclusive and TPZ sites, which they claim could accommodate 1,317 dwelling units in the land inventory adopted August 28, 2009.
- The County claims in the Housing Element, it did not include any sites in the inventory that have improvements valued over \$100,000. This is not true. According to the inventory the County provided us on October 19, 2009, there are 54 such sites included, representing 87 dwelling units.
- The Housing Element states that the FOL team identified the mid-point of development. This is not true. The FOL team identified the maximum number of dwelling units that could be developed on the sites analyzed.

➤ The Housing Element declares there are 9,921 dwelling units with development potential in the Land Inventory. This is an increase of 1,933 dwelling units over the 7,988 units identified in the 2004 Housing Element Land Inventory -- a twenty-four percent (24 %) increase. With the ever-increasing shortage of infrastructure, especially sewer hookups, the County's projection of 9,921 parcels (24%) more available for development between 2009 and 2014, makes absolutely no sense.

➤ The Housing Element states the following criteria was used to determine which sites were included in the land inventory (left column below). Please note in the right column, what was actually used:

HOUSING ELEMENT:	ACTUALLY:
<u>Vacant Developable Parcels</u>	
(1) In areas with water & sewer, parcels must have at least 2,500 sq ft of developable area	5,000 sq ft
(2) In areas with water service, the assumed density is 1.0 acre per dwelling unit.	½ Acre / DU
(3) In rural areas, without water or wastewater service, assumed density is 2.0 acres per dwelling unit.	1 Acre / DU

Improved Developable Parcel Assumptions

(1) Less than ¼ acre are not considered developable	½ acre
(2) Parcels with residential development valued at over \$100,000 are not considered developable	There are 54 sites (87 DUs) in the inventory
(3) Developable land must be equal to at least three times the assumed density	FOL was not told this.
(4) Areas with water service, the maximum assumed density is 1.0 acre per dwelling unit	½ Acre / DU
(5) In rural areas, without water or sewer service, Maximum assumed density of 2.0 acres per dwelling	1 Acre / DU

There are two problems with the above representation by the County:

1. If the above assertion is true, the land inventory needs to be revised, because it was not the actual criteria used by the County.
2. If the County does in fact intend to double the amount of land they currently require for the development of housing, it is increasing the restrictions on the development of housing and therefore *discouraging* affordable housing, not *encouraging* it as they profess.

➤ Finally, a couple of weeks ago, on October 19, 2009, we requested from the Planning Department, an Excel spreadsheet that reflects only those parcels that are included in the adopted land inventory. The spreadsheet they provided on October 19, 2009 is not consistent with the list of sites incorporated into the adopted Housing Element land inventory. (See attachment A)

Ms. Lynn Jacobs, HCD Director
Ms. Cathy Creswell, HCD Deputy Director
Mr. Paul McDougall, HCD Program Manager
November 3, 2009, cont'd

- The inventory provided to us October 19th, includes 1,227 sites which are identified as zero (0) develop ability. And yet they have attributed 1,645 dwelling units to those same sites and included them in the land inventory count.....unbelievable!

These are only a few examples of the source of our frustrations. Our FOL meeting yesterday was the last straw when we discovered how many inconsistencies there are in the adopted inventory. We had hoped that by working with the County, we would be able to arrive at an inventory that complies with State law. At this point, we are at our wits end and unable to envision that coming to fruition.

The FOL team can identify approximately 1,000 dwelling units which could be built and therefore qualify for the land inventory, while the County claims 9,921. We are at a total loss to know what to do next. Do you have any advice? We are open to your guidance and would appreciate your assistance. How can this Housing Element possibly be certified?

Sincerely,

THE FIND OUR LOTS TEAM

Tina Christensen, Coldwell Banker Realtor

Linda Disiere, North Coast Investors Group

Tim Hooven, The Hooven Company

Bernice Huston, Homeowner / Retired Real Estate Agent

Kevin Caldwell, Real Property Solutions Company, Owner

Debbie Provolt

David Varshock, Coast Central Realty, Broker / President

Kay Backer, HELP consultant

NOTE: The above named FOL members are signatory to this letter via electronic means (see Attachment B)

ATTACHMENT " A "

RE: Thanks
Date: 10/19/2009 3:17:52 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: MRichardson@co.humboldt.ca.us
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Here you go!

-----Original Message-----
From: KBIUSA@aol.com [mailto:KBIUSA@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2009 10:03 AM
To: Richardson, Michael
Subject: Thanks

Hi Michael -

Thanks so much for taking the time to meet with me Friday.

When you have time to send the land inventory excel spread sheet of those sites that ended up in the Housing Element....would appreciate it.

My best,

Kay

707 834-8006

+++++

ATTACHMENT " B "

RE: FOL Letter to HCD

Date: 11/5/2009 9:58:51 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: DProvolt@hltco.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Please include my name as being a signatory to the FOL letter to HCD dated 11-3-2009.

Debbie Provolt.

+++++

HCD

Date: 11/5/2009 9:16:29 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: linda@ncig.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Kay:

*Please include my name as being signatory to the FOL letter to HCD dated November 3, 2009.
Thanks*

*Linda Disiere CCIM
NCIG Equity Manager/Partner
3134 H Street
Eureka CA 95503
(707) 444-8560 x501
(707) 442-9580 FAX
linda@ncig.com
www.iraaa.org*

+++++

RE: FOL draft letter to State HCD

Date: 11/4/2009 4:17:23 P.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: timh@hoovenco.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

I am fine with it Kay.

TH

Tim Hooven

Vice President

Hooven & Co., Inc.

+++++

FOL Letter

Date: 11/5/2009 8:00:13 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: tinacutten@gmail.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Please include my name as being signatory to the FOL letter to HCD dated November 3, 2009.

Respectfully,

Tina Christensen

+++++

Re: FOL draft letter to State HCD

Date: 11/4/2009 6:44:07 P.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: dave@coastcentralrealty.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Kay,

Sorry about the delay in my response, I will absolutely sign. Please correct my title to Broker/President and there are just a couple of typos, nothing spell check should not catch.

Thanks Kay,

Dave V

+++++

Re: FOL Letter to HCD

Date: 11/5/2009 8:11:16 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: bhuston21@att.net
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Good letter!! To the point. My frustration with this county is almost as great as yours. Consider the letter signed by me. Bernice Huston

+++++

Re: FOL Letter to HCD

Date: 11/5/2009 7:23:42 A.M. Pacific Standard Time
From: realpropertysolutions@gotsky.com
To: KBIUSA@aol.com

Hi Kay:

Please include my name as being signatory to the FOL letter to HCD dated November 3, 2009.

Thanks for your efforts!

Kevin Caldwell

Real Property Solutions
P.O. Box 220
Miranda, CA. 95553
Office (707) 943-1900
FAX (707) 943-1626