

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Division of Housing Policy Development

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February 21, 2006

Mr. John A. Ornelas
City Manager
City of Bell Gardens
7100 South Garfield
Bell Gardens, CA 90201

Dear Mr. Ornelas:

RE: Review of the City of Bell Gardens' Adopted Housing Element

Thank you for submitting the City of Bell Gardens' revised housing element, adopted November 14, 2005 and received for review November 23, 2005. As you know, the Department is required to review adopted housing elements and report the findings to the locality pursuant to Government Code Section 65585(h).

The Department's October 18, 2005 review found the revised draft element addressed the statutory requirements. Since the adopted housing element is substantially the same as the revised draft, the Department is pleased to find it in full compliance with State housing element law (Article 10.6 of the Government Code). The Department commends Bell Gardens' effort to address its regional housing needs by assisting the Vista Del Rio housing development through the use of the City's redevelopment set-aside funds. To further facilitate the development of housing for low- and moderate-income households, the element includes a variety of strong programs, including programs to promote homeownership by expanding the maximum density for condominiums and to facilitate developer consultation with City staff.

Please note because Bell Gardens has adopted a housing element that complies with State housing element law, and submitted an Annual Progress Report on implementation of the housing element (pursuant to Government Code Section 65400), the City has met the threshold requirements for an innovative new program that rewards local governments for approving workforce housing affordable to very low- and low-income households. The WFH Program, funded by Proposition 46, provides grants to eligible local governments for every qualifying residential unit permitted in calendar year 2006. Grant awards can be used to fund any capital asset project, such as infrastructure, street, or park improvements. Applications are due to the Department by March 22, 2006. More specific program information about the Program is available on the Department's website at <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/ca/whrp>.

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For your information, recently enacted legislation (Chapter 706, Statutes of 2002, Government Code Section 65863) requires local governments to ensure its inventory of adequate sites can accommodate its share of the regional housing need throughout the planning period. Government Code Section 65863(b) also prohibits local governments from lowering a residential density below that utilized by the Department in determining compliance with housing element law unless the locality makes certain findings. Further, Government Code Section 65589.4 (added by Chapter 793, Statutes of 2003) provides more certainty and simplifies procedural requirements for approving multifamily projects in multifamily zones. The law requires that multifamily uses not be subject to a conditional use permit in multifamily zones if specific requirements are met.

The Department looks forward to following Bell Gardens' progress in implementing its housing and land-use programs through annual general plan progress reports required pursuant to Government Codes Section 65400, and wishes the City continued success in addressing its housing and community development needs. If the Department can provide any further assistance in implementing the element, please contact Paul McDougall, of our staff, at (916) 322-7995.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy E. Creswell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy E. Creswell
Deputy Director

cc: Gilbert A. Livas, Director, Community Development Department