



# Equity Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries

## Madera County General Plan Updates

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# 1 Meeting #1

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## 1.1 Meeting Information

Date: May 1, 2023

Attendees: Madeline Harris, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
 Mattie Mendez, Community Action Partnership of Madera County (CAP MC)  
 Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
 Johanna Torres, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

## 1.2 Meeting Summary

### Farmworker Housing

- There is a lack of affordable housing, and consequently, a lot of unpermitted housing and irregular, substandard housing situations (e.g., trailers, campers or units lacking heat or insulation). Overcrowding is also an issue.
- Needs include rental assistance, assistance locating housing, and more affordable housing.
- Community Action Partnership (CAP) operates a migrant farmworker center at Pomona Ranch located in unincorporated county, together with City of Madera Housing Authority. Amenities include a community center, and sometimes childcare (Head Start leases a building).
- County should consider reaching out to CBDIO (Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño) and Libres Campesinos for more details about farmworker housing needs.
- People double up on housing.
- County could help by providing an inventory of housing available to farmworkers for service providers to share with clients.
- A lot of migrant farmworkers have settled in Madera County. Maybe one parent works outside of the County but the family's home base is here.
- Buffer zones are needed to protect housing located close to fields and ensure affordable housing does not get sited near polluting land uses to protect residents from pesticide drift and dust from farming operations. Policy solutions for new housing are needed, but also to mitigate the effect on existing housing. Lavinia is particularly affected.
- There are issues with unpermitted burning in rural areas, both agricultural and generally. Improve trash collection in rural areas.
- Resources available for undocumented residents: County approved contract for mortgage and rental assistance—operated by Madera Coalition for Community Justice and CAP MC. Immigration status is not part of eligibility. Recognize that asking for SSNs or other details may still be a deterrent.
- Regarding the need for on-site farmworker housing versus housing more centrally located, there are opportunities for more housing within city spheres of influence. Families may prefer to live closer to cities for proximity to schools and services. There are good schools in Lavinia. County

should prioritize building housing in high-resource areas. Make sure new affordable housing isn't disproportionately affected by pollution burden.

- People don't necessarily work in one rural area. They may work on multiple farms.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

- Transportation is an issue for people with disabilities. There are places with no sidewalks which reduces access to services.
- Reference to a committee in the City of Madera to identify issues for persons with disabilities.

### **Female-Headed Households**

- Smaller units are needed for single-parent families. The market has been mostly for three- or four- bedroom units, but there is a need for studios and one-bedroom units. Need to provide an incentive for builders.

### **Homelessness**

- Most homeless residents are in City of Madera and just outside city limits. Homeless population is growing in Oakhurst, Chowchilla, and Fairmead.
- There is one emergency shelter, Madera Rescue Mission, but residents are required to leave during the day. There's a need for smaller units, tiny homes. Triage is a joint effort between County and Rescue Mission to provide seven tiny homes as transitional housing. People can stay for about seven months.
- Mental health and substance abuse are primary causes of homelessness.
- Many residents do not want to leave pets behind and most facilities do not allow pets.
- *Solteros* are farmworkers who work during the day but live outside. Being separated from their families can lead to mental health issues and loss of housing.
- Recognize that every family is unique and case management is needed to create a relationship between homeless persons and services.
- Hope House is a wellness center and day services center in the City of Madera.
- Services are needed throughout County.

### **Housing Conditions**

- There are issues with substandard housing all around the County.
- Weatherization for lower-income households is needed, beyond programs offered by CAP MC, which requires proof of immigration status. The requirement is based on funding source (federal) and CAP MC is advocating for changing that requirement at the national level. CAP MC does support families if they don't qualify under their contract with the County.

### **Overcrowding**

- Many people are considered homeless under McKinney Vento Act definition if they are living in someone else's home.
- Displacement is caused in part by people from outside the community buying rental properties, renovating units, and raising rents.

## General Questions and Comments

- Residents want in-person workshops in Fairmead and Lavigna.
- People in Fairmead are interested in having service-oriented events for veterans—i.e., spay/neuter events.

## 2 Meeting #2

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### 2.1 Meeting Summary

Date: June 5, 2023

Attendees: Vicki Ortiz, Fairmead & Friends Community, Fairmead Resident  
 Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
 Mattie Mendez, CAP MC, Homeless Coordinator

### 2.2 Meeting Summary

#### Environmental Justice

- Participants identified a lack of public facilities and infrastructure in Lavina and Fairmead. Schools in unincorporated areas provide a lot of public facilities/service.
- The priority health issues identified included air quality, water quality, clean streets, walking paths, and smoke-free places. Water access due to dry wells and people having trouble keeping up with their water bills were also of significant concern. In terms of air quality, participants addressed unpermitted agricultural burning, pesticide reduction, indoor air filtration, and buffer zones.
- Most vulnerable populations identified were Fairmead and Lavinia from agricultural pollution. A majority of the population is nonwhite. People with respiratory diseases and children doing physical activity when pollution is high were also identified. Public health epidemiologist may have reports and other resources on respiratory diseases in relation to pollution.
- Resources: SJVAQD has a grant for in-unit filtration systems. Self-Help maintains water tanks.

#### Safety Element

- Participants identified the climate hazards that pose the most risk as sinkholes in Eastern Madera County and the City of Madera, and drought/flooding. They noted that in Fairmead, there has been flooding throughout the community. Unincorporated communities do not have sewer systems, which damages homes. Fire protection insurance is high, and there are not enough fire resources close to certain unincorporated areas. There are big concerns regarding King River and Fresno flooding and impacting neighboring communities.

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- The subpopulations most affected are people living near agricultural areas, children – especially those with medical conditions, and Eastern Madera County as electricity outages impacts those reliant on electricity for medical conditions
- Some resources identified include Community Action Partnership, Self-Help Enterprises, PG&E CARE program, Leadership Counsel meetings.
- Regarding outreach resources, participants want to see more funding to assist with outreach. The population doesn't use the computer, or they don't have broadband so there needs to be more door to door/boots on the ground.
- There are only cooling centers located in incorporated cities. Folks in unincorporated areas have to go to these ones in the incorporated cities. Need to make sure generators are made available for vulnerable residents (senior and those that are reliant on electricity for medical needs) in Eastern Madera County.



## 3 Meeting #3

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### 3.1 Meeting Information

Date: September 25, 2023

Attendees: Madeline Harris, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Jasmine Robinson, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Johanna Torres, California Rural Legal Assistance  
Vickie Ortiz, Fairmead Community and Friends  
Camille Piazza

### 3.2 Meeting Summary

#### Site Inventory

- Participants identified the agricultural parcels (orchards) surrounding the Fairmead community as opportunity areas for future residential development and desired a mix of housing opportunities by affordability.
- Participants identified the lack sewer infrastructure as a major barrier to development in Fairmead. Fairmead Community and Friends is working with the County, HSR, and the City of Chowchilla to bring municipal sewer service to the community.
- General interest in a mix of housing types including larger projects to provide a lot of housing as well as small scale redevelopment of vacant lots.

#### Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

- Strong interest in the development of affordable housing development in Fairmead and across the county, but emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between rental and home ownership opportunities, and multi-family apartments, townhomes and larger lot single-family houses.
- It was asked if there were numerical targets/percentages for the number of units of each income level in each community. Rincon staff responded that while there are not specific numerical targets, the inventory strives to avoid concentrating lower income units in low resource areas or areas of high segregation and poverty.
- Rincon staff emphasized that as part of AFFH, the County will to implement place-based strategies to improve access to resources in areas designated high segregation and poverty.
- There was interest in the breakdown of projected site capacity by community and TCAC opportunity category. This is typically provided in the AFFH analysis.

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- Participants were interested in seeing housing affordable to lower income households spread throughout the area and not concentrated in a way that people recognize “rich neighborhoods” and “poor neighborhoods.”

**Community Outreach and Engagement**

- Participants emphasized the desire for County staff to come out to Fairmead and La Vina to provide in-person outreach and events and promote awareness of the housing element process. Participants felt that remote/electronic engagement strategies were not adequate.
- County staff noted that the next outreach event will be a workshop October 4<sup>th</sup> in La Vina.
- Participants specifically suggested mailers and door to door engagement strategies.

## 4 Meeting #4

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### 4.1 Meeting Information

Date: October 16, 2023

Attendees: Madeline Harris, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Jasmine Robinson, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Johanna Torres, California Rural Legal Assistance  
Vickie Ortiz, Fairmead Community and Friends  
Camille Piazza

### 4.2 Meeting Summary

- From the EJ Tech Report, pollution was found a high priority for Madera County DACs.
- Main points of contact to coordinate in-person meetings in La Vina and Fairmead—  
Fairmead: Barbara Nielson, Vickie Ortiz, leadership counsel; La Vina: leadership counsel team, self-help enterprises contacts
- Hard copies of the draft elements should be placed at the third floor of the county building and libraries.

## 5 Meeting #5

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### 5.1 Meeting Information

Date: November 6, 2023

Attendees: Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Jasmine Robinson, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

### 5.2 Meeting Summary

- Current affordable housing programs in La Vina provide good resources. Updates to housing such as fixing doors for insulation have been helpful in reducing weatherization.
- Programs assisting first-time homebuyers should be introduced. Residents note that accessibility to these programs is difficult. How can undocumented folks complete paperwork/participate in these programs?
- Prevent future residential areas near agricultural areas or creating buffers.
- Implementing tax for folks in agricultural areas to provide air purifiers for those affected by pesticide and agriculture. Air District is giving out air purifiers, but grant funding is not sufficient at the moment. Proper programs focused on monitoring and testing of homes, notices of pesticide sprays or air monitoring systems should be introduced.
- Ensure that when policies/programs are created, they are actionable, enforceable, and aligned with the EJ and Safety elements as well. Ex: The County will be applying for XX Grant, rather than County will be applying to grants broadly.
- AFFH: ensure land use is equitable. Equitable distribution of resources and development dispersed all around county. Programs and funding need to be provided to lower-income communities.
- Affordable housing should be made available outside of low-income communities.
- Incorporation of green spaces designated to each community.
- Address mobile home needs. Support for looking at code enforcement, habitability, affordability, overlapping with home ownership. Pathways and opportunities for folks to rent out and own. Areas that have more mobile homes to be prioritized, specifically in Fairmead.
- Foster a sense of community – adequate sidewalks, lighting, holistic transportation policies, active transportation programs, revitalize neighborhoods in terms of infrastructure – holistic living. Policies should encompass things beyond getting someone into a home.
- Proper geographic distribution of funding and affordable housing going into all communities.
- Need to provide meaningful community engagement, direct input from residents.

## 6 Meeting #6

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### 6.1 Meeting Information

Date: January 8, 2024

Attendees: Mattie Mendez, CAP MC, Homeless Coordinator

### 6.2 Meeting Notes

- EAC is interested in an executive summary for the Housing Element to help the audience understand the content, what questions they might want to ask, specifically through key points and a high-level summary. Look at Live Well Madera County executive summary for health assessment as an example.
- Additional mailer information: FAQs or question that stands out, like “Are you looking for somewhere to live?”
- Location: distribute where there will be more traffic, places people are visiting anyway.
- Increasing visibility of the draft: contacting Tyler Takeda from the Madera Tribune for an interview to include in the newspaper.
- Podcasts for the younger generation to listen to and provide information to their families. Reach out to Madera Young Professionals.
- Convey EJ and Safety elements purpose and description to the public.
- Madera County PIT team – having the report there, ask to post on their social media

## 7 Meeting #7

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### 7.1 Meeting Information

Date: March 18, 2024

Attendees: Andrea Uribe, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Jasmine Robinson, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

### 7.2 Meeting Summary

- Participants suggested sending out an overview summary, agenda and flyer for upcoming townhall meetings, and to message Roberto from Self-Help Enterprises for more details.
- Goal 2: It would be nice to see metrics/specifics/milestones outlined to ensure affordable housing will be managed and encouraged. How can we go beyond maintaining and encouraging? How can we make “encourage” enforceable?
- Implementing requirements of AFFH Final goal is a bit broad and could use more concrete language. The Housing Element should be aimed at overcoming past discrimination and creating opportunities for equitable and sustainable housing development.
- Ongoing goal during the next 8 years: Continue community engagement during implementation.
- The established group of Jamie, Annette, and Matt was helpful for the previous townhall in La Vina. Beneficial for upcoming meetings: questions prepared to draw out what people want to see/learn from Housing Element. Even if people don’t fully understand what the HE is, we could ask broad needs questions that directly tie into the HE. Give broad examples, such as through a 1-page fact sheet summarizing what Housing Element is, what is in the Madera County Housing Element, and how it addresses community needs.
- There should be more than just LCJA in EAC meetings, and there is more than just Fairmead and La Vina for townhalls. Participants would like to see a bigger effort to have more people in the room. Participants want to make sure these are accessible to folks who are interested, maybe by changing the time to increase participation. Text messages could also be beneficial for those who cannot attend meetings/workshops.
- EAC upcoming meeting context is helpful, participants can send to their contacts to spread the word.
- Question asked by Andrea: Is there consistency between Elements as many are under updates/revisions?
- Jasmine offered to have key takeaways page sent to as another set of eyes to ensure community needs and interests are included.
- Next meeting: Collectively look at materials to send out to community/key takeaways.