

## News

REPORT: POOR NEED HOUSING

### CONSULTANT TELLS STOCKTON PLANS NEGLECT THOSE WITH LOW INCOMES

By **David Siders**

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STOCKTON - Stockton should at least consider forcing developers to set aside some new homes for people with low and moderate incomes - a substantial population for which the housing market is largely out of reach, a consultant Wednesday told a city housing panel.

In a report this month, Bay Area Economics listed an inclusionary housing policy as one of the "most promising" measures for city officials to consider in their bid to address affordable housing. The report did not recommend the adoption of such a policy, only that it be more closely reviewed.

Such policies are highly controversial, criticized by builders who have said that forcing the sale of homes at less than market-rate would shift costs to market-rate home buyers, increasing the cost of home ownership.

If the Stockton City Council was to pursue such a measure, it would require "some care and crafting," Bay Area Economics' Matt Kowta told the council panel.

The council has largely been skeptical of inclusionary housing, and a majority of members have said they could not support such a measure without first studying its benefit and cost.

The council housing panel is likely next month to consider recommending to the full council that such a study be done.

"I don't think it would hurt," said Councilman Steve Bestolarides, the panel chairman.

The panel's meeting came more than a year after People and Congregations Together, a faith-based lobby group, brought about 125 people to City Hall to call for a low-income housing ordinance, and at least four years since such a rule was first proposed.

More than 100 cities and counties in California, including Ripon, require or request that developers set aside homes for low- or moderate-income buyers.

Though the housing market's collapse has all but halted the construction of new homes in Stockton, the city expects its population to double by 2035 and for thousands of new homes to be built by then.

The adoption of an affordable-housing ordinance is "for the future," the group's Vicki Brand said. "How are we going to take care of these people?"

Bay Area Economics also recommended that the city generally eliminate existing housing grants and instead award deferred interest loans, a measure to recycle available money and to expand its reach. City officials appeared Wednesday to embrace that.

The Building Industry Association of the Delta's John Beckman has praised that recommendation but objected to an inclusionary housing ordinance, saying it would have a detrimental impact on market-rate housing.

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