

# Report calls for more affordable housing

## Officials may mandate low-income units in new developments

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Inside Bay Area

Article Last Updated:08/15/2007 04:58:22 AM PDT

OAKLAND — Affordable-housing advocates released a report Tuesday calling on cities throughout the state to adopt rules mandating certain levels of low- and moderate-income housing in new residential development.

The report found that 170 cities and counties — accounting for about one-third of the state — already have such policies on the books.

Oakland officials continue to weigh the possibility of that kind of ordinance here.

Inclusionary zoning ordinances, as they are called, are designed mainly to ensure people can have home ownership opportunities in the communities in which they work, rather than forcing people to live far distances from the workplace.

The report said, "High school teachers, clergy, health care workers, day care providers — people who are considered lower-income — can now open their front doors and say 'welcome to my home,' as a result of inclusionary housing programs."

The report was commissioned by the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, the California Coalition for Rural Housing, the Sacramento Housing Alliance and the San Diego Housing Federation.

It found at least 80,000 people in California live in housing units built as a result of inclusionary zoning programs.

Such findings were presented as evidence that inclusionary zoning programs are working, and should be replicated.

In Oakland, a proposal that would have required developers to set aside at least 15 percent of new housing units for low- or moderate-income residents failed by the narrowest of margins last year.

After the City Council split 4-4 on the question, then-Mayor Jerry Brown cast the tie-breaking vote against it, saying the proposal would have driven developers and private investment out of the city while doing little to help the 30,000 families living below the poverty line in Oakland.

"It will not make even a small dent," Brown said at the time.

The council instead opted to create a blue-ribbon commission to study inclusionary zoning options.

In the meantime, one of Mayor Ron Dellums' task forces wrestled with the question earlier this year, unanimously endorsing the creation of an inclusionary zoning measure.

Dellums spokeswoman Karen Stevenson said the mayor supports the concept of inclusionary zoning, and that he repeatedly called for it in his campaign, but that, as far as any specific proposal, "the devil is in the details."

Dellums' task force presented its recommendation to the council's blue-ribbon commission, members of which have met 20 times since February, according to a list of their meetings on the city's Web site.

Gary Patton, the city's deputy director of planning and zoning, said the Commission would present a proposal to the City Council's Community and Economic Development Committee on Sept. 11.

Committee chair Jane Brunner, who supported the

15 percent plan last fall, said she is looking forward to seeing the new proposal.

She said she is not sure whether it will be "better or worse" than past proposals.

"I think we need to get something on the books and see if it works and then go from there," she said.

Inclusionary zoning proposals frequently do come up against the argument that they may stymie development.

Dianne Spaulding, executive director of the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, said numerous cities' experiences with inclusionary zoning indicates that such fears are unwarranted.

"There's really no factual data that for-profit developers cannot build under this kind of policy," she said.

The report recommended that in addition to adopting inclusionary zoning policies, cities should move to provide incentives — such as density bonuses, fee reductions and fast-track permitting — to ease the burden on developers.

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