



# CITY OF OJAI

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VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

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VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

August 9, 2006

Honorable John R. Smiley, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, Ventura County  
Hall of Justice, #2120  
800 So. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Smiley,

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report entitled "Affordable Housing in Ventura County Cities". As required by Penal Code section 933(c), we are commenting on the report's findings, conclusions and recommendations within the time period specified. Our comments follow.

**Grand Jury Findings:** We concur with findings F-01 through F-05 and F-07. We have no knowledge of the affordable housing programs in the City of Port Hueneme as addressed in F-06, and therefore, we do not comment on this finding. We accept the Grand Jury's finding in F-08 that they did not include other specialized programs and organizations within the County as part of their report.

**Grand Jury Conclusions:** We generally agree with conclusions C-01, C-02, C-04 and C-5. However, we do not fully agree with Conclusion C-03 which indicates that "failure by cities to solve the needs of very low income and low income residents will cause increasing adverse economic challenges". We agree that failure to address the affordable housing problem creates adverse consequences; however, we believe that cities are not solely responsible for addressing the problem. Adding more affordable housing for low income and very low income households should take place through a collaborative effort between the State of California, counties and cities. New funding sources must be created to help pay for affordable housing, and the State of California can play a pivotal role in this regard. The report did not include specialized organizations that build affordable housing, and yet they have played a key role in adding affordable units to our housing

stock. By working together, we can do a better job of providing affordable housing and addressing this challenge.

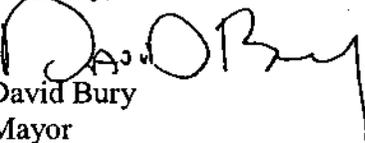
Grand Jury Recommendations: We will implement Recommendation R-01 which states that cities should pursue efforts to work with businesses and developers to actively pursue solutions to the social, economic and environmental problems associated with Affordable Housing. As part of the new Housing Element cycle, the City of Ojai will review and consider affordable housing policies including relocation, replacement and inclusionary policies as part of its "toolbox" of solutions to create more affordable housing within the City. Also, the City will review current land use zoning to consider special affordable housing overlay zones that would allow affordable housing in other than residential zones. The updated Ojai Housing Element must be submitted to the State by July 1, 2008, and we will implement this recommendation as part of the Element.

We have already implemented Recommendation R-02 which states that each city should educate its residents on how local services depend upon the availability of affordable housing. In October of 2004, the City held an Affordable Housing Workshop, and brought in affordable housing experts to testify on the benefits of affordable housing as well as the adverse impacts of not providing affordable housing. In addition, the City will again hold a community meeting(s) to discuss housing policies and zoning overlays to encourage affordable housing within City limits. As such, we will implement Recommendation R-02 as part of the development of the Housing Element; we expect to hold the community meeting(s) in 2007.

We would add that there is no better way to encourage affordable housing than by doing good projects that advertise and speak for themselves. We have several shining examples here in Ojai of which we, as well as the residents who live there, are very proud.

We thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report. Please let us know if there is anything further that you require.

Sincerely,

  
David Bury  
Mayor

C: City Council Members  
Jere A. Kersnar  
Monte Widders, City Attorney  
Carlton Strobel, City Clerk  
Kathy McCann, Redevelopment Manager