

To: Mendocino Supervisors John Haschak and Mo Mulheren  
Cc: Supervisor Ted Williams  
Cc: Building and Planning Department  
From: Anderson Valley Housing Association  
Date: September 20, 2021  
Re: AVHA Input for the Mendocino Supervisors' Housing and Homeless Ad Hoc Committee

Sincere thanks to Supervisors Haschak and Mulheren for volunteering for the Housing and Homeless ad hoc committee, taking on the task of drafting a response to the Mendocino Grand Jury's findings and helping create new pathways for affordable housing.

The Anderson Valley Housing Association (AVHA) would like to share with you some suggestions, to give a voice to the more remote regions of Mendocino, and, hopefully, to make your drafting job easier.

1. Implement periodic housing meetings, with Supervisors, Building and Planning representatives, and representation from Mendocino's various regions and communities, to facilitate sharing of ideas, concerns, and potential housing ideas. The Grand Jury recommended instituting a "formal and consistent communication" process between PBS and the cities (Ft. Bragg, Pt. Arena, Ukiah, and Willits). We ask that you expand that to include unincorporated area representation as well.
2. Integrate flexibility into county building codes for housing projects in rural areas that rely on wells and septic systems, especially regarding fire resistant construction; the Building and Planning Dept. should develop acceptable fire resistance alternatives to sprinkler systems, as Oregon state has done:

With the passage of Senate Bill 582 in the 2013 session, the legislature noted: *"It is in the best interests of this state that state building code regulations encourage economic development, experimentation, innovation and cost effectiveness in construction, especially construction in rural or remote parts of this state."*

Accordingly, the Division has been tasked with identifying provisions in the code which are barriers and developing strategies to simplify processes and reduce obstacles. One such barrier is the requirement to install a fire sprinkler system in buildings where water supply is either unavailable or inadequate to service a code-compliant sprinkler system.<sup>1</sup>

3. Current zoning regulations are not compatible with the CA mandate to increase affordable housing stock in rural regions. There needs to be reasonable options for density housing near rural town centers (to reduce our transportation carbon footprint) and options for expanding development on AG-zoned lands, especially those that are not actively being utilized for agriculture. We recommend an easy-to-navigate process for applying to zoning re-designations, without a cap on how many re-zoning applications the DBP can accept annually.

<sup>1</sup>[www.oregon.gov/bcd/codes-stand/Documents/st-whitepaper-alternatefiresprinklers.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/bcd/codes-stand/Documents/st-whitepaper-alternatefiresprinklers.pdf)

4. Encourage small, viable projects in Mendocino's outlying and unincorporated areas (in addition, of course, to the larger projects that Mendocino's cities -- with sewer and water systems -- can support). Developing affordable local workforce housing helps retain continuity in the workforce and reduces the need for long and twisty commutes.
5. Consider developing a Community Land Trust program that would invest in land and encourage would-be home owners to help build their own new homes with sweat-equity in lieu of down-payments. This would help house low-middle-income families and keep current low-income housing stock accessible to those who need it most.
6. Set up a Mendocino County Building Trust Fund, as the Grand Jury recommended.
7. We understand that many of these suggestions would entail additional time and effort on the part of the Building and Planning Department staff. We encourage you to support that effort with the budget and the staffing resources they'll need to make this work.

Many thanks for welcoming and considering our input! It's been a couple of tough years, with COVID and fire and draught, and we understand that there's a lot on your collective plates. Thank you for your desire to improve Mendocino's affordable housing stock and processes, and for being open to working together as a community to make it happen.

Sincerely,

The Anderson Valley Housing Association, Board of Directors

Kathy Cox   Matt Elke   Stephanie Gold   Rebecca Goldie

Chloe Quazzone   Captain Rainbow   Nancy Serna   Jody Williams