

Fort Bragg general plan a few notes:

It happened around 2000 when there were three seats open on the Fort Bragg City Council: Vince Benedetti, Dan Gjerde and Michelle White were voted into office. The remaining council members were Lindy Peters, and Jere Melo.

The general plan needed update, so the process began early on. Many of us citizens could see this was not going well so we formed a citizens group known as the Citizens for Fort Bragg 's Future to keep an eye on the general plan process. We had someone from our group at every single committee, planning and City Council meetings related to the general plan.

Marvin Parrish and I were the only two citizens that knew about but attended a meeting where three of the City Council members voted to exclude council member Melo from participation in the general plan because he had retired from Georgia Pacific. Lindy Peters voted no but this was one of probably hundreds of 3 to 1 votes on various parts of the general plan. It went downhill from there.

The general plan that evolved from this process took many months and many public meetings. This was in my opinion, designed specifically to take existing authority from the City Council and structure the general plan so future council members could not vote on certain projects or actions without a general plan amendment. They accomplished that task.

I refer to the prior general plan (1982 version) which this new general plan updated. Of the many items it had allowed, one was that a standard 50 x 150 ft.2 lot zoned for multiple units could effectively have a triplex or three-unit residential property constructed on it. This is not so in the new plan. The floor area ratios and lot coverages were unreasonable for a municipality that really wanted more housing to be built. The first step the city Council took in this process was to reduce the sphere of influence which is a general planning area that a city such as Fort Bragg would have in place for future planning and for some legal purposes as well. This was unheard of for a city to take this action. Why on earth would they wish to reduce the area over which they had some influence? No good reason except for making it more difficult to annex, even if they desire to do so in the future.

In the General Plan it was specifically added that a residential annexation could not be undertaken unless the annexation was revenue neutral; meaning it had to be able to provide for the police and fire protection which is virtually impossible for a residential annexation and to my knowledge there have been no annexations since this general plan went into effect. That may be incorrect, but none come to mind. The former administration prior to this had begun the process for public meetings and notifications for discussion to annex from the eastern boundary of Fort Bragg all the way out to Monson Lane adjacent to the city water plant. This was a logical extension for the citizens of the Fort Bragg area as most of the infrastructure; water, sewer, power etc. is in place. If you drive out Sherwood Road and view the open areas, then make a left on Monson Lane and turn back west on Cedar Street to the city limits you will see more open spaces with the capacity for probably several hundred homes that are totally ignored in this general plan because to attempt it would require a general plan amendment for annexation.

One of the other major concerns was that the City Council used to be able to approve a water or sewer connection outside of the city limits of Fort Bragg. It was done at the council level and not many were done but some were allowed specifically for a situation where there was a failed septic system. The City's

update with this general plan disallowed the City Council being the decision maker on such an issue. If they did wish to pursue such an action, they would have to make a general plan amendment before they could consider it. The eastern portion of Fort Bragg has a rather high-water table so septic systems are difficult to develop and often have issues but are not allowed to hook onto the city sewer system in this general plan even if the city sewer is adjacent to the property. Many people granted easements for both water and sewer lines all over town years ago.

The one change I recommend would be to remove the limitations to a specific mapped area of water and sewer services district but leave it entirely up to the City Council. If they're responsible enough to do a general plan, implement and enforce it, they are responsible enough to decide on a case-by-case basis. That authority was taken from them. Many of you probably don't know and that's the reason for this letter.

On the day this general plan was approved by the city Council, it was unanimously voted on and passed. Jere Melo pointed out to me that if the problems I mentioned proved to be negative to the City of Fort Bragg, we could always change them. That never happened. He also promised, after the plan had been in existence for a few years, to look at the sewer situation that had progressed and see if there should be some changes made. Council member Melo was killed before that review ever happened. At least three years ago, the City started on an ordinance or change of the general plan to allow adjacent properties to the city to hook onto water and/or sewer, but it got bogged down in discussion as they wanted to make sure by contract that any such hook ups would be obligated to provide low-income housing.

I have no idea where this is in process. I believe it was completely dropped. I spoke recently to a property owner that would have benefited from this, but he also has not heard anything from the city for years.

Paul Clark *2/27/24*

To: Jason Godeke, Vice Mayor
Community Development Committee, City of Fort Bragg

From: Geri A. Morisky, Grassroots Institute, Housing Work Group

Re: **Housing Workshop February 27, 2024: Key Challenges & Proposal for Monthly Collaborative Housing Work Groups**

Thank you for hosting this urgently needed workshop. While the City of Fort Bragg has been among the most innovative and responsive to our housing crisis, our lack of affordable and suitable housing continues to have multiple harmful impacts – unraveling the cultural and socio-economic fabric of our whole community. We are all too rapidly losing our remaining valuable lands and housing: Our 2050 future needs 2024 action.

We're also painfully aware of the obstacles to timely and shovel ready solutions. Yet other small towns have achieved out-of-the-box community driven solutions, when everyone is deeply engaged.

Real solutions can only emerge when we create strong collaborative connections among all key stakeholders – which take time to evolve, deepen and grow. Ongoing focused housing workshops can help bring our employers, employees, elders, young people and real estate community together to deeply listen to one another and the challenges we face, build mutual trust and understanding, and respect one another's needs – and the urgent needs of our community.

Key Challenges & Carving a Path Forward - 7 Pieces of the Puzzle

1) We need a strong collaborative housing hub and focused roundtable meetings to give a coherent and problem solving voice to the needs of our employers, employees, elders, young people and our future – and tackle the big challenges of current building costs and requirements, costly permitting process, septic, sewer, water, zoning, coastal zone restrictions, inaccessible market rate housing, and costly compliance costs for the unpermitted buildings housing most of our county's residents.

2) Market Rate Housing and Rentals Are Out of Reach to Most Residents: Most of our hard working families – the backbone of our community – average \$20,000 to \$35,000 per year. To purchase a \$500,000 home, most banks now require 20% down and \$80,000 per year to qualify. Our young people and elders, who contribute much to our community, are priced out of ownership, and face skyrocketing rents for unsuitable and unsafe housing. All are very vulnerable to being unhoused, confirmed by ever rising unhoused rates locally & statewide. - 1 of 2 -

3) Employers cannot attract or keep the skilled professionals and workforce needed: Our community depends on our doctors, nurses, teachers, electricians, plumbers and a multitude of vital skills and services. Many are leaving or will not come because of our housing crisis. Employers, employees, elders and young people all cite AirBnB's, vacation homes and market economy as major obstacles to affordable housing. A short summary of The Housing Action Team Employer-Employee survey from 2021 and Healthy Mendocino's data attached.

4) How we house people strongly affects our impacts on climate change. How can we become a more climate and economically resilient community? Prevent catastrophic climate damage? *Explore more sustainable building materials and models to provide affordable housing? Imagine our way into 2050 and beyond?*

5) Climate resilient affordable housing pilot project: How can we create a community driven and designed pilot project and newly designated innovation zones? Explore how to integrate shared solar arrays, stormwater, watershed and ecosystem management, permaculture design land use, food sovereignty gardens, and small village cluster design to foster social Blue Zone living?

6) School, Hospital, Recreation Districts & Employers Could Collaborate: Many districts are stepping forward with land and other solutions to attract and keep the valuable teachers, hospital personnel, and others who strengthen our community.

7) Stronger community support for Housing Mendocino Community Land Trust: We are rapidly losing our remaining lands, housing and valuable resources to an unsustainable market economy. Our local community land trust needs protection and community-wide support to supply stable long-term affordable housing. Our healthy economic and resilient future depends on creating healthy communities.

Attachments: Housing Action Team Employer-Employee Survey 2021;
Healthy Mendocino housing and health statistics

Respectfully submitted,
Geri A. Morisky, Grassroots Institute, Housing Work Group
P. O. Box 1605, Fort Bragg, CA. 95437 Phone: 707-734-0841

Summary of Housing Action Team Employer-Employee Survey 2021

Local Employer Responses Summary - 72 employers

Salary ranges paid to most of their employees: \$20,000 to \$50,000.

67% - unable to hire one or more applicants because of housing issues

69% said housing affordability was a factor in losing one or more employees

58% of employer's candidates said housing was either unaffordable or unavailable

54% employers wanted local government to create zoning & policy changes

All wanted restrictions on AirBnB and vacation rentals

All wanted creative collaborations for workforce housing, grants, funding

Employee Responses to Survey - 147 responses

34% earned \$26,000 to \$50,000 per year - 26% earned \$5,000 - \$20,000/year

70% of employees rent, only 26% able to own, many paying ½ income to rent;

63% said they spend one third of their combined income on housing

45% live in single family dwelling and most prefer a single family home

54% cited affordability, unsafe, and lack of availability as housing struggles

70% were considering relocating to another area that was more affordable

Largest numbers to respond were in the 66+, 56-65, and 36-45 age group

38% worked for local businesses, 16% govt agencies, 11% healthcare;

20% landscape workers, house cleaning, tourism services, self employed

70% said they would buy a home if they had help with downpayment

70% - would prefer to work for employers who helped with housing needs

50% would be willing to participate in community land trust housing option

Economy / Housing & Homes



County: Mendocino

	VALUE	COMPARED TO:			
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	0.9% (2018-2022)	CA Counties	U.S. Counties	CA Value (0.9%)	US Value (1.1%)
Homeownership	50.9% (2018-2022)	CA Counties	U.S. Counties	CA Value (51.4%)	US Value (57.8%)
Mortgaged Owners Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Housing	47.1% (2022)	CA Counties	U.S. Counties	CA Value (37.6%)	US Value (27.8%)
Overcrowded Households	4.9% (2018-2022)	CA Counties	CA Value (8.2%)	US Value (3.4%)	HP 2030 Target (25.5%)
Point-in-Time Count of Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	19 Persons (2022)	Prior Value (13)	Trend		
Renters Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Rent	55.3% (2018-2022)	CA Counties	U.S. Counties	CA Value (54.4%)	US Value (49.9%)

See the Legend