

June 4, 2002

Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

SUBJECT: Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report on Housing the Citizens of Santa Barbara County

Dear Honorable Judge Melville:

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the City of Lompoc's formal response to subject report dated May 2002. According to Penal Code Section 933, the City has 90 days to reply to the Grand Jury Report. This letter is intended to satisfy that reporting requirement.

The Grand Jury Report made two findings and one recommendation regarding the City of Lompoc. The following is the City's formal response to the two findings and one recommendation:

Finding 1: The cities and County will have great difficulty in achieving the State mandated housing goals.

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding as the finding relates to the City of Lompoc.

The State mandated housing goals dictate that cities and County have adequate zoning and sites to accommodate the allocated housing needs for each income category. The State does not require that jurisdictions necessarily produce the number of allocated units by the end of the assigned period. Each jurisdiction is only required to accommodate the potential for development of the residential units, i.e., to provide a supply of vacant, properly zoned land within its boundaries to accommodate the number of projected units at specified income levels. To this end, the projected housing needs allotted to each jurisdiction by the local council of governments are required to be incorporated into each jurisdiction's Housing Element of its General Plan. The Housing Element then becomes the basis for the development of local housing programs to help meet the existing and projected housing needs.

The City of Lompoc has adequate land properly zoned inside the city limits to accommodate the numbers of housing units allocated for each income category. Based on the City of Lompoc's prior growth rates, the City is currently projected to add 58% (488 residential

units) of its allocated share of residential units during the January 2001 through July 2008. The City is required to accommodate the remaining need of 42% (353 residential units) to meet its share of housing needs. In December of 1999, the Lompoc City Council approved a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change for several parcels at the easterly entrance to the City. As part of the analysis for that project, staff determined that the vacant, residentially zoned land within the City limits would accommodate the remaining need of housing units for the assigned period.

Finding 2: The cities and County have already lost valuable time in setting goals and policies to achieve housing growth rates to provide adequate housing for our citizens.

Respondent disagrees partially with the finding as the finding relates to the City of Lompoc.

The Regional Housing Needs Plan (RNHP) was adopted by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) on March 19, 1992. The countywide allocation was 18,969 units for the period between 1990 through 1997. Following adoption of the RNHP in 1992, each jurisdiction was required to accommodate its share of the number of allocated residential units into its Housing Element. Subsequently, the City updated its General Plan Housing Element in December of 1992 to comply with State law. The RHNP was extended by the State because funding was not available to undertake another allocation process.

Since that time, a new allocation process and development of a revised RHNP are underway for the period of January 2001 through July 2008. Various steps associated with development of the revised RHNP and subsequent timing for agencies to update their Housing Elements have already taken place. In November of 2001, The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) provided the Santa Barbara County estimate of housing needs to SBCAG. In January, SBCAG submitted a request to HCD to lower the countywide allocation based upon several local factors. SBCAG staff was advised that HCD reduced the allocation range. Development of the methodology for local allocation began in January of 2002. SBCAG staff worked with the Technical Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) on the methodology. The draft RHNP is expected to be completed in May 2002 and released for public comment. The revised final RNHP is expected to be adopted and forwarded to HCD by December 31, 2002.

Recommendation 1: In meeting the housing goals established by the State and soon to be allocated by SBCAG, the cities and County need to establish policies and metrics to facilitate the necessary actions and to track performance.

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The recommendation for meeting housing needs is an ongoing process that has been implemented as required by State law. Additionally, the new allocation of housing needs released by the State will be implemented as required by State law.

The General Plan Housing Element is required to be sent to HCD to be certified as being in compliance with State Housing Element Law, including compliance with the adopted RHNP. Most recently, the State Department of Housing and Community Development found the City of Lompoc's Housing Element to be in conformance with State law in 1997. As noted previously, SBCAG has been working with each of the cities and County through TPAC since November of 2001 to revise the RNHP to incorporate the new countywide allocation of residential units. Upon adoption of the revised RNHP by SBCAG, each jurisdiction is required to update its Housing Element to accommodate the allocated housing units and distribution by income group to ensure that the housing needs are met. Each jurisdiction's Housing Element is required to be certified by HCD by December of 2003. The City of Lompoc is expected to begin its Housing Element update in January of 2003.

Additionally, State law requires the City to file an annual report addressing the status of the General Plan and progress made toward implementation of its goals, policies, and programs. The City is currently working on the annual report for the 2000 through 2001 period. As with the General Plan Housing Element, the annual report is required to include progress made in meeting its share of regional housing needs and efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing for all income levels.

In conclusion, the City of Lompoc disagrees with the Findings 1 and 2 of the Grand Jury Report because (1) the City of Lompoc has achieved compliance with State mandated housing goals and anticipates compliance with the 2003 Housing Element update and (2) the General Plan Housing Element contains effective goals and policies that will continue to be carried over to the 2003 Housing Element update. Lastly, the City has already complied with Recommendation 1.

The City of Lompoc welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report.

Dick DeWees
Mayor, City of Lompoc

cc: Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Foreperson
Board of Supervisors