

## **EVSP Focus Area – Housing**

### **Focus Area Formation Guidelines:**

1. Reach out to partners for participation in the sub-committee. Consider diversity and inclusion as you assemble the team.
2. Think meaningful and manageable as you contemplate the scope of work/goals to aim for in the next 12 months. Part of your role is to prioritize. Consider aspects such as timing, opportunity, and urgency. We do not have to identify a near term activity for every action item.
3. Avoid duplication. Part of each sub-committee's initial job will be an assessment or inventory of the current state resources and initiatives already in place. Consider what is already in place with our economic vitality partners and how we can support, expand or better coordinate those efforts, before looking to add or create new initiatives to support the Action Items in your Focus Area.
4. The EVSP was completed before the Thomas Fire. We encourage each sub-committee to call out activities taking place within their Focus Area that relate to Thomas Fire Recovery and have an Economic Vitality element to them. Opportunities to support/expand these efforts or fill an identified need are encouraged.
5. Consider the "Suggested Initial Objectives" for your Focus Area (Listed Below, if identified in the EVSP) as just that, a suggestion. Your sub-committee is empowered to choose the initial objectives and report those back to the Steering Committee.
6. Paul Stamper and Rachel Linares will be your primary contacts at the County if you have questions. We can also help to coordinate participation from the various County agencies on each of your sub-committees, where appropriate.
7. All EVSP reports and resources can be found at our website:  
<http://vcevsp.org/>

TABLE 1. SUGGESTED INITIAL OBJECTIVES

Focus Area	Action Items	Key Initial Objectives
Housing	A2 F1-F2	Generate a series of initial options for addressing housing affordability, within the context of other land use conditions in Ventura County. Initial steps could include compiling information on and reviewing existing efforts, and documenting the different influences on affordability and the entities that could intervene in affecting those influences.

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Focus Area Action Item	Recommended Priority Level (Scale 1-3: 1- Highest, 3- Lowest)	Proposed Lead
A.2 Establish Housing Solutions Coalition to raise public/policymaker awareness of housing affordability and availability issues	1	CEO (Comm. Dev.) VCEDA Civic Alliance Housing Authorities CERF

**A.2 *Establish Housing Solutions Coalition to raise public/policymaker awareness of housing affordability and availability issues***

This action item focuses on raising public awareness of the critical connection between housing issues and Ventura County’s overall economic vitality (e.g., the direct influence on workforce availability and recruitment, etc.). This topic needs to be viewed as an urgent economic vitality issue, and not as something peripheral to economic development. The public awareness campaign should directly address NIMBYism and other public opinions that have dampened political support for affordable housing development. Whereas action item A.2 focuses on advocacy and public education, specific steps related to housing/homelessness are outlined under related items F.1 and F.2.

This action item emerged as the highest priority from a special EVSP workshop focused exclusively on housing issues. The meeting attracted a diverse array of public and private stakeholders actively involved in affordable housing / homeless issues. A detailed summary of the workshop discussions is provided in a separate companion report. Key stakeholder comments relative to the public awareness campaign include the following:

- Awareness is important, but commitment and political will are ultimately needed to make meaningful progress on these issues.
- Awareness campaign needs to start with a focus on the public; the public will then influence policymakers.
- Need to establish coalition/advocacy group(s) to address NIMBYism.
- Awareness of affordable housing issues needs to be based on an ongoing/sustained dialogue and education process (for both the public and policymakers).

<b>A.2 Establish Housing Solutions Coalition to raise public/policymaker awareness of housing affordability and availability issues</b>		
<b>KEY PARTNERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Non-profit affordable housing developers</li> <li>• For-profit housing developers</li> <li>• Major employers</li> <li>• Housing Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building industry and contractors associations</li> <li>• Civic Alliance</li> </ul> <p>(see F.1 and F.2 for full list of potential participants)</p>
<b>APPLICABLE RESOURCES</b>	Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Report (“The Rise of Underemployment: Supporting the Needs of Low-Income Workers”)	Summary of EVSP Housing Summit Workshop
	Civic Alliance State of the Region Report	

Focus Area Action Item	Recommended Priority Level (Scale 1-3: 1- Highest, 3- Lowest)	Proposed Lead
F.1 Address housing affordability – a potential constraint to retaining/attracting residents; given the widespread nature of this problem, take advantage of best practices as they develop around the state and nation	1	CEO (Comm. Dev.) VCEDA Civic Alliance Housing Authorities

**F.1 Address housing affordability – a potential constraint to retaining/attracting residents; given the widespread nature of this problem, take advantage of best practices as they develop around the state and nation**

The problem of maintaining housing affordability in “high amenity” areas is pervasive throughout the country. Approaches to addressing this problem have tended to involve practices such as requiring housing developers to include subsidized units and enacting rent controls, for example. Such practices can of course simply drive market-based costs higher, widen the (market-based) affordability gap, add administrative costs, and increase the challenge of matching housing units (affordable and otherwise) with cities’ and neighborhoods’ expectations. The problem is made worse by the fact that some people who have the means to live in desirable areas such as Ventura County exist independently of the local economy.

To some extent government programs, including some federal programs, that subsidize housing costs can help with this issue, but these are generally intended to serve “traditionally disadvantaged” populations (e.g. those with incomes at some percentage below the area median). Another example of this is the Ventura County Board of Supervisors setting aside \$1 million to support Farmworker Housing. Programs such as these however do not generally

address systemic problems of ongoing limited supply (of land or actual housing products) and high demand.

Potential strategies related to this action item were discussed at a special EVSP workshop focused exclusively on housing issues. The meeting attracted a diverse array of public and private stakeholders actively involved in affordable housing / homeless issues. A detailed summary of the workshop discussions is provided in a separate companion report. The highest-priority strategies are summarized below (along with related stakeholder comments):

<b>Priority:</b> Address the cost of affordable housing development through improvements in permitting/entitlement process and fees
<b>Abbreviated summary of comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement flexible, expedited approval processes for affordable housing projects</li><li>• Remove uncertainties from the approval process – clarity and speed are critical to development feasibility</li><li>• Expand use of ministerial approvals</li><li>• Standardize pre-approval and design requirements</li><li>• Incentivize innovative housing products/projects with streamlined approvals and density bonuses</li></ul>
<b>Priority:</b> Improve County/City coordination on specific housing development projects
<b>Abbreviated summary of comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include planning directors and VCOG in coordination</li><li>• Improve coordination among housing authorities</li><li>• Build a regional “voice”</li></ul>
<b>Priority:</b> Build policymaker support for non-traditional housing products (e.g., “tiny houses,” domes, modular construction, etc.)
<b>Abbreviated summary of comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include accessory dwelling unit (ADU) and other innovative programs</li><li>• Encourage conversion of existing housing units (i.e., single-family to multi-family)</li><li>• Flexible zoning for mixed-use projects</li></ul>
<b>Priority:</b> Address the cost of affordable housing development through reductions in development impact fees
<b>Abbreviated summary of comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce and waive when possible</li><li>• Reduce fees for infill housing projects</li><li>• Adopt flexible payment schedules</li></ul>
<b>Priority:</b> Publicly-funded infrastructure investments (to reduce costs to developers)
<b>Abbreviated summary of comments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address in General Plan policy</li><li>• Identify dedicated (county-level) funding sources for housing-related infrastructure</li></ul>

**F.1 Address housing affordability – a potential constraint to retaining/attracting residents; given the widespread nature of this problem, take advantage of best practices as they develop around the state and nation**

<p><b>KEY PARTNERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventura County CEO and CDBG</li> <li>• Civic Alliance</li> <li>• Contractors associations</li> <li>• Realtors</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura and housing authorities of Santa Paula, Port Hueneme, San Buenaventura and Oxnard</li> <li>• Cities</li> <li>• Cities’ ED function</li> <li>• Senior agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House Farm Workers!</li> <li>• Major employers</li> <li>• Building Industry Association</li> <li>• Peoples’ Self-Help Housing</li> <li>• Many Mansions</li> </ul>
<p><b>APPLICABLE RESOURCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Housing Assessment 2025: Challenges and Opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League of California Cities – Response to Assessment</li> <li>• Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura, 5-Year and Annual Plan for FY2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventura County Community Development Corporation (VCCDC)</li> </ul>

Focus Area Action Item	Recommended Priority Level (Scale 1-3: 1- Highest, 3- Lowest)	Proposed Lead
F.2 Continue to address homelessness, as both a social and business-impact issue, throughout Ventura County	1	Continuum of Care Board Downtown Organizations

**F.2 Continue to address homelessness, as both a social and business-impact issue, throughout Ventura County**

Functional operations with a major existing role in this issue, particularly the Continuum of Care coordinating function within Ventura County government, will be key to implementing this action item. Similar to the affordability issue, homelessness is a nationwide problem for which best practices continue to be assembled, which will have varying applicability to conditions in Ventura County. To some extent, there is no optimal “local” solution to homelessness, because the demand (for “good” housing and services for the homeless) is essentially infinite with respect to any individual jurisdiction. Strategies must include regional, if not national, coordination and cooperation to address this issue.

At the EVSP affordable housing / homelessness “summit” workshop, the following specific ideas for addressing homelessness were discussed:

- Identify older hotels, similar properties suitable for single-room occupancy (SRO) units.
- Pursue master-leasing agreements (e.g., County would partner with nonprofit organizations to reduce risk for property owners willing to consider “high risk” tenants).
- Improve integration of housing issues with other County social services, including the following potential connections:
  - Match non-profit service providers with existing “aging in place” residents
  - Whole Person Care (connections to permanent housing)
  - Field-base case management
  - Dedicate new / turned-over HUD vouchers to homeless

F.2 Continue to address homelessness, as both a social and business-impact issue, throughout Ventura County		
<b>KEY PARTNERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventura County CEO and CDBG</li> <li>• Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance</li> <li>• Downtown Organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxnard Downtown Management District</li> <li>• Peoples’ Self-Help Housing</li> <li>• Many Mansions</li> <li>• Cities’ CDBG programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Veterans services groups</li> <li>• Health care providers</li> </ul>
<b>APPLICABLE RESOURCES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Ventura Organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">HUD Exchange Homelessness Assistance</a></li> <li>• Oxnard Downtown Management District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance databases and other resources</li> </ul>