



Affordable Housing in Sacramento County?

Decision July 28th

Later this month, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors is expected to decide whether to adopt a crucial new affordable housing policy, aimed at ensuring that a percentage of all new housing in the County is affordable.

The Board's action represents the culmination of an 18-month campaign by the Sacramento Housing Alliance-joined by a broad coalition of community groups-to win approval of SHA's Community Proposal for a Mixed-Income Housing Policy. That policy proposal calls for a mandatory program in Sacramento County requiring 15% of all new housing to be affordable to Low-, Very Low-, and Extremely Low-Income households, in equal proportion. Community supporters have dubbed it the "15%: 5/5/5" solution.

A center-piece of the campaign has been to win a specific and equal commitment to addressing the housing needs of extremely low income households, such as minimum wage workers, seniors and persons with disabilities. SHA won an important victory in that regard last year, when the Board committed to adopting a program that includes a mandate for housing for extremely low income households, with the details to be worked out. The Board's upcoming action (July 28th at 2pm) will consider many of those details.

Pressure from the building industry lobby has diluted many of the recommendations that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. The program, so far, has shortchanged the critical housing needs of extremely low income households. Staff has recommended that only 2% of the units be made affordable to extremely low income households, a minimal commitment at best. SHA is encouraging its members to contact their representatives on the Board of Supervisors and urge the Board to support a policy of 15% with 5% for people with extremely low incomes, and to attend the upcoming Board hearing.

The Board is scheduled to hear the program July 28th at 2 pm, at 700 H Street. (watch your email or check our website, www.sachousingalliance.org/events).

Measure A May Earn Spot on November Ballot: Paratransit Watching Closely

Many Sacramento residents can't drive or use mass transit like buses or light rail. Most are frail, elderly or people with disabilities who can't maneuver a vehicle themselves, walk dozens of blocks to transit stops, make multiple transfers, or ride for long periods of time. Paratransit Inc., a Sacramento nonprofit company which has been providing door-to-door shared ride transportation to these individuals in Sacramento since 1978, is counting on the passage of Measure A to continue and enhance its ability to provide services.

Measure A is a half-cent tax, passed in 1988 and ending in 2009, used to pay for transportation, transit and road improvements here in Sacramento County. On July 22, the County Board of Supervisors will vote to put a proposal to renew Measure A on the fall 2004 ballot.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

John Foley

"They have an ostrich approach," a school district homeless worker said about elected officials and their passive reaction to the poor and homeless in the community. She wants me to bring extremely low income families who cannot find housing right into the offices of city hall and the county administration building. Officials say they are responsive to the needs of their constituents, but she sees that the poor are not viewed as constituents.

The Sacramento Housing Alliance has a new commitment to bring the housing needs of the poor to a higher level of visibility throughout our region. This renewed passion is born from our experience working towards an effective affordable housing program with county elected officials and other interests groups. We will be adding a new staff person in September to focus on organizing the stories and housing needs of lower income residents in specific areas of our region. This person will be working alongside poor residents to ensure that they are seen and heard by elected officials and other community leaders.

At the same time, a Social Work student intern from Sacramento State University will join the Housing Alliance two days per week. This intern will be working with affordable housing communities to compile a profile of affordable housing residents.

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New HUD Administration Policy Threatens Hundreds of Sacramento Residents

Allen Wilson, a Sacramento resident with a developmental disability, waited six years for a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher. After receiving the long anticipated federal assistance, Wilson could finally afford a small, yet safe apartment where he has lived comfortably over the past several years.

In June, Wilson was informed by his landlord that he may have to think about a new housing arrangement. The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) may no longer be able to fund the Section 8 housing vouchers that were assigned to the residents in his complex through the project-based program. Wilson could soon be faced with paying the entire monthly rent of \$721 on his own, or moving elsewhere.

Wilson is only one of hundreds of Sacramento households who are being exposed to the possibility of eviction. Recent changes in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) policy for funding Section 8 housing vouchers have left SHRA, along with thousands of Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) across the nation, short in cash. SHRA is actively seeking alternatives to limiting rental assistance.

On April 22, 2004, HUD announced to the 2,500 PHAs nationwide that they would no longer be paid based on the full cost of the Housing Choice Vouchers they administered. Instead, payment would be based on the cost of vouchers at the August 2003 level plus an adjustment for inflation.

Furthermore, the new policy is retroactive to January 1, 2004. This means that many PHAs will not receive the full funding to which they are entitled under the FY04 system, as stated in the April memo, due to adjustments for "overpayments" made to them in January, February, and March, which were based on the old FY03 system.

HUD's new policy, coupled with the Bush Administration's 2005 budget proposal to cut the program by \$1 billion, will have dire consequences for the 2 million poor, elderly and disabled Americans who currently benefit from the voucher program. Sheila Crowley, President of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, in the April 30, 2004 "Memo to Members" writes:

As the meaning of HUD's action sinks in, landlords, developers, and lenders will flee the voucher program in droves. Homeless and other low income people who need housing will be out of luck, and their ranks will swell with those who lose their housing assistance.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program constitutes one of the smallest portions of the federal budget, yet it is the most important federal program for helping needy workers, elderly and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes remain in safe, affordable housing.

HUD officials claim that they are only carrying out what Congress directed them to do in the FY04 appropriations bill. Congress asserts that they intended for the voucher program to be fully funded, and that they budgeted enough money to underwrite the program. However, Congress quietly authorized HUD to make cuts by administrative means, according to The New York Times. Meanwhile the Bush Administration and many members of Congress continue to press for more tax cuts for the wealthy, even though they are already doling out billions in corporate welfare. It would seem unconscionable to deny needy workers, elderly and disabled persons the federal help that will keep them sheltered in an attempt to pay for all those tax cuts for the rich. Yet, based on these recent actions, that is exactly what the federal government intends to do.

For more information on how HUDs recent actions are forcing many PHAs to cut housing assistance, please visit the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at www.cbpp.org/4-26-04house.htm

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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Our goal is to complete the question, "Who lives in affordable housing?" This two-part approach, research and community organizing, will help us to lead affordable housing policy in cities and counties throughout the region.

We know that the need for housing is great. One must only look at the skyrocketing real estate and rental markets. The Sacramento Housing Alliance will be working with community members to organize a base of people to help cities and counties address their housing needs.

If you would like to be apart of these efforts, please contact Ethan at the office - 442-1198.

Measure A

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Currently, only about 1.5% of the money collected every year goes to transit options for elderly and disabled. Paratransit, Inc. matches the Measure A funds with dollars from other sources to provide key services that maintain mobility and independence for seniors and people with disabilities. If the voters approve the proposed renewal plan, the amount for seniors will triple to 4.5%.

Regional Transit (RT) also uses Measure A money to pay for light rail and bus services. In addition, RT provides a large chunk of Paratransit, Inc.'s funding, since Paratransit helps to provide rides that allow RT to meet its ADA obligations.

The population of Sacramento is graying, as well as growing. Twenty percent of our population will be older than 65 within 30 years — compared to 13% today. The number of Sacramentans older than 85 will increase five-fold within 50 years, and many will give up their cars due to age-related disabilities. Analysts expect the number of Paratransit trips to exceed 1.6 million by 2030.

For more information about Paratransit services and Measure A see www.paratransit.org or call 429-2009 x 322. You can sign up with the Sacramento Mobility Coalition (its free), and they'll let you know about other ways to keep informed.



every Wed:
7:30 a.m.

The SHA Affordable Housing Coffee Hour has become a meeting ground for community residents to discuss affordable housing, homeless issues, housing policy, activism, etc. Come on in on your way to work and have a cup-o-joe or iced tea in one of the many locally owned and operated coffee houses throughout the Sacramento Area. See you there!

Schedule

7:30 am	7:30 am
<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>
7 th Luna's Cafe 1414 16 th St.	4 th Luna's Cafe 1414 16 th St.
14 th Coffee Works 3418 Folsom Blvd	11 th Coffee Works 3418 Folsom Blvd
21 st Naked Lounge 15 th & Q	18 th Naked Lounge 15 th & Q
28 th Weatherstone 812-21 st Street	25 th Weatherstone 812-21 st Street

Proposition 72

The Health Insurance Act

Across California, millions of working people are paying more not only more for housing but more for health care, as well. Higher health care costs affect lower-income community members disproportionately. These cost are rising not only because of rising health care prices, but also because businesses are shifting a greater share of the burden to their workers. *The amount California families pay for premiums has increased 70% in the last three years.*

In November, Proposition 72 will be decided by statewide voters. Proposition 72 asks voters to affirm or repeal the Health Insurance Act, formerly SB 2 until signed into law last October. Affirmation of the act will limit what employees pay for health care, by requiring large and medium-sized companies to pay *at least 80%* of the cost of employees' premiums for health insurance.

Hmong Refugees to Resettle in Sacramento: Long-term Housing a Major Concern

The U.S. State Department announced in late 2003 that it would open America's doors to resettle Hmong refugees from Thailand. Hmong people fled their home country of Laos after fighting the North Vietnamese on behalf of the United States during the Vietnam War. After the United States withdrew from Vietnam, Laos became a Communist country in 1975 and the Hmong were declared enemies of the state. The U.S. resettled about 130,000 Hmong in the United States between 1976 and 1990, after the Hmong were forced to flee Laos to Thailand. A large group of Hmong who did not resettle in the U.S. eventually found refuge at a Buddhist temple, Wat Tham Krabok. The people living at Wat Tham Krabok are the new group of refugees resettling in the United States this year. See the Sacramento Bee article from June 20, 2004, "Arriving in America: Family lands in capitol," for more information.

Sacramento will be receiving one of the largest groups of Hmong refugees over the next six months. Estimates indicate that up to 1,500 individuals may be arriving in the greater Sacramento area. Each arriving family will have a corresponding sponsor family in Sacramento. The sponsor family will assist the new arrivals with locating housing and adjustment to living in the U.S. Each arriving family will receive \$400 per person to assist in housing, clothes, and other basic necessities.

Each refugee family will qualify for federally subsidized housing programs. However, the voucher wait list is closed and the wait list for public housing is four to five years. It is unlikely that these families will receive any housing subsidy in the near future. Additionally, it is not likely that any of these families will qualify to receive a loan to purchase a home. In fact, many of the sponsor families, who may be low-income and reside in subsidized housing themselves, are concerned about where the new residents will be able to find affordable long-term housing opportunities. A task force of Hmong community leaders, government agencies, school administrators, and community organizations has formed to address the needs of the Hmong community. The next meeting will be held in early August. If you are interested in participating in the task force, specifically with regard to helping address the pressing housing need, please contact the Sacramento Housing Alliance.



**Speaker
Training**

Housing Advocates Needed!
Please join our Speakers Bureau

**Speaker
Training**

Please join us on Monday, August 2 or Wednesday, August 4 to learn how you can inform the public about the facts of affordable housing.

Pizza and drinks will be served. All you have to do is show up!
SHA wants YOU!

Training Date – Join us!	
Dates:	Monday, August 2, 2004. 12:30pm-2:30pm Wednesday, August 4, 2004. 5:30pm-7:30pm
Location:	1122 17 th Street, Suite B (in the YWCA building)
RSVP:	442-1198 or email desiree@sachousingalliance.org



The Sacramento Housing Alliance's Evening of Caring, Cuisine & Community

On June 21st, the Capitol Plaza Ballroom was packed with nearly 200 spirited members celebrating SHA's 8th Annual Evening of Caring, Cuisine and Community. We were thrilled to host the event at the charming new location, where so many remarkable people committed to enhancing our community gathered to celebrate the many accomplishments of SHA's member organizations. A rolling slideshow captured these efforts, and more than one were surprised to see themselves larger than life on the 10 foot screen! Jayna Bower, Reverend Dexter McNamara, Lisa Noling, Supervisor Don Notolli, and USA Properties were given special recognition for their efforts to enhance housing opportunities for the poor and homeless in our community. SHA would like to send a special thanks to those who sponsored the evening and made it all possible.

PLATINUM

Remy, Thomas, Moose & Manley

GOLD

Fannie Mae
SEIU Local 250
Strategies Toward Empowering People
Sunseri Construction

SILVER

Larry & Suzie Augusta
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John Stewart Company
Paratransit, Inc.
Loaves & Fishes
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Sacramento Mutual Housing
Volunteers of America
USA Properties Fund, Inc.
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BRONZE

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Lisa Noling & Hill Snellings
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River City Bank
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 IMPORTANT ADVOCACY ISSUES? SIGN UP
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 442-1198 OR EMAILING
 SHA@SACHOUSINGALLIANCE.ORG**

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MEMBERSHIP - JOIN NOW!

All members receive our bi-monthly newsletter, action alerts, invitations to workshops and policy analyses. Please consider a full, associate or individual membership!

YES! I want to support SHA!

- Full Membership: 0.1% (point one percent = budget x .001) of agency budget, \$175 minimum. Full members can be nominated to have a representative on the Board of Directors.
- Associate Membership: \$125 or more, \$50 for agencies with a budget under \$100,000.
- Individual Membership: \$35 and up, \$15 low income.
- I cannot join, but would like to support SHA activities.

Payment I have enclosed \$ _____

Please invoice me monthly for \$ _____ Please invoice me quarterly for \$ _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____ Fax _____

SHA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. All gifts are tax decutable to the full extent of the law. Tax ID #68-0252305

Housing Advocates Needed! Please join SHA's Speakers Bureau Pizza Party on August 2 at 12:30 pm or August 4 at 5:30 pm to learn how you can help SHA educate the community on the realities of affordable housing. For more information, contact Desiree Rose at 442-1198 or desiree@sachousingalliance.org

Celebrate diversity! On July 31, Sac City College will be holding a festival celebrating the diversity and cultural richness of our communities. 10am to 9pm. Call Juanishi, 806-4903, or Marissa, 505-2930 for more information.

Now accepting nominations for the California Reinvestment Committee (CRC) Tiger Award. CRC will be giving the CRA Tiger Award to a few individuals and non-profit organizations that have made outstanding contributions to Northern California communities at its 2nd annual Celebrate Reinvestment Sacramento Valley event on September 30th. Nominations will be accepted through August 15th. Contact Alan Fisher, (415) 864 3980, or Paul Ainger, (530) 757-4444 x 225, if you would like to nominate an individual or organization.

Do you need assistive technology (AT)? The AT Network provides FREE information and referral on AT vendors, service providers, daily living devices, funding, community resources and more! Please contact us at 1-800-390-2699 (voice), 1-800-900-0706 (TTY) or visit www.atnet.org.

SHA updates

Looking to buy a home? Sacramento Neighborhood Housing Services offers a variety of ongoing classes aimed to help first-time homebuyers get ready to purchase a home. Topics include "Preparing for Homeownership," "Home Maintenance" and others. For more information call 452-5356 ext.25 or www.sacnhs.org.

Teachers needed at St. John's Shelter for Women. St. John's Shelter for Women and Children has begun its new program at 4410 Power Inn Rd. We offer 1-2 hour classes to our residents. We are looking for individuals willing to teach/facilitate a class. Sacramento City School District will pay teachers they have credentialed. For more information contact Deborah Dunham, 453-1482.

To receive this in large print call (916) 442-1198.

Sacramento Housing Alliance

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- * Affordable Housing Sac County
- * Hmong Resettlement
- * Annual Dinner Thank You

Help us update our mailing list

If the addressee is not you, please email or call sha@sachousingalliance.org or (916)-442-1198