

10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee

“10,000 Affordable, Accessible Homes by 2010”

Final Report



May 1, 2007





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Introduction

The "10 x 10" Affordable Housing Plan is a community based Mayoral Initiative to foster the creation of 10,000 new affordable housing units by 2010. The Plan was originally created by members of the Fresno Housing Alliance in cooperation with the Mayor and City staff over a six month period. The Plan emphasizes land-use, planning and affordable housing policies that will help Fresno become a healthy, prosperous and affordable destination.

The 10,000 affordable housing units include units that are completed, under construction, permitted, approved in master plans. Affordable means housing for very-low to moderate-income households. Currently 58 percent of Fresno residents are at or below moderate income. Affordable housing may also include new housing that is priced at or below the median home price for the City.

The "10 x 10" Plan was unveiled at the Mayor's State of the City Address on May 25, 2006. The initial step of the Plan called for the Mayor to appoint a "10 x 10" Blue Ribbon Committee to complete an Action Plan around the five original strategies below:

1. **Smart Growth Plan Implementation** - Achieve the higher densities of the General Plan to increase affordability, and promote developments that are mixed-use and pedestrian oriented.
2. **Urban Reinvestment, In-Fill, and Transitional Housing Developments** - Look to other cities for models of reinvestment and continue to proactively address the housing issues of our urban core.
3. **Expand Affordable Housing Resources and New Financing** - Continue to seek and support additional housing resources.
4. **Innovative Local Government Planning, Incentives, Regulations, Permitting, and Enforcement** - Fast track City review and approval of affordable housing developments, and adopt stricter code enforcement penalties against slumlords.
5. **Coordinate Regional Land Use and Transportation Policies** - Participate in the Regional Blue Print process, and lobby the State and Federal Government to financially reward local jurisdictions that regionally plan and work together.

In September 2006, thirteen committee members and Councilmember Sterling were appointed to spearhead the plan.



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Blue Ribbon Committee Membership

Keith Bergthold (City of Fresno)
 Cynthia Sterling (Co-Chair, Councilmember City of Fresno)
 Dennis Woods (United Security Bank)
 Jess Negrete (Central California Legal Services)
 Robert Wood (Generation Homes)
 Sharon Stanley (Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries)
 Veda Stamps (The Ramsay Group)
 Michael Sigala (City of Fresno)
 Reverend Paul Werfelmann (Fresno Hope Lutheran Church)
 Sara Hedgpeth-Harris (League of Woman Voters)
 Ned Stacy
 Lee Brand (Westco)
 Dan Fitzpatrick (Lantana Corporation LLC)

The 10 x 10 Committee has met every Thursday at City Hall at 4:00 p.m. The Committee has been committed to learning the numerous issues concerning affordable housing. Affordable housing can be defined as housing made available to households at or below 120 percent of area median income where no more than 30 percent of the monthly income is spent on housing. During the meetings, the committee learned about how other communities fund and encourage the development of affordable housing. The committee also learned that collaborative efforts between private developers and City planners are essential to create attractive, successful affordable housing projects.

The committee also learned that there are significant barriers to affordable housing which include substantial building costs, “NIMBYism” (Not In My Backyard) syndrome, and at times lengthy approval processes.

The 10 x 10 Blue Ribbon Committee has been dedicated to addressing those barriers. In October 2006, Nick Yovino, Director, Planning and Development Department, presented to the 10 x 10 Committee the changes that are occurring within the Department that would foster development of affordable housing projects. The changes included the passage of the “Variety Pack” of zoning laws and the implementation of the Application Business Center (ABC) to assist with development applications that come to City Hall.



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In October 2006, committee members created seven subcommittees to complete an action plan to fulfill the goal of 10,000 units by 2010. The subcommittees are:

- New Financing
- Innovative Local Government
- Urban Reinvestment, Infill and Transitional Housing Development
- Innovative Code Enforcement
- Affordable Accessible Housing
- Smart Growth Plan Implementation
- Regional Land Use and Transportation

Subcommittees not only worked with committee members, but with members of the community. On December 19, 2006, each subcommittee presented their preliminary reports to Mayor Alan Autry. Mayor Alan Autry warmly received the Preliminary Report, and gave the Blue Ribbon Committee additional time to finalize their recommendations and report to him at a later date with a final report.

Since that date, the 10 x 10 Blue Ribbon Committee has worked diligently to form a strategic plan to achieve 10,000 affordable, accessible homes by 2010. Each subcommittee ensured that their recommendations were relevant to issues facing the City of Fresno residents. For example, the Urban Reinvestment subcommittee met with the Continuum of Care and other community advocates regarding providing housing for homeless residents. The Code Enforcement subcommittee researched the health aspects of substandard housing conditions and how a pro-active code enforcement could reduce the City’s number of substandard units. The Accessibility subcommittee researched Universal Design and how the concept for designing housing units benefits everyone. The New Financing subcommittee researched how to create and fund a housing trust fund. Eliminating administrative barriers to the development of affordable housing projects was the focus of the Innovative Government subcommittee. The Smart Growth subcommittee researched density bonuses and flexible design guidelines to encourage the development of mixed income housing. The Regional Land Use subcommittee discussed the importance of communities in the region working together to leverage state and federal funds for a regional housing trust fund.

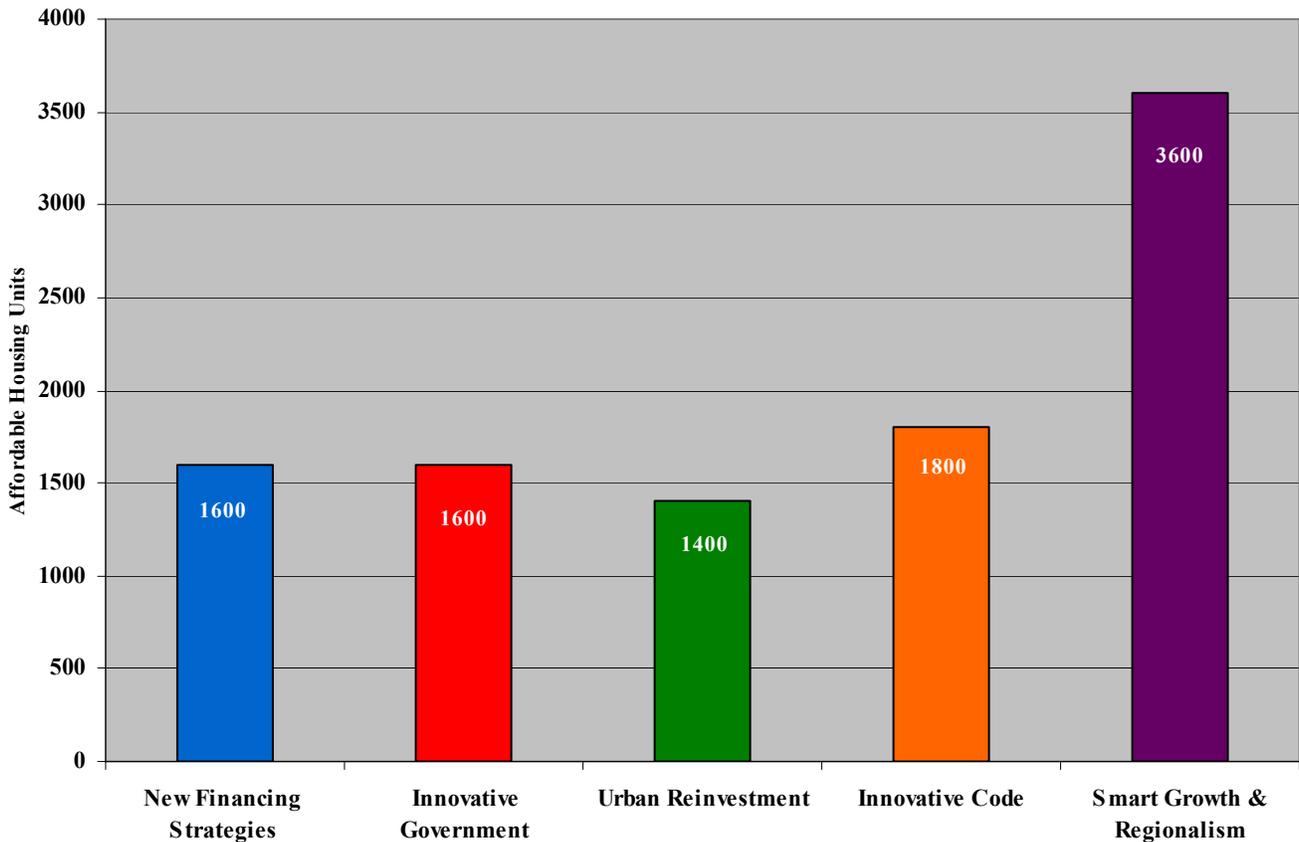


Housing Units for Each Subcommittee



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Below is a graph that indicates how many affordable accessible housing units may be completed, under construction, approved or master planned by the year 2010, if the recommendations of this report are implemented.





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Next Steps

The 10 x 10 Blue Ribbon Committee Final Report to the Mayor is a collaborative effort between committee members, City of Fresno departments, state and federal agencies, community leaders and advocates, community organizations and dedicated residents of our community. After the final report was presented to the Mayor on March 22, 2007 and on May 1, 2007, to City Council for approval, the Committee will meet at least once a month to implement and monitor these recommendations. Achieving 10,000 affordable, accessible homes, is an ongoing process that the committee is dedicated to see through to completion. Having safe, available, affordable housing is crucial to improve the economic, and physical well-being of our community.



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New Financing Strategies



Goal: Develop New Financing Strategies and Eliminate Financial Barriers for Affordable Housing

New Financing Strategies: New Financing Strategies are crucial for an effective affordable housing plan. It is vital to secure a variety of funding sources for affordable housing production. The City of Fresno should also work towards eliminating some of the financial barriers for non-profit and for profit affordable housing developers. The Community Bank Investment Plan could yield 2,000 affordable housing units per \$30 million invested.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Create a Housing Trust Fund and a committee to establish an Implementation Strategy**
- **Adopt the Community Bank Investment Plan for City deposits to encourage banks to finance affordable housing projects**
- **Create and fund a countywide consortium of cities and affordable housing advocates to lobby for state and federal funding sources**
- **Work with all stakeholders including the building trades to establish a local wage rate**
- **Continue to address economic barriers to affordable housing**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Housing and Community Development Division, Redevelopment Agency, For Profit and Non-Profit Affordable Housing Developers, local banks and affordable housing advocates.





Innovative Government



Goal: Empower the Private Sector to Develop Affordable Housing by Streamlining the Approval Process, Reducing Administrative Barriers, and Providing Economic Incentives

Innovative Government The private sector must be empowered to increase the number of affordable housing units. Outdated zoning laws and annexation laws, a lengthy approval process, and complicated City requirements can discourage private development of affordable housing projects. Economic incentives should be utilized to encourage private developers to build affordable housing projects. A “shepherd” should be appointed per project to assist it through the development and approval process.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Appoint a “Shepherd” that would assist affordable housing projects through the approval process**
- **Implement the Application Business Center (ABC)**
- **Adopt more flexible zoning codes and improve the annexation process**
- **Implement economic incentives such as density bonuses**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, City Manager’s Office, Public Utilities Department, and Public Works Department





Urban Reinvestment/Infill Properties



Goal: Encourage Development of Vacant/Underutilized Infill Properties into Affordable Housing

Urban Reinvestment/Infill Properties: There are many areas throughout the City that have vacant and/or underutilized properties. These properties need to be inventoried and then a “portfolio” of each property should be developed to market the properties to developers. Adopting a new zoning code and removing land use restrictions would help in the development of infill/underutilized properties

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Assemble and maintain a database of vacant and underutilized properties.**
- **Develop a marketing plan to “assemble, package, and sell” sustainable infill development. The marketing plan should include an interdisciplinary team of experts that would help the developer develop the property successfully and provide assistance through the completion of the project**
- **Remove land use restrictions and adopt proactive rezoning of infill properties**
- **Find a target area in every Fresno City Council District for infill development.**
- **Create economic incentives for infill development**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Redevelopment Agency, Public Works, Public Utilities, and for profit and non-profit developers.





Urban Reinvestment/Transitional Housing



Goal: Dramatically Increase the Availability of Housing Options for Homeless and Very Low Income Residents

Housing for Homeless and Very Low Income Residents: There is a great need for housing for homeless and very low income residents. Supportive care needs to be provided for residents in transitional housing. Emergency housing for families, housing for transitional age youth and permanent supportive care housing are examples of much needed housing options for this population group.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Engage the County in developing a strategic plan for emergency, transitional, permanent supportive care housing for the elderly, poor, and disabled communities**
- **Prioritize public sources of funding for homeless and very low income housing**
- **Develop private sources of funding for homeless and very low income housing**

Lead Agencies: A strategic partnership between the County of Fresno and City of Fresno with community based organizations.





Innovative Code Enforcement



Goal: Implement Pro-Active Code Enforcement to Reduce the Number of Substandard Housing Units

Pro-active Code Enforcement: Pro-active code enforcement is essential to transform substandard housing units into safe, affordable housing for residents. Pro-active code enforcement entails using existing tools, such as The Housing Standard Team, The Anti-Slum Task Force, City Attorney's Office and Code Enforcement Department. Through these recommendations it is the goal of the Code Enforcement Department to transform 1,800 substandard units into quality housing. Legal tools such as the Real Property Ordinance, and Receiverships are used as powerful deterrents to frequent code violators. Systematic inspections should occur for habitual code violators.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Strengthen the Housing Standard Team and Anti-Slum Task Force**
- **Hire three additional Code Inspectors**
- **Hire additional City Attorneys dedicated to proactive Code Enforcement**
- **Use legal tools such as the Real Property Ordinance and Receiverships as effective deterrents against frequent code violators**
- **Create a systematic inspection of code-offending rental units**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Code Enforcement Division, City Attorney's Office, and City Manager's Office





Innovative Code Enforcement



Goal: Create a Pilot Program For Community Engaged Pro-Active Code Enforcement

Community Engaged Code Enforcement: Community involvement is essential for effective code enforcement. Tenants and owners need to be educated on their rights and responsibilities. Tenant cooperation is essential for effective code enforcement. A clear checklist of code, health and safety violations needs to be implemented to educate the City/Community Partners, Tenants, and Owners. Tenants need to be educated regarding the health risk of substandard housing. These risks include lead poisoning and asthma triggers.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Implement an effective community engaged, pro-active code enforcement program**
- **Engage community partners such as the Fresno Housing Alliance, Fresno County Health, The California Apartment Association and other community health organizations**
- **Create a clear Checklist of Code, Health and Safety violations**
- **Educate all tenants and owners regarding the health risks of substandard housing**
- **Strengthen enforcement of existing regulations regarding cooling systems**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Code Enforcement, Fresno County Department of Health, Community Partners and Health Organizations, .



FRESNO HOUSING ALLIANCE

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Affordable Accessible Housing



Goal: To Incorporate Universal Design for all New Residential Development

Affordable Accessible Housing Universal Design is a “Design for All” approach to house design. Five Basic features of Universal Design can be incorporated without greatly impacting affordability. The five basic features of Universal Design are:

- No step accessible entry
- All doorways & passage ways at least 34 inches
- One downstairs bedroom and accessible bathroom with reinforcements for grab bars
- Six square feet of accessible kitchen counters
- Hallways at least 42 inches wide

Recommendations For Implementation:

- Adopt a City Ordinance for all City funded affordable housing projects to incorporate the five basic features of Universal Design
- Work with key stakeholders to create a policy that all new residential units built in the City of Fresno will incorporate the five basic features of Universal Design
- Continue to support programs such as the Disabled Accessibility Grant Program and other programs that rehabilitate existing dwelling units so that they are accessible

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Housing and Community Development Division, and Community Partners





Smart Growth



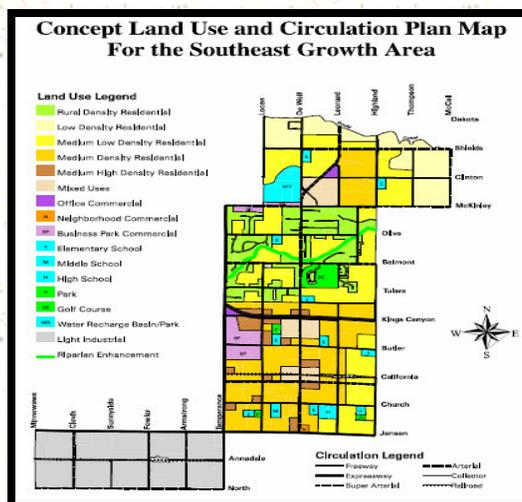
Goal: Achieve Significant Numbers of Master Planned Affordable Accessible Single and Multi-Family Units Using the Southeast Growth and Other Sponsored Community and Specific plans as an Example

Smart Growth: Community and specific plans to create policies and design guidelines adopted by the City of Fresno should include Smart Growth objectives. Smart Growth principals encourage incentives such as density bonuses to encourage high quality, mixed income neighborhoods with a range of housing opportunities.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Direct the Planning and Development Department with Consultants to formulate plans that include compact development, higher densities and site design guidelines that will incorporate affordable, accessible mixed-use or single site development projects**
- **Encourage developers and provide incentives such as fast track processing, that result in all new residential development having at least 20% of the units attainable for families earning 120% of the area median income and below. Half of these units should be attainable for very low, and low income families with incomes at 80% of the area median income and below**
- **Secure long term affordability for rental units through covenants and Deeds Equity Sharing and other mechanisms**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, Consultants and Developers



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Smart Growth and Impact Fees



Goal: To Increase the Number of Affordable Housing Units Built by the Private Sector by Waiving a Portion or All Impact or Entitlement Fees for Affordable Housing Development

Smart Growth/Impact Fees: The need for housing for families at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) is well documented. Providing a relief from impact and entitlement fees for affordable housing projects will create incentives for the private sector to develop affordable housing. This type of incentive along with other incentives such as density bonuses and streamlining will encourage private developers to build more single family and mixed income affordable housing projects.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Implement a local Density Bonus ordinance**
- **Waive or reduce impact and entitlement fees for housing projects approved as “Density Bonus” projects as defined by the City and the State, with recorded deed and covenant income restrictions for low and very low households (80% of Area Median Income and below) for thirty years**
- **Waive or reduce impact and entitlement fees for new construction of single family homes sold to families utilizing the City’s First Time Homebuyer Program or other programs acceptable to the City. The developer would receive a reimbursement for fees waived once the home is sold to a low income family**
- **Consider an annual appropriation of non-impact monies to support these policies**

Lead Agency: The Planning and Development Department, and Private Developers





Regional Land Use



Goal: To Have the City of Fresno Take a Leadership Role in Promoting a Regional Housing Strategy that Includes Transit, Energy Efficiency, and Targets Mixed Income and Mixed Use Developments

Regional Land Use: The City of Fresno, has been participating in the creation and development of the regional housing strategy for the San Joaquin Valley. In 2007, a regional Housing Trust was introduced in the State Legislature. The City of Fresno is participating in the regional Blueprint process that will organize a collective action in regards to transportation, land use, and housing in relation to economic development.

Recommendations For Implementation:

- **Work with strategic partners throughout the Valley to implement a Regional Housing Trust Fund that gives incentives for affordable housing development in relation to smart growth and new urban policies**
- **Consider participating in the National Call to Action for Affordable Housing through Regulatory reform**
- **Maintain a leadership role in the California Partnership and the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint process**
- **Consider pursuing the Goals of the Metro Loop Project**

Lead Agency: Fresno Office of Housing and Urban Development, The City of Fresno, California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, Council of Governments, and the State Department of Housing and Community Development



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Special Acknowledgements



The 10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee would like to acknowledge all the people who participated in the planning process of this report.

Mayor Alan Autry

City Council Members and Staff

City Manager's Office

City Departments

-Planning and Development

-City Attorney's Office

-Public Works

-Public Utilities

-Finance Department

-Economic Development

Fresno Redevelopment Agency

Fresno City Housing Authority

HUD

County of Fresno Mental/Behavioral Health

County of Fresno Department of Community Health

Center for Independent Living

The Fresno Madera Continuum of Care

Housing Partnership for the Disabled

California State University, Fresno

Fresno Housing Alliance

California Apartment Association

Sequoia Community Health Center

Fresno Madera Medical Society

Local Electricians Union

Better Opportunity Builders

CURE

A.F. Evans

Poverello House

FIRM

.....And all other people, groups, civic organizations, community leaders and advocates who participated in the 10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee .

A special thank you to the Planning and Development Department, Housing and Community Development Division for providing the administrative support and assistance to the 10 x 10 Committee. A special recognition goes to Sara Mirhadi of the Housing and Community Development Division for putting together this final report.