

City of Burbank Housing Element & Environmental Justice Community Workshop Input



On October 3rd 2020, City Community Development Department staff and consultants conducted a virtual community workshop to solicit public input on the Housing Element update and the new Environmental Justice component of the General Plan. Twenty-three members of the public participated in the workshop, and provided feedback via on-line polling and question and answers. The following summarizes the input received at the workshop, including staff responses to participant questions.

Polling Questions

1. How long have you lived in Burbank? 16 respondents

- 1 person 1-2 years
- 3 persons 6-10 years
- 3 persons 11-20 years
- 8 persons 21+ years
- 1 person Work in Burbank but live in another City

2. What type of housing unit you live in? 17 respondents

- 9 persons Detached single-family house
- 4 persons Duplex/triplex/fourplex
- 2 persons Condominium/townhome
- 1 person Apartment
- 1 person Work in Burbank but live in another City

3. Which of these issues do you see as being Burbank's most important housing needs? 13 respondents

- 10 persons Lack of housing for Burbank's workforce
- 8 persons Housing for our homeless population
- 7 persons Housing for Burbank's seniors and disabled population
- 3 persons Deteriorated housing conditions
- 3 persons Overcrowded housing

4. What strategies should the City pursue to meet its RHNA obligations? 13 respondents

- 9 persons Tiny homes/micro units
- 8 persons Increased densities near transit
- 6 persons Incentives for accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- 6 persons Motel conversions
- 3 persons Allow slightly increased densities in single-family neighborhoods to reduce the number of multi-family sites needed
- 2 persons Increased densities in multi-family zoned neighborhoods

5. In evaluating strategies to address environmental justice issues faced by Burbank’s low income and disadvantaged communities, which of the following environmental justice issues do you see as being the highest priority? 16 respondents

- 13 persons High housing costs
- 8 persons Public health
- 7 persons Environmental pollution
- 6 persons Unemployment
- 3 persons Linguistic isolation (non-English speaking)
- 2 persons Increased densities in multi-family zoned neighborhoods

Questions and Answers

1. How does City Council’s goal to produce 12,000 housing units by 2034 pace with the expected future job growth? How much will it improve the Job-Housing ratio in the City?

Staff Response:

- *The goal of 12,000 housing units is aspirational, but it is consistent with Burbank’s projected RHNA which has increased from 2,600 to 8,700 in the last 8 years.*
- *We anticipate a growth in employment with current developments like Avion and Media Studio North. Additionally, the City has been able to attract major employers like Netflix and Tip Mouse.*
- *Even if Burbank were to achieve its housing goal, the City might not be able to keep pace with projected employment growth. However, we won’t be losing ground as we have in the past.*

2. Given the water and power shortage, how will the City accommodate the increase in electricity and water demand from 12,000 additional housing units? Will the City build another powerplant?

Staff Response:

- *Burbank2035 General Plan, adopted in 2013, anticipated projected growth of 5,900 units. The 8,700 units that is our fair share requirement coming through SCAG is something we have to look at within the context of our infrastructure/utility capacity.*
- *An environmental assessment will be conducted to determine the location of additional housing units that is consistent with Council goals of responsible development and protecting single-family neighborhoods, and at the same time being able to have community facility and infrastructure to support additional housing.*
- *The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process will be initiated early next year. Topics of energy and water will be investigated as a part of the review process.*

3. Can you elaborate on what will happen if the City does not meet the required RHNA numbers and does not build the required housing? How will it impact the City, and alternatively, how would meeting the RHNA number help the City?

Staff Response:

- *While the majority of cities don't meet their RHNA numbers, particularly for lower income households which typically require subsidies, it is important for cities to set the stage through zoning to enable development of projected housing needs without undue constraints.*
- *The State is trying to get cities to help with the housing crisis. Cities underproducing housing to address their RHNA goals can be subjected to SB35 (by right housing development). There is a trend in the recent legislature to hold cities more accountable to meet their housing needs.*

4. Where will the proposed housing be located within the City?

Staff Response:

- *Specific plan areas - Golden State Specific Plan, Downtown specific plan area (Burbank Center Plan), and Media District – areas with potential for high density and Transit Oriented Development. Focus will be on employment and transit centers within the City which have opportunity for infill development.*
- *Housing location will be looked at in more detail during next phase of the Housing element update and there will be a second community workshop focused on looking at potential housing sites.*

5. What is the City's plan to accommodate parking for the proposed housing?

Staff Response:

- *Parking will be looked at through development standards in the new Specific Plans. The City is looking at ways to accommodate parking through efficient parking management and best practices for infill and mixed-use projects.*
- *Parking standards will depend on the type of project. For example, density bonus projects are eligible for reduced parking requirements under State law.*

6. How can we be sure that new housing units will contribute towards meeting the City's housing needs, in other words, house permanent residents of the City and not function as short-term

rentals for travelers. ADUs in particular can be rented out as short-term rentals to generate income for the owners.

Staff Response:

- *The City is looking at Short Term Rental (STR) regulations. The intent of the STR regulation is to document existing STR units in the City, and ensure that ADUs are not being used as STRs.*
- *ADUs are actual dwelling units and are meant for long term residence. Per Code, ADUs cannot be rented out for less than 30 days. Additionally, City Council is looking at increasing the minimum number of days for renting ADUs to 90 days. If people are using their ADUs for short term rentals, they are doing so illegally.*

7. Does the Housing Element provide detail regarding how housing will be created under the lower and moderate income categories? Can you provide any updates regarding the old Ikea site, how many residential units are you considering to build on that site, and how will it be classified under each income category? Is the 34-acre property you are referring to the entire Mall?

Staff Response:

- *Housing Element statutes allow for the use of default densities to assign sites to the various income categories. For Burbank, any site with a density of 30 units/acre or greater can be credited towards its low and very low-income RHNA need, and sites with 12 units/acre and above are considered suitable for development of moderate income housing. While a 30 unit/acre market rate project may not be affordable to lower income households, the City is setting the stage through zoning to allow a developer – typically a non-profit - to build affordable housing at that density.*
- *The City is also in the process of updating its Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance that requires a certain percentage of deed restricted affordable units to be built within projects that have 10 units or more.*
- *In addition, the State has allocated significant funding to support production of affordable housing.*
- *Regarding the old IKEA site – there was a mixed-use project proposed – Burbank Town Center North – that proposed over 1,000 units. Due to COVID, the Mall has been shut down and property owners are re-evaluating the feasibility of repurposing the Mall. The 34-acre Ikea site is inclusive of the entire Mall proper, including development across and adjacent to the freeway, In-N-Out, and furniture stores.*

8. It will be interesting to look at the correlation between Burbank’s disadvantaged communities/high impact areas and the location of entertainment industries that have a rate of high employment turn-over. For example, the Media Center is located in an area identified as a disadvantaged community.

Staff Response:

- *Good feedback – Burbank is unique as it has prominent media industry presence. Such feedbacks are important for policy development to mitigate negative impacts.*

9. How much contribution do large companies - like Netflix and Disney that are employers in the City - have in providing housing for their employees? Microsoft and Facebook are examples of large companies that have contributed towards housing for their employee in the past.

Staff Response:

- *We aren't aware of anything specific where Burbank employers are providing housing assistance, but we will check with the Economic Development Department to get more information. These big companies are usually supportive of opportunities to facilitate housing near and around their employment site, and employees have expressed an interest in residing close to their workplace.*
- *For the Housing Element survey, we have included questions about potential new housing programs for Burbank, including a potential Commercial Impact Fee that requires new commercial developments to pay a fee which contributes towards City's affordable housing trust fund to provide affordable units.*
- *Other efforts being undertaken by the City include evaluating Development Impact Fees to identify opportunities for new developments to provide their fair share of funding for community services and infrastructure including new housing units.*

10. How will the increase in housing units impact schools in the City? What will be the impact on those people who work in the City but don't live here and want their kids to join schools here?

Staff Response:

- *The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Update will include an assessment of schools. During the process, we talk to schools and see how they are projecting their growth, and we look at the impact of potential growth from housing on the schools.*
- *The 4City will reach out to BUSD and their demographers regarding Housing Element Update to verify enrollment rates and their capacity.*

11. Will there be any consideration for the impact the increase in housing will have on early child care and education/ infant care (age 0 to 5 years)? Gaps in infant care hit crisis levels in 2018 in Burbank and had a direct impact on economic participation by the parents. In workforce housing – young adults (25-44 years) upon beginning a family – Infant care becomes their first introduction to the neighborhood. I urge the City to consider infant care, child care, and early education in this Housing Element Update.

Staff Response:

- *Good point. Traditionally the environmental assessment doesn't specifically evaluate early childcare, but we can take this into consideration.*
- *There are various avenues that can the City can use (including CEQA review) to address infant care, child care, and early education.*

12. With respect to ADUs – there were 350 permits submitted for ADUs. How many of those permits are for new ADUs? How many of these permits are for those ADUs that are being legalized by bringing them to conform to the Burbank Municipal Code? Where are new ADUs being built?

Staff Response:

- *The City has few cases of existing ADUs that are being legalized. The vast majority of ADUs fall into two categories –*
 1. *Garage/accessory structure conversion*
 2. *New detached ADUs*
- *In terms of where new ADUs are being built, the City has created a map showing the distribution of ADU applications throughout the City. The map was included in a November 10, 2020 ADU update to the City Council and can be access at the following link:
https://burbank.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=42&clip_id=9251&meta_id=376295
The map indicates that ADU development has been dispersed throughout the City.*

13. Talking about employer assisted housing, especially given the current situation where people are working remotely due to COVID, and given that post COVID there may not be as much demand to commute, there might be an opportunity to provide on-campus housing within commercial properties for short term workers who work in the City on a project basis (may be for a year). This might help to ease the pressure on the smaller units that can provide housing for permanent residents. Is this something that larger commercial entities can consider?

Staff Response:

- *These are good points. We need to set up future discussions with large employers to see where they stand on this matter.*

14. With such a large proportion of young professionals in Burbank, many of whom live alone, what happens when they start families - do they leave Burbank or are they able to start families here? Similarly, a large number of young professionals live with their parents due to high housing costs – are there any efforts underway or planned to help this age group?

Staff Response:

- *The City's goal is to significantly increase the production of housing for its workforce, and through this increase in supply, pent up demand will be reduced and housing prices should come down. The City will employ a variety of tools - including inclusionary zoning, density bonuses and other affordable housing incentives - to ensure a portion of new housing is provided at levels affordable to lower and moderate income households.*
- *Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can also provide a less costly housing option for young professionals, and with over 540 ADU applications received over the last three years, ADUs are becoming more widely available throughout Burbank.*

15. Has there been any thought to evaluating the long-term effects of COVID 19 on the workforce needing to be near their work vs working from home?

Staff Response:

- *While there is likely to be reduced demand for commercial office space moving forward, Burbank's employment base continues to grow (refer to response to Question #1). The City has over-produced jobs relative to housing for several decades, resulting in a ratio of three jobs for every housing unit. Even with reduced demand for office, the City needs to increase housing production to achieve a healthy jobs/housing balance.*

16. I'm wondering about traffic issues, particularly Barham Boulevard as it is already congested. What is being done to alleviate that kind of additional strain on the roadways?

Staff Response:

- *Burbank's General Plan - adopted in 2013 - studied how growth in the City between 2010 and 2035 would impact its street system, and included land use changes, transportation policies, and six targeted intersection improvements to lessen impacts to transportation. The Housing Element will build on the General Plan analysis to identify how the amount and location of new housing will affect transportation. The Housing Element will study if building new housing in Burbank, near jobs and transit, will reduce the number and length of car trips in the City because more housing provides opportunity for Burbank workers to live closer to where they work.*
- *The cause of congestion on major roads leading into and out of the City, such as Barham Blvd, is because most of the employees who work in Burbank live elsewhere and must commute into the City. Adding new housing in the City will likely lessen traffic increases on Barham and other regional corridors.*
- *The General Plan and the Housing Element do not propose major street and road improvements to reduce congestion because widening streets increases car trips and harmful environmental effects like greenhouse gas emissions.*