



Search

[RSS](#) | [Mobile Edition](#)  
[Newspaper Subscriber Services](#)

Home | News | Sports | Living | Entertainment | Business | Opinion | Choose a Publication | Help

[Shopping](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Homes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Post Ad](#)

**News**

- Bay Area News
- Beyond the Bay
- Online Features
- RSS Feeds
- Special Sections
- Obituaries
- Columnists

## Affordable housing forced onto agenda

Council member puts forth proposals to initiate dialogue

By Kelly Rayburn, STAFF WRITER

Article Last Updated: 01/09/2008 02:44:26 AM PST

OAKLAND — Councilmember Jane Brunner (North Oakland) moved Tuesday to kick-start the city's debate on affordable housing, bringing a bevy of proposals before the City Council's Community and Economic Development Committee, which she chairs.

The proposals were offered for discussion purposes only. Any final action on affordable housing, if it ever comes, is weeks or months away.

"My hope is to start a dialogue," Brunner said, "to get people serious about going over the proposals."

Last September, a city blue-ribbon commission delivered a set of recommendations aimed at solving Oakland's affordable housing woes.

But those recommendations, so far, have gone nowhere.

So Brunner drafted a set of her own proposals, borrowing ideas, she said, from conversations she'd had with a number of people and groups. The Oakland People's Housing Coalition also placed a set of proposals before the committee.

Officials — and the public — are still waiting for Mayor Ron Dellums to release his own recommendations on affordable housing, which could happen in the next couple of weeks or sooner.

The Housing Coalition has indicated it may gather signatures to force an affordable housing question onto the November ballot if the council fails to develop an acceptable policy.

"We're exploring all our options," said Amie Fishman, executive director of East Bay Housing Organizations, a founding member of the Housing Coalition.

Council members

Advertisement

and housing advocates have discussed a range of possibilities, including the idea of placing a bond measure before voters to build housing units.

But often the debate boils down to two questions. The first is whether developers should be forced to include certain percentages of affordable units in residential projects, a concept called inclusionary zoning. The second is whether — and if so, how — the city should limit apartment conversions to condominiums.

So disputed is the condo issue that the 17-member blue-ribbon commission, after months of work, could not reach a consensus to make a recommendation to the council even though it was specifically tasked to do so.

The question pits those who would like to see more conversions as a way to boost home ownership, particularly in areas of the city with high percentages of renters, against those who worry about renters being priced out of Oakland if renting opportunities dwindle.

"We're never going to agree on that," said Gregory McConnell, a member of the commission who supports allowing as many as 800 units to be converted to condos every year. "You could have meetings until the cows come home."

A separate group of people on the blue-ribbon commission supported much more stringent rules on condo conversions. Their plan would allow only 125 a year. The Oakland People's Housing Coalition recommended a cap of 100 per year.

Dellums spokesman Paul Rose said the mayor's set of proposals would be released "in or around" his State of the City address, scheduled for Monday.

Dan Lindheim, head of the Community and Economic Development Agency who worked as an adviser to Dellums in 2007, said it was his understanding the mayor's proposals would be ready before the committee's next meeting, Jan. 22.

The committee agreed to take up the af

fordable housing topic again at that meeting.

Dellums' office has met with people on both sides of the affordable housing debate. The mayor is said to be considering a way to offer a limit on condo conversions without placing a hard number on how many can be completed in a year.

One idea Brunner brought to the council Tuesday was to tie the number of condo conversions permitted to the number of affordable housing units built under inclusionary zoning the previous year.

That idea is a non-starter to City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente (Glenview-Fruitvale), who speaks regularly of the importance to develop policies that benefit not only renters, but also boost home-ownership opportunities.

Asked after the meeting if he thought Brunner's proposal was a fair compromise, he said, "Absolutely not."

He said he expected far more condo conversions to go forward before inclusionary zoning units came online. Such a policy would stymie condo conversions, he said.

"People have the right not only to rent, but to own," De La Fuente said at one point during the meeting. "The American dream has become an impossible dream for almost everyone."

Contact Kelly Rayburn at 510-208-6435 or [krayburn@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:krayburn@bayareanewsgroup.com).

[Print](#) [Email](#) [Return to Top](#)

Advertisement

**Top Listings**

[CARS](#) | [RENTALS](#) | [JOBS](#) | [HOMES](#)

**HAYWARD** (Homes)  
3BD/2BA

**Hayward** (Homes)  
3bd/2ba

**SAN LEANDRO** (Homes)  
2BD/2BA

**San Ramon** (Homes)  
Office Rentals  
800-OFFICES

**Commercial Industrial For Sale** (Homes)  
5730 Market, Oakland

**Newark Home For Sale** (Homes)  
\$565,000 4bd/2ba

**CASTRO VALLEY** (Homes)  
5000 Ft. Estate 1 story

**Apartment for rent in San Leandro** (Homes)  
1BD/1BA \$875

**ALL LISTINGS**

Most Viewed | Most Emailed

(From the last 12 hours) [RSS](#)

1. [Your Views: Cease rip on Raiders](#)
2. [Man slain at Oakland eatery](#)
3. [Gunshot victim, 10, unaware of condition](#)
4. [Postal worker paralyzed after shooting](#)
5. [Mayor Dellums lays out multitiered city plan](#)
6. [CHP names victim killed walking across I-880 in San Leandro](#)

InsideBayArea **Buy Your Links**

InsideBayArea **Buy Your Links**  
[Click here to advertise!](#)