

Editor
Alameda Journal

To The Editor:

This letter is in reference to the proposed Housing Element that was brought before the Planning board on October 22nd and is currently being presented to various city boards and commissions. The release of the Housing Element was delayed and the time granted for public review is now extremely limited. Although the text of the Housing Element is available online, crucial information in the form of appendices is not yet available unless you appear in person at City Hall.

This is a major concern because the Housing Element forms the basis of the next General Plan for Alameda. If the element is approved, it can only be amended by a vote of the City Council. Public input at this stage is crucial. The Housing Element calls for an addition of 3621 housing units in Alameda over the next 5 years. This number exceeds a number based on a formula used by Association of Bay Area Governments. This number itself is based on outdated information. The current number assumes that the 14,000 jobs lost when the Naval Air Station closed would simply be replaced at the new Alameda Point. There will not be 14,000 new jobs at Alameda Point.

To provide for this dramatic increase in housing, areas that were designated as open space in the 1991 General Plan are now being used for units, specifically, high priced units built by developers. The current site designated for Estuary Park on Clement between Willow and Oak is such an area. And even though the new General Plan has not been approved, the Planning Department has been working for months with a private developer to put 74 new units on a site that is currently designated as open space.

The Parks Commission is unable to bear the expense to obtain and clean-up the property. They have not explored any county or state or private financing options. Unless the citizens of Alameda put forth an effort now and demand desperately needed parks, Alameda will lose them. Neither the Parks Commission nor the Planning Board have any desire to prevent this from happening. It appears as if the best option is to put our open space and the future quality of life on the Island solely in the hands of developers. The Housing Element that is in review basically provides a map for developers to exploit the remaining available sites on the Islands, sites that should be used for soccer games and barbeques and frisbee and softball.

There is a group of citizens that are very concerned about future developments on the Island and our loss of open space. Our website is <http://jwoodard.best.vwh.net/epac> and it contains a list of upcoming meetings where the public can make its views known. It will also provide information on what action is being taken to hold on to our open spaces and ways you can help.

Sincerely,

Deborah R. Greene
Penny Cozad