

## The Cultural and Demographic Background

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**The Housing Element is consistent with the St. Helena General Plan Update Vision and Goals.** The Vision was presented by the General Plan Update Steering Committee and adopted by City Council, May 2008.

The Vision was created with intensive community involvement.

In addition to committee guidance, opinions were gathered at the Summer Concert Series, farmers markets and public workshops. Newsletters were produced and input cards were circulated. A web site was developed. Local newspapers ran articles and all outreach was available in both Spanish and English to ensure all segments of St. Helena's population were included. A phone survey also provided quantitative data to supplement the opinions and ideas gathered elsewhere.

The Vision creates a picture of St. Helena in the future where:

- More people who work in town will be able to afford to live here, in a wide range of innovative, well-designed housing for residents of all ages and income levels.
- St. Helena's historic and agricultural character will be honored and protected.
- St. Helena's character will be strengthened through innovative design that maintains the scale and character of neighborhoods.

The Goals Created from Visioning Process include:

- Create affordable workforce housing opportunities and improve the City's jobs-housing imbalance. Policies and programs to further this goal should recognize that St. Helena will continue to have more jobs than resident workers, but strive to achieve measurable improvements. The updated plan should address the mismatch between the types of jobs available in the City compared to the available housing and other effects of a continuing imbalance. This goal will require changes to the 1993 Land Use and Growth Management Element.
- Re-align land use plan with community goals. Policies and programs to further this goal should emphasize mixed-use strategies, changes to land use designations, changes to design guidelines and blending of new housing and commercial/office spaces into their surrounding environment. This goal will require changes to the 1993 Land Use and Growth Management Element and Community Design Element.

### **Why build housing in St. Helena at all?**

Community Diversity retains Community Character and Vitality

St. Helena has a small town, all-inclusive character that makes it a special place to live. The diversity of people of different cultures, incomes, and ages enhance the character and vitality of St. Helena. A variety of housing types available at a range of costs will allow a diversity of people to live here.

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Over the past two decades, St. Helena has controlled the growth of housing more than we have controlled the growth of jobs. This jobs/housing imbalance has contributed to a pattern of people commuting into St. Helena, resulting in traffic congestion on Hwy. 29. Transportation contributes 50% of our total carbon emissions. Reduction in vehicle miles traveled through a reduction in commuters will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Not only is this healthy for

the planet, but will help bring us into the goals of AB 32 which requires that we reduce carbon emissions.

### Social Responsibility

The human population is growing! We are a long way from zero population growth – and people are living longer. Projections are that two million more people will live in the San Francisco Bay Area by 2035. Where are they going to live?

### **Why build high density in-fill housing?**

The City of St. Helena has designated an Urban Limit Line (ULL) that defines the limits of urban growth. The primary reason that this was done was for the preservation of agricultural land. Once the land within the ULL is built upon, the City will need to look at expansion of urban growth into agricultural land. Efficient use of land will forestall the expansion of the ULL.

Efficient use of land means higher density – increasing the number of homes per acre over that which was traditionally done with suburban development patterns. For example, Stonebridge Apartments is developed at approximately 16 dwelling units per acre (dua). The Sylvaner Subdivision is developed at approximately 4 dua. That means 4 times as many people are housed at the Stonebridge Apartments as are housed on the same amount of land as in Sylvaner.

### **What is “affordable” housing?**

The median income in St. Helena (for a family of four) is \$79,200. Affordable incomes are tied to the area median income. It would take an income of \$210,000 per year to purchase the median priced St. Helena house of over \$872,500.

Extremely low income household makes less than 30% of median income. A family of four would make less than \$23,880. This category includes seniors or disabled people with social security as their only income, laborers, housekeepers, dishwashers.

Very low income household makes between 30% - 50% of median income. A family of four would make between \$23,880 - \$39,800. This category includes retail clerks, restaurant workers, hotel staff and landscape workers.

Low income household makes between 50% - 80% of median income. A family of four would make between \$39,800 - \$61,500. This category includes office and winery workers, bank clerks, city and school district employees.

Moderate income household makes between 80% -120% of median income. A family of four would make between \$61,500 - \$95,520. This category includes City employees, teachers, police officers, hospital employees, carpenters.

### **What is workforce housing?**

HCD has not adopted an official definition of Workforce Housing. The recommendation in the Housing Element is that it be defined as a household that makes between 120% - 180% of median income. A family of four would make between \$95,520 - \$143,280, able to purchase housing in the range of \$380,000 - \$570,000.

### **What happens if we don't meet the state deadlines for submittal of the new housing element?**

The Housing Element would become out of compliance with state law until a new one is adopted and certified. Until a Certified Housing Element is adopted, the City could be subject to legal action and/or become ineligible for certain types of State-administered funding.