



## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Trinidad Planning Commission

**FROM:** Trever Parker, City Planner

**DATE:** November 15, 2013

**RE:** General Plan Update – Housing Element & Community Design Element

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### *Housing*

I have not made very many edits to the Housing Element since I sent it to you on November 1. The main thing I did was to add the new Regional Housing Needs Allocation numbers for January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019 to section E.1.d. The element is almost complete, except for a couple of figures – a regional map, and a vacant parcels map. If you recall, your homework was “to focus on the overall readability and organization and any final edits. In particular, please keep the policies in mind when reviewing the document. Look for any statements within the text that say that the City will or should do something to make sure that those made it into policies. In addition, if you notice any policies that are not included in or supported by the text, then maybe they are not necessary.” I figured that I would wait to try to have the housing element reviewed by a professional until the Planning Commission has finalized it.

### *Community Design*

This will be the next element that the Planning Commission reviews, along with the Cultural & Historic Element. In reviewing general plans from other communities, these three issues are often combined into one element, but I have kept them separate for now. I have provided you with a draft Community Design Element that is based on the City of Fort Bragg, since that was recently certified by the Coastal Commission. I also included the community design sections from the existing General Plan for review. Finally, I included some minutes from a couple of Planning Commission meetings in April 2002 where community design issues were discussed with some substantial public input. At that time, view-blocking vegetation became the biggest issue. The result was the development of the Views and Vegetation Ordinance rather than an amendment of the existing Design Review / View Protections guidelines that was originally intended. This should provide enough background to start your review and consideration of a Community Design Element.

# CITY OF TRINIDAD

## Housing Element Update DRAFT

~~October~~November 2013

As Adopted           , 201   by the City Council

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## A. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Overview

#### Purpose

All Cities and Counties in California are required to adopt and periodically update a Housing Element, one of several General Plan Elements mandated under State law. Although State standards dictate much of the Housing Element's form and structure, local governments are primarily responsible for Element preparation and implementation.

The Trinidad Housing Element is designed to meet State requirements by discussing the City's current housing situation and predicting future housing trends and needs. This document is intended to supplement the Trinidad Residential Land Use Policies (Land Use Element) to provide adequate housing for all segments of the population while maintaining a quality living environment in Trinidad and its environs. The Housing Element also addresses Trinidad's share of the Regional Housing Need, as determined by the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

However, it should also be recognized that Trinidad is a very small community with 362 residences and approximately 2290 housing units. There are a lot of regulatory requirements for a Housing Element to meet in order to be certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Many of the issues and requirements do not apply in Trinidad, and the City has a number of physical and environmental constraints. Therefore, while this Housing Element is intended to be as complete as possible, and makes a good faith effort to comply with State housing law, it is recognized that it is likely infeasible and unpractical for the City to be in full compliance with a certified Housing Element.

#### State Requirements (from the 2003 General Plan Guidelines)

The housing element requirements listed below are derived from Article 10.6 of the Government Code, §65583 through §65590. The housing element must be comprehensively revised at least every five years to reflect the results of the required periodic review. Section 65588 establishes the timetable for these revisions. Local governments may address these requirements in any format they deem most meaningful to meet the community's needs. A housing element, regardless of its format, must clearly identify and address, at a minimum, each of the statutory requirements, as follows:

- Quantifying projected housing needs. This is accomplished through the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) process pursuant to §65584. The city or county's share of the RHNA, as determined by their Council of Governments (COG) and HCD, is the projected housing need for the planning period of the housing element. To accommodate the RHNA, the element must demonstrate site development capacity equivalent to, or exceeding, the projected housing need, to facilitate development of a variety of types of housing for all income groups.

- Review and revision of the housing element. Unlike the other elements of the general plan, state law explicitly requires that the housing element be reviewed and updated as frequently as appropriate, but not less than once every five years (§65588). The “review and revise” evaluation is a three-step process:
  1. Section 65588(a)(3): “Progress in implementation”— Compare what was projected or planned in the previous element to what was actually achieved. Analyze the significant differences between them. Determine where the previous housing element met, exceeded, or fell short of what was anticipated.
  2. Section 65588(a)(2): “Effectiveness of the element”—Review the results of the previous element’s goals, objectives, policies, and programs. The results should be quantified where possible (e.g., the number of units rehabilitated), but may be qualitative where necessary (e.g., mitigation of governmental constraints).
  3. Section 65588(a)(1): “Appropriateness of goals, objectives and policies”—Based on the above analysis, describe how the goals, objectives, policies and programs in the updated element have been changed to incorporate what has been learned from the results of the previous element.
- Describe how the jurisdiction made a diligent effort to achieve public participation from all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element.
- Assess housing needs and analyze an inventory of resources and constraints (§§65583(a)(1-8)), including an analysis of population and household characteristics and needs, an inventory of land, analysis of governmental and non-governmental constraints, analysis of special housing needs, analysis of energy conservation opportunities and an analysis of assisted housing development at-risk of converting to market rate uses.
- Estimate the amount of funds expected to accrue to the Redevelopment Agency Low- and Moderate- Income Housing Fund (LMIHF) over the planning period of the element and describe the planned uses for those funds §65583(c)).
- Establish a housing program that sets forth a five year schedule of actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the element. Programs are to be implemented through the administration of land use and development controls; provision of regulatory concessions and incentives; and the utilization of appropriate federal and state financing and subsidy programs; and when available, use of funds in a low and moderate income housing fund of a redevelopment agency (§65583(c)). The housing program must:
  - Identify adequate sites with appropriate zoning, development standards and public facilities that encourage and facilitate a variety of housing types to accommodate all income levels of the local share of regional housing needs, including multifamily rental, factory-built housing, mobile homes, farmworker housing, emergency shelters and transitional housing (§65583(c)(1)).
  - Assist in development of housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households (§65583( c)(2)).
  - Address and, where possible, remove governmental constraints on the development, maintenance and improvement of housing. The program shall also remove constraints or provide reasonable accommodation for housing for persons with disabilities (§65583(c)(3)).

- Conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock (§65583(c)(4)).
- Promote equal housing opportunities for all persons (§65583(c)(5)).
- Preserve for lower income households the multifamily assisted housing developments at-risk of conversion to market rate uses (§65583(c)(6)).
- Quantify objectives by income level for the construction, rehabilitation, and conservation of housing (§65583(b)).
- Demonstrate the means by which consistency will be achieved with the other general plan elements and community goals (§65583(c)), including an analysis of housing in the Coastal Zone (§65588(c)(d) and §65590(h)(2)).
- Distribute a copy of the adopted housing element to area water and sewer providers. The purpose of this section of the law is to ensure that public and / or private water and wastewater providers provide a priority to proposed housing development projects for lower income households in their current and future resource or service allocations (§65589.7).

## **2. Document Contents & Organization**

This Trinidad Housing Element is composed of the following eight sections:

Section A. INTRODUCTION, introduces the document, describes the sections, describes public participation and cites statutory authority for the Housing Element.

Section B. HOUSING NEEDS SUMMARY, summarizes Trinidad’s housing needs as indicated by the previous sections.

Section C. GOALS, POLICIES, OBJECTIVES, presents the City’s proposed program for meeting housing needs.

Section D. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, describes the population trends and characteristics of Trinidad.

Section E. HOUSING & HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS, describes the population trends and characteristics of Trinidad.

Section F. HOUSING MARKET INFORMATION, discusses the City’s housing stock and characteristics of the housing market that affect the affordability and availability of land and housing.

Section G. CONSTRAINTS, describes factors limiting construction, rehabilitation and housing provision in general.

Section H. ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS HOUSING ELEMENT, examines the effectiveness, appropriateness, and progress in implementation of the policies and goals of the previous Housing Element.

Section I. ENERGY CONSERVATION, describes the need for energy consumption and conservation in Trinidad and discusses measures & incentives for promoting energy conservation.

### 3. Consistency with the General Plan

This document serves as an extension to the Residential section of the Land Use Element of the Trinidad General Plan (pages 28-32). It has been prepared in accordance with the goals, policies, and implementation measures established throughout the General Plan, and every attempt has been made to assure consistency between the documents. This is further discussed in Section H.

### 4. Public Participation

During the review period for this document the Planning Commission held monthly public hearings with discussions of this Housing Element from February 6, 2013 through \_\_\_\_\_ 2013. In addition, the City Council held public hearings on \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_. Notices were posted indicating the time and place of the hearings, and the draft document was made available at City Hall and on the City's website. The final document will be made available at City Hall and the County public library in Trinidad.

## B. HOUSING NEEDS SUMMARY

~~Later sections will describe the factors contributing to Trinidad's position with respect to meeting its housing needs. In view of these factors, the City should focus its housing efforts on the following: (Note, these are verbatim from the previous housing element. They are supposed to provide a summary of important points provided from the informational sections (D, E, F, G). It might be easiest to start from scratch and go through that data and analysis and pick out the important points.)~~

This Housing Element update is being done to update the demographic statistics in the document, discuss what changes have occurred with the City's housing stock over the last fifteen years, and plan for the housing needs of the City which have changed since the 1997 Housing Element. Some of the key findings include: (1) the demographics in Trinidad are shifting from a trend towards older and fewer residents, to slightly more families and larger household sizes; (2) there are plenty of vacant, developable parcels in Trinidad to accommodate housing demand in the foreseeable future; (3) the data (Census and ACS) for a small community like Trinidad is unreliable; (4) Trinidad does not have substantial numbers or concentrations of disadvantaged populations; and (5) many of the barriers to development, particularly high-density, affordable housing is limited by factors outside the City's control.

As listed in item 5 above, it is important to note that due to several factors, the ability of the City of Trinidad to provide for the variety of housing types requested by the State is limited. These factors include:

- 1) The small size and population of the City of Trinidad (367 residents in 2010), and one of the smallest City's in the State of CA at approximately 1 sq. mile in size;

much of that area includes sensitive environments, cultural sites, unstable bluffs and open space owned by the State as part of the Park system.

2) The lack of a municipal sewer system

3) High property values in the City due to the unique location, scenic beauty, and inherent recreational opportunities

## **1. General**

- ~~a. Facilitate the ability of limited-income households to improve the condition of their living quarters through financial and technical assistance, as feasible.~~
- ~~b. Continue to promote the conservation of affordable housing through policies aimed at minimizing overall housing costs for residents, with special focus on limited-income households.~~
- ~~c. Provide opportunities for construction of affordable housing on developable vacant lots.~~
- ~~d. Encourage the utilization of available subsidy programs such as HUD Section 8 and FmHA construction/rehabilitation programs by qualified City residents.~~

## **2. Special Needs**

- ~~a. Encourage the provision of access for handicapped persons in new and rehabilitated residential structures. Where handicapped access provisions are not provided with initial construction, building design should not preclude the possibility of such future remodeling.~~
- ~~b. Encourage adequate supply of local day care/nursery school programs.~~
- ~~c. Encourage shared housing opportunities, particularly for seniors, female-headed households, and the disabled.~~
- ~~d. Increase public awareness of local assistance opportunities including public subsidized housing programs, shared housing, day care and nursery facilities, social services (for transitional or homeless persons), housing rehabilitation programs, weatherization practices, fair housing policies, local employment opportunities, and energy conservation methods.~~
- ~~e. Further investigate the feasibility of establishing a limited care facility in Trinidad to assist local seniors and the disabled.~~
- ~~f. Encourage tourism, to a reasonable extent, to help bolster the City's economy. The primary focus should be on counterbalancing revenues lost due to drops in commercial-fishing related tourism.~~
- ~~g. Consider policies for capping or limiting the number of vacation rentals in the City if they are determined to interfere with the availability and/or affordability of housing for long-term residents. According to the 2010 Census, approximately 15% of the City's~~

~~housing stock was identified as being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. City Staff estimates that the percentage of vacation rentals in the City may be as high as 20% of the existing housing stock.~~

## **C. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION (2013-2018)**

The City's goals, policies and objectives are intended to accomplish the broad State housing goals and requirements as appropriate for Trinidad's particular needs and circumstances. The format and organization of the goals and policies of the City's Housing Element are slightly different than the other chapters of the General Plan. Rather than there being a set of policies for each goal, all the goals and policies are lumped together because most of the policies are applicable to multiple goals.

### **1. Goals**

- HG-1 To assure adequate housing for all segments of the community while maintaining the quality, living environment and rural character of Trinidad.
- HG-2 To provide adequate housing for persons with special housing needs such as target income groups of low-income, the elderly, handicapped, and female-headed households.
- HG-3 To promote safe, convenient, and cost-effective housing.
- HG-4 To plan for and enable the development of balanced residential neighborhoods with access to employment opportunities, community facilities, and public services.
- HG-5 To preserve the City's historical and cultural heritage through preservation and innovative reuse of older structures.
- HG-6 To assure availability of temporary facilities in the event of natural or human-induced disasters.

### **2. Policies**

- HP-1 Review all new residential development to be consistent with the existing small town character of the community and to ensure sustainability as well as scenic and environmental protection.
- HP-2 Review and revise Trinidad's View Protection Criteria as necessary to provide clearer guidance and reduce community conflicts while still protecting important public and private coastal views.

- HP-3 Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are a valuable source of affordable housing in Trinidad. However, ADUs shall be carefully regulated to ensure that coastal resources are protected and may not be appropriate on all residential lots.
- HP-4 Due to existing physical constraints, retain the existing emphasis on single-family dwelling units in residential designated areas.
- HP-5 As pertinent information becomes available, develop a program for notifying residents of the availability of housing programs and funding.
- HP-6 Consider exceptions or revisions to City ordinances allowing more flexibility relating to zoning, density, reduced setbacks or other incentives to provide reasonable accommodation or improve living conditions of residents as long as coastal resources are still adequately protected.
- HP-7 As feasible, pursue appropriate, applicable local, State, and Federal housing and economic development programs.
- HP-8 Discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, family size, marital status, national origin, ancestry, or other arbitrary factors is not permitted. Support appropriate safeguards and reasonable accommodation requests to ensure fair housing opportunities.
- HP-9 Consider the housing needs of the elderly and the handicapped a high priority in future land use decisions.
- HP-10 Encourage provisions for access for the handicapped in new or rehabilitated residential and commercial developments.
- HP-11 Continue to allow manufactured housing to be permitted on sites where single family dwellings would otherwise be allowed.
- HP-12 Encourage the use of private initiated and / or publicly-funded programs to provide housing for low-and moderate-income families.
- HP-13 Encourage the County to allow a variety of housing types in the residential areas surrounding the City during the development of the current General Plan Update.
- HP-14 Encourage the use of multi-family developments in Planned Development designations provided that the density does not exceed the physical limitations of the land.
- HP-15 Encourage energy efficiency and use reduction and conservation in new and existing development.

- HP-16 Promote conservation and improvement of the existing housing stock, with emphasis on older structures. Specific areas of concern include electrical wiring, foundation stability, potential for water damage, and septic tank failure.
- HP-17 Investigate and adopt appropriate policies encouraging “green building technologies” that reduce negative impacts on the environment from both existing and new development.
- HP-18 Encourage, both inside and around the City, principles of smart growth and mixed-use development concepts where feasible to improve circulation and reduce the need for auto use.

### **3. Implementation to Reach Five-Year Goals (201~~43~~-201~~98~~)**

- HI-1 Continue to pursue certification of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance to allow second units where feasible, subject to certain restrictions allowed by State Law. The ADU Ordinance has been approved by the City Council and was forwarded to the California Coastal Commission (CCC) in May 2013 for review and ultimate inclusion into the City’s Local Coastal Program (LCP).

Responsibility: City Council, Planning Commission, & Planning Staff

Time Frame: Within the next year. Dependent on CCC review process.

- HI-2 Continue to maintain zoning regulations that allow for manufactured housing on remaining developable residential lots within the City.

Responsibility: City Council, Planning Commission

Time Frame: Ongoing.

- HI-3 As relevant information becomes available, publicize available programs or resources regarding the following topics through a local community newsletter or water billing:

- a. Subsidized Housing Programs
- b. Shared Housing Opportunities
- c. Available day care/nursery school programs
- d. Permit process to become a licensed day care provider
- e. Available adult day care program
- f. Fair Housing Practices
- g. Nearby Social Services
- h. Housing Rehabilitation Programs, Weatherization Programs
- i. Local Employment Opportunities

Responsibility: City Council & City Clerk

Time Frame: Ongoing

- HI-4 If a need or interest is identified, research and implement opportunities for group quarters for targeted groups (single persons, female-headed households, disabled, seniors, etc.). If applicable and available, assist interested applicants to apply for HCD's Family Housing Demonstration Program (FHDP).

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & Planning Staff

Time Frame: If an applicable program is identified and program funds are available, assist at least one interested applicant to submit an application during the next five year period.

- HI-5 Pursue Senior Group Housing opportunities. If the City is eligible, consider submitting an application / proposal to HCD for the CalHome Program.

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & Planning Staff

Time Frame: If an applicable program is identified and program funds are available, assist at least one interested applicant to submit an application during the next five year period.

- HI-6 Continue implementing the requirements of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) by ensuring the use of the most recent Uniform Building Code. Support requests for reasonable accommodation as long as long as long as it is not detrimental to the public welfare or environment.

Responsibility: City Council & City Building Inspector

Time Frame: Ongoing

- HI-7 Provide assistance to individuals requesting the development of limited care facilities for seniors and / or the disabled.

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & Planning Staff working with Service Providers

Time Frame: If an applicable program is identified and program funds are available, the, assist at least one interested applicant to submit an application during the next five year period.

- HI-8 Encourage rehabilitated units to include retrofit weatherization improvements such as ceiling and floor insulation, caulking, and weather-stripping.

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & City Building Inspector

Time Frame: Ongoing

HI-9 Disseminate energy conservation information for existing housing by publicizing and / or providing information regarding energy audit and weatherization programs, such as those through the Redwood Coast Energy Authority, PG&E, and Energy Upgrade California™, as they become available .

Responsibility: City Council & City Clerk

Time Frame: Ongoing

~~Program CIRC-5.1.3: Coordinate with the RCEA (Redwood Coast Energy Authority) to educate and encourage property owners to conduct energy audits to reduce energy consumption through utilization of free programs sponsored by utilities and other incentives.~~

~~Program CIRC-5.2.4: Work with RCEA to provide information, marketing, training and education to support renewable energy development.~~

HI-10 New Construction and major remodels will continue to be required to comply with the current version of Title 24 of the California Building Standards Code. These requirements are approved by the City Building Department at the time of plan review or permit application.

Responsibility: City Building Inspector

Time Frame: Ongoing

HI-11 Consider requesting a local organization involved in housing rehabilitation (e.g. Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA)) to survey the City of Trinidad's housing stock as an initial step for establishing a housing rehabilitation program for targeted income groups. City Staff or Community Members could complete this task as well.

Responsibility: City Council

Time Frame: Within two years after adoption of the Housing Element.

HI-12 If eligible, apply for, or support appropriate applications to HCD and other applicable agencies for funds to provide grants and / or low interest and deferred loan programs for the rehabilitation of housing occupied by targeted income households.

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & Planning Staff

Time Frame: If an applicable program is identified and program funds are available, assist as many interested applicants as feasible to submit an application during the next five year period.

HI-13 The City will continue participation in the Humboldt County Fair Housing Committee sponsored by the Board of Realtors.

Responsibility: City Council

Time Frame: Ongoing

HI-14 The City Clerk is designated as the contact for referral of fair housing complaints to the State Department of Fair Housing and Employment.

Responsibility: City Council & City Clerk

Time Frame: Ongoing. Post a minimum of two notices informing residents regarding fair housing complaints each year at Town Hall and / or other appropriate public places.

HI-15 The City will continue to encourage appropriately licensed / permitted cottage or home-base industries, including those related to commercial fishing / tourism to the area, to a reasonable extent, in efforts to bolster the City's economy and increase employment opportunities by implementing the following actions:

1. Permit at least 1 licensed day care or nursery school operation where appropriate
2. Increase tourism revenues by promoting community events
3. Increase opportunities for development of cottage industries / home occupations that are compatible with neighborhood character and environmental constraints
4. Permit appropriate and necessary ancillary services to the commercial fishing industry

Responsibility: City Council, City Clerk, & Planning Staff

Time Frame: ~~As feasible~~at a minimum, hold ~~an~~ annual meetings between the City Council and Business Community.

## **D. DEMOGRAPHIC AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

A note on the data: Most of the data required for this housing element previously could be found in the most recent Census data. However, many of the applications using the Census data needed more up-to-date information. Therefore, supplemental statistics for intervening years were estimated in a dataset known as the "American Community Survey" (ACS). These ACS statistics, estimated in 5-year increments, are estimates only and are not nearly as accurate as the Census data, especially for a small community like Trinidad. Unfortunately, for the 2010 Census, much of the long-form data was not used, and the Census is only providing population and demographic data. Employment, income and other data can now only be retrieved through the ACS. Efforts are being made to increase the accuracy of these estimates in the future, but for now the data is quite questionable, with margins of error commonly greater than 50 percentage points, up to 100 percentage points for Trinidad. Therefore, this data must

be used with caution and common sense. Each set of data below includes the source of the information.

A good example of the problems with this data can be seen in the following statistics for household heating fuel. According to the most recent ACS data (2007-2011), 12 homes in Trinidad utilize natural gas for their heating fuel. Because there are no natural gas lines serving the City, that number should realistically be 0.

House heating fuel (2007-2011 ACS):

- Utility (Natural) Gas – 12
- Tank / Propane Gas – 42
- Electricity – 41
- Fuel oil, kerosene, etc. – 3
- Coal – 0
- Wood – 36
- Solar energy – 2
- Other fuel – 13
- No fuel – 0

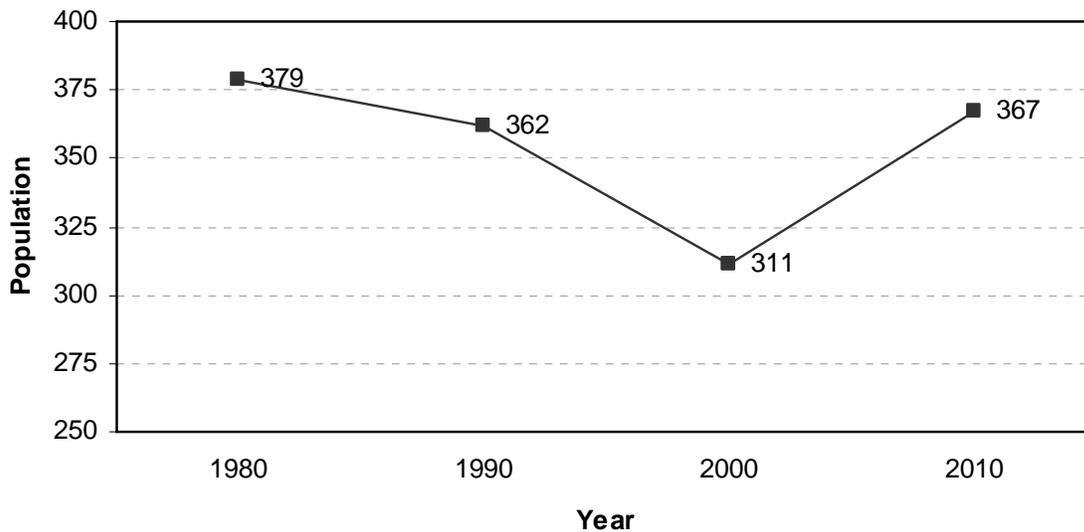
## **1. Population Characteristics**

### a. Growth Trends & Age Distribution

#### *Population Trends*

The City of Trinidad has declined in population from 379 in 1980 to 362 in 1990 (4.5% decrease) and then to 311 in 2000 (14% decrease). However, according the 2010 US Census, the population has increased to 367 (15.3% increase) over the last decade. Graph 1 illustrates the change in population from 1980 to 2010.

**Graph 1. Population Growth - City of Trinidad**



### *Age Distribution*

#### CENSUS 2010

Persons less than 18 years old – 60

Persons 18-64 – 236

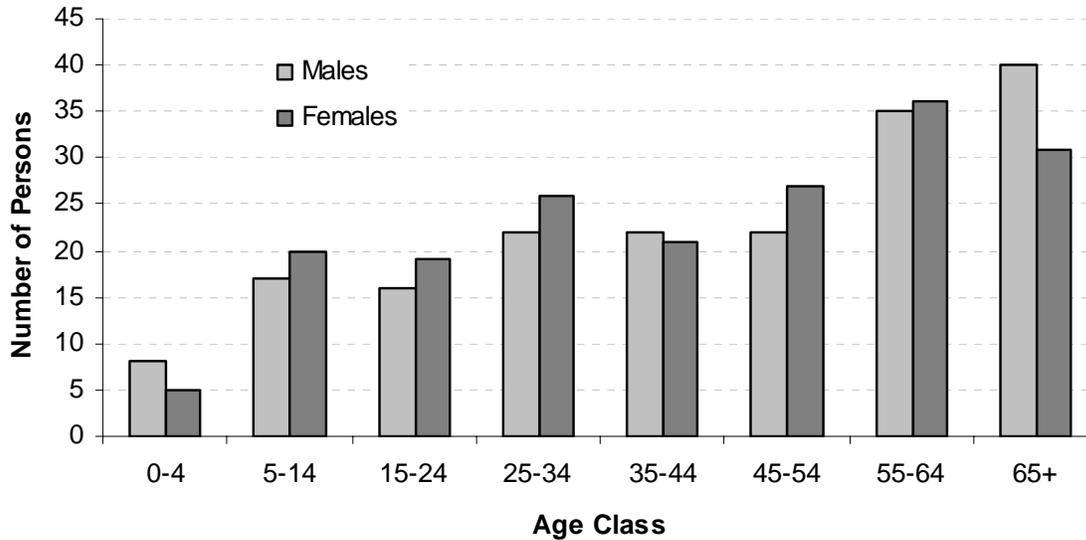
Persons 65 years and older – 71

Based on the 2010 Census, Trinidad's largest two age classes are 55-64 and 65+. Both of these age classes contain 71 people (142 total) and make up 38.7% of the total population. The 55-64 class has slightly more females, but the 65+ class has 12.6% more males than females. This information is displayed in Graph 2 below. According to the 2000 and 2010 census, there has been a minor decrease (.014%) in the number of people aged 65 and over, but a 124% increase in children (under 16 years) and a 11.2% increase in people of working age (16-64).

The City of Trinidad historically supported a commercial fishing industry. As the fishing industry has declined over the years the City has become more of a retirement community, tourist / recreation area, and bedroom community. As this transition occurred the population had been in decline with smaller household sizes. Elderly housing was a growing concern in Trinidad as the population continued to age. Even though the percentage of seniors is no longer growing, it is still the largest population sector in the City. Housing units appropriate for elderly persons, especially single elderly persons, should be encouraged in Trinidad (e.g., smaller units and possibly group quarters with special design needs). Comparison of household type information indicates a lack of sufficient numbers of this type of unit, especially group quarters (see section E.2.f). Local services such as a pharmacy would also be useful in the City for

this age group. However, more important may be reliable access to transportation to access medical and other necessary services outside of Trinidad.

**Graph 2. Age Structure 2010 - City of Trinidad**



As mentioned above, the City has seen an increase in population over the last decade which has reversed the decline in population that occurred over the two previous decades. The recent increase in population seems to be due to the fact that younger families with children have moved into the City. This is evident by the fact that the number of people aged 65 and over has remained relatively constant, but the number of children (under 16 years) and working age (16-64) individuals has increased.

Another age group of significance is the number of individuals of parenting age between 20-54 (156 total). This group makes up 42.5% of the total population and is one of the main reasons for population growth in the City over the last decade, and has caused a transition from a mostly retirement community to a more mixed community with young families. Table 1 below compares the population composition in 1990, 2000, and 2010, according to US Census information.

**Table 1 – Population Characteristics**

	1990	% of Pop.	2000	% of Pop.	2010	% of Pop.
Total Population	362	100%	311	100%	367	100%
Male	190	52.5%	154	49.5%	182	49.6%
Female	172	47.5%	157	50.5%	185	50.4%
Children (<16 years)	58	16%	25	8%	56	15.3%
Working Age (16-64)*	219	60.5%	214	68.8%	240	65.4%
Retirees (>65)**	85	23.5%	72	23.2%	71	19.3%

\*These figures refer to the actual number of residents between 16 and 64 years and do not reflect the size of Trinidad's work force (see c. Employment Trends).

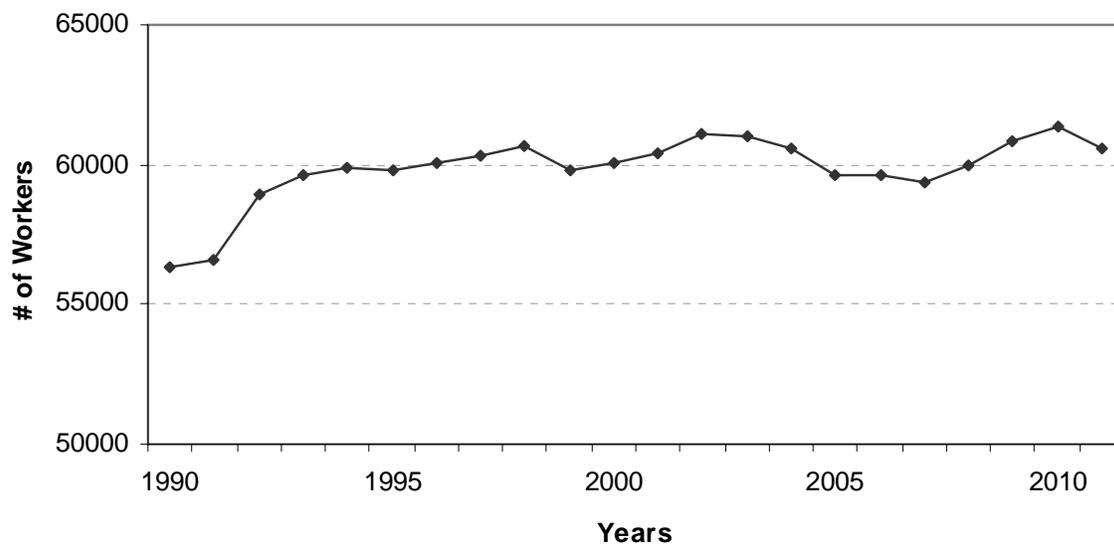
\*\*This category includes all residents 65 years and over, regardless of employment status.

## b. Employment Trends

Trinidad's local economy is largely dependent on three key industries: tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing. During the past decade, Trinidad residents were employed in two main industry categories: educational, health, & social services; and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, & food services. Other notable job sectors include: agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining; public administration; professional, scientific, and administrative; and retail trade.

Most of the employable population in Trinidad is affected by the County-wide job market. Comparing the 2000 Census to the 2007-2011 ACS data, from 2000-2011 the labor force (those working or looking for work) in the City of Trinidad grew by 14.4% (181 to 207). However, the 2010 Census data shows a decrease in the population of working age (16-64) residents. According to the State Employment Development Department (EDD), from 2000-2011 the Humboldt County labor force grew by only 0.83 percent (60,100 - 60,600). Because the ACS data are estimates, and Trinidad is a small community, the discrepancy is likely just a reflection of skewed / poor data. Graph 3 below illustrates the size of the Humboldt County labor force from 1990-2011. The EDD data is not available for Trinidad, but Humboldt County would be expected to have similar trends.

**Graph 3. Humboldt County - Civilian Labor Force 1990-2011**



According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the mean travel time to work for Trinidad residents was 17.5 minutes. This implies that many Trinidad workers are employed in the nearby cities of McKinleyville and Arcata. The 2007-2011 ACS also indicates that 28.1% of workers traveled less than 10 minutes to reach their work places and were therefore employed locally (within 5 miles of their homes).

Average travel time to work – 17.5 minutes (2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Number of workers traveling:

Less than 10 minutes – 28.1%

More than 30 minutes – 12.4%

Mode of travel to work: (2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates)

Workers 16 and over – 188

Car, truck or van (drove alone) – 111

Car, truck or van (carpooled) – 24

Public transportation – 0

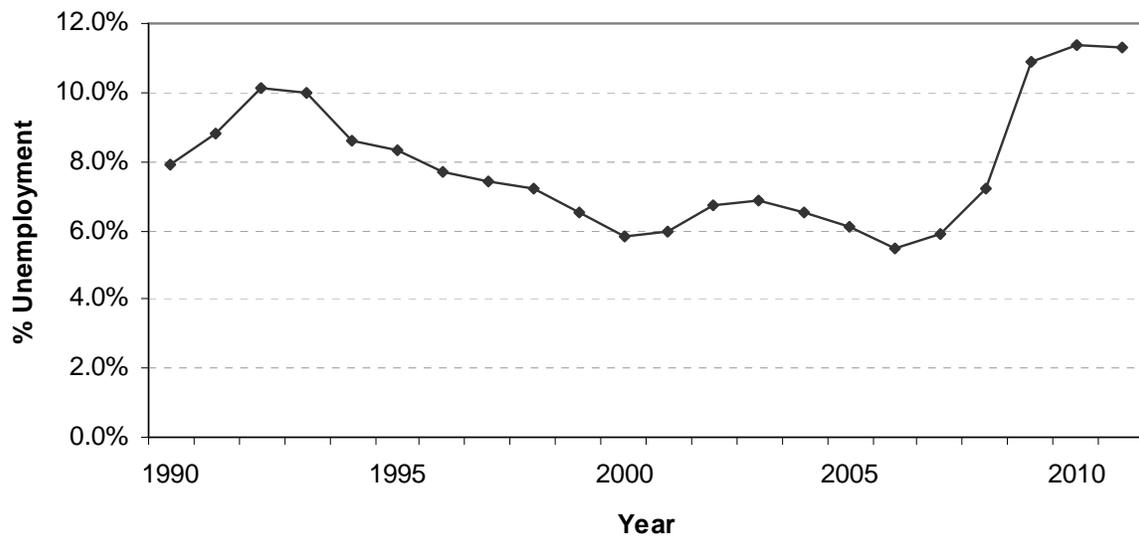
Walked – 18

Other – 0

Worked at home – 35

The unemployment rate in Humboldt County remained relatively steady in the early 2000's but began increasing sharply in 2007 due to the economic crisis. According to the EDD, Humboldt County's unemployment rate peaked in 2010 at 11.4% and decreased slightly in 2011. Graph 4 below illustrates the changes in the County unemployment rate from 1990-2011. The 2007-2011 ACS data estimates Trinidad's unemployment rate at 6.3%

**Graph 4. Humboldt County - Unemployment Rate 1990-2011**



c. Ethnic Population

The total ethnic minority population in Trinidad is 36 persons from the 2010 Census and equals 9.8% of the total population (See Table 2 below). At 4.1%, Trinidad’s largest non-white ethnic group is Native American, which is reflective of the relatively large Native American population in Humboldt County. The second largest group is Hispanic or Latino at 3.0% of the total population. The ethnic minority population in Trinidad has increased by 55.5% since the 2000 Census with Native American and Hispanic or Latino ethnicities showing the largest increases. A decade ago, the entire ethnic minority population made up only 5.1% of the total population. Interestingly, there has been a 60% decrease in the number of blacks or African Americans in Trinidad.

**Table 2 – Race Population Characteristics**

	2000 Census		2010 Census			
	Trinidad		Trinidad	County	State	
RACE	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
White (non-hispanic)	288	92.6	324	88.3	77.2	40.1
Black or African American	5	1.6	2	0.5	1.0	5.8
American Indian & Alaska Native	1	0.3	14	3.8	5.2	0.4
Asian	2	0.6	2	0.5	2.1	12.8
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	1	0.3	1	0.3	0.2	0.3
Hispanic or Latino	7	2.3	11	3.0	9.8	37.6
Other race	1	0.3	0	0	0.3	0.2
Two or More Races	6	1.9	13	3.5	4.1	2.6

## E. HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

The Census defines a household as one or more individuals living together, with common housekeeping arrangements, in the same living quarters. The Census divides households into two categories, depending on their composition. Family households consist of two or more related persons living together. Non-family households include persons who live alone or in groups of unrelated individuals.

According to the U.S. Census, a “housing unit” is defined as a house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single room which is occupied (or vacant but intended for occupancy) as independent living quarters. Table 3 shows the number of housing units and the size and number of households in Trinidad according to the three most recent Censuses.

### 1. General Household Characteristics

#### a. Number and Size of Households

##### HOUSING UNITS (CENSUS)

Total number of housing units – 225 units in 2000

Total number of housing units – 252 units in 2010

Note that this is one of those datasets where there is a significant discrepancy between the 2010 Census data and the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) data. The ACS data lists the total number of housing units in the City as 220 while the Census data lists it as 252. Normally the Census data is much more reliable than the ACS data, but the fact that the Census data shows that 27 new homes were built between 2000 and 2010 makes that data very suspect. On the other hand, the ACS data indicates that 5 new homes were built between 2000 and 2011, which is very close to the actual 6 new homes that were permitted between 2000 and 2012. However, the data is useful in showing a general distribution of housing stock in the City. Additional information about Trinidad’s housing stock can be found in Section F. Note that housing stock includes all types of housing units, including apartments and probably some permanent RV’s as well.

##### 2010 CENSUS

Owner-occupied – 113 (44.8% of total housing units)

Renter-occupied – 74 (29.4% of total housing units)

Total occupied – 187 (74.2% of total housing units)

Vacant – 65 (25.8% of total housing units)

For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use – 38 (15.1 % of total housing units)

##### 2007-2011 ACS

Owner-occupied – 77 (35.0% of total housing units)

Renter-occupied – 72 (32.7% of total housing units)

Total occupied – 149 (67.7% of total housing units)

Vacant – 71 (32.3% of total housing units)

Based on 2010 Census information, 187 households were occupied in Trinidad, and 65 were vacant during that year, which includes vacation rentals. Approximately 58.5% (38) of vacant housing units in the City were identified as being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. That accounts for approximately 15% of the housing stock in Trinidad. Current City records show that there are actually 41 business licenses for vacation rentals in the City, or 18% of the total housing stock (based on the ACS total of 220 units).

**Table 3 – Total Households and Housing Units**

<b>US CENSUS</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Total Population	362	311	367
No. of Housing Units	200	225	252
No. of Households*	170	168	187
Ave. Household Size	2.13	1.85	1.96
Family Households	101	73	88
Ave. Family Size		2.51	2.64
Non-family Households		95	99
Persons Living Alone			73
65 & Older Living Alone			28

\* Corresponds to non-vacant housing units.

From 1990-2000, the City of Trinidad saw a 27.7% decrease in the number of family households which resulted in a 13.1% decrease in the average number of persons per household. However, this trend reversed from 2000-2010 as younger families with children moved into the City and the number of households increased along with the average number of persons per household. According to the Census data, throughout this time, Trinidad has seen an approximate 12-13% (Avg. 26 housing units added to housing stock per decade since 1990) increase in the number of housing units each decade since 1990. However, a review of the actual number of permits that have been issued shows that this data is significantly higher than reality, and so should be viewed accordingly.

**Table 4 – Household Size and Percentage of Households (Census)**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
1 person	51 (30%)	68 (40%)	73 (39%)
2-4 persons	115 (68%)	95 (57%)	109 (58%)
5 or more	4 (2.4%)	5 (3.0%)	5 (2.7%)
Total	170	168	187

As noted in Table 4, the number of 2-4 person households showed the only increase from 2000-2010. This corresponds with the data contained in Table 3 which shows an increase in the number of families and the average number of persons per household.

## b. Group Quarters / Shared Housing

Group quarters refer to living arrangements where rooms are rented individually and a kitchen or meals are shared. The 2000 Census reported that no Trinidad residents were living in group quarters at that time. However, the 2000 Census also indicated the existence of 17 non-family households containing two residents each, and one non-family household containing three persons. These households may have represented units occupied by some of the college students residing in the City at that time (See Students [2.gD.7](#) below). These shared households are not classified as group quarters in the Census.

The 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates also shows that Trinidad does not contain any residents living in group quarters. As discussed above, 38.7% of Trinidad's population is 55 years or older and as this group ages there will be a greater need for housing units appropriate for elderly persons (e.g., smaller units and possible group quarters with special design needs). On the other hand, the more recent population trend is toward younger people with families, which will offset some of that need.

## c. Income Characteristics

Household income characteristics are a vital element in analyzing affordability of housing. The 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates indicate that the number / percent of households with some type of income has increased since the 2000 Census, including an increase in public assistance (Table 5). Note that these numbers, other than the 'any earnings' row, do not include employment income.

**Table 5 - Households with earnings**

<b>Income / Source</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2007-2011 ACS</b>
Any Earnings	81.8%	91.3%
Retirement Income	43.2%	23.5%
Social Security	27.3%	25.5%
Supplemental Security	4.3%	1.3%
Cash Public Assistance	0%	1.3%
Food Stamps / SNAP Benefits	0%	2.7%

### EMPLOYMENT (2007-2011 ACS)

Population age 16+ – 266

Total in labor force – 207

Total not in labor force – 59

Unemployed – 13

Number that work at home – 35

Self-employed – 50

#### d. Regional Housing Responsibility

The current Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan for Humboldt County covers the planning period from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and allocates 11 new housing units to be provided by the City during that period. In addition, a new RHNA for the January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2019 has just come out. These numbers are based on income levels (see next section below). The regional housing need is then determined by estimating the existing and projected need for housing. Existing need is the amount of housing needed to address existing overcrowding or low vacancy rates. Projected need relates to providing housing for the growing population. Table 6 below shows a breakdown of Trinidad's housing allocation for 2007-2014 and 2014-2019 by income group.

**Table 6 – RHNA Allocation for Trinidad by Income Group**

Income Group	2007-2014		2014-2019	
	# of Units	% of total	# of Units	% of total
Very Low	3	27.3	<u>2</u>	<u>40.0</u>
Other Low	2	18.2	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Moderate	2	18.2	<u>1</u>	<u>20.0</u>
Above Moderate	4	36.3	<u>2</u>	<u>40.0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b><u>5</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>

According to the RHNA allocation, the City has the greatest need for housing units in the above moderate and very low income categories both for the current and next housing cycle. For the new cycle, the numbers are intended to be additive – meaning if not enough housing units were built during the previous cycle to meet the allocation, they should be added to the current allocation. Only one new home has been built since 2007 (670 Edwards), and that house would likely be considered 'above moderate.'

## 2. Household Needs Summary / Special Households

### a. Low Income Households in Trinidad

Income levels affect the cost, style, and type of housing (e.g., detached single family vs. apartment or manufactured home) needed to meet demand. Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of monetary income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If the total income for a family or individual falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family or individual is classified as being "below the poverty level."

Median annual income (2000 CENSUS)

Families - \$50,357

Households - \$40,000

Median annual income (2007-2011 ACS)

Families - \$74,983  
 Households - \$63,438

Persons below poverty level (2007-2011 ACS - Last 12 Months)  
 All individuals – 25 (out of a total of 286 for which poverty status was determined)  
 Between 0-18 years - 0  
 18-64 - 25  
 64+ - 0

Families below poverty level\* (2007-2011 ACS - Last 12 Months):  
 All families – 0  
 With children under 18 - 0  
 Female headed households with children under 18 - 0

\*The Planning Commission is skeptical of these numbers and feel that there are likely families and children in Trinidad below the poverty level.

On the other hand, the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development defines households based on income levels in comparison to the Area Median Income (AMI), which is what the regional housing needs allocation numbers above are based on. These income levels do not correspond exactly to ACS income categories. Each level is defined as follows:

- o Extremely low income = 0% - 30% of the AMI
- o Very low income = 31% - 50% of the AMI
- o Low income = 51% - 80% of the AMI
- o Moderate = 81% - 120% of the AMI
- o Above Moderate income = 120%+ of the AMI

Lower income households (“low”, “very low”, and “extremely low”), those with incomes below 80% of the County median income, have more difficulty locating housing than those with moderate or high incomes. The Humboldt County median household income has risen every decade from \$23,586 in 1990 (Census), to \$31,226 in 2000 (Census), and to an estimated \$40,376 based on the 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table 7 below shows the income ranges for the lower income households defined above.

**Table 7 – Income Ranges for Lower Income Defined Households**

	Income Range (Dollars)
Low Income (50-80% AMI)	\$20,188-\$32,300
Very Low Income (30-50% AMI)	\$12,113-\$20,188
Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	Less than \$12,113

Number of very low income & low income:  
 Families (2007-2011 ACS)  
 \$10,000 - \$14,999 – 1  
 \$15,000 - \$24,999 – 5

\$25,000 - \$34,999 – 2  
Households (2007-2011 ACS)  
Less than \$10,000 – 0  
\$10,000 - \$14,999 – 11  
\$15,000 - \$24,999 – 15  
\$25,000 - \$34,999 – 11

Non lower income households by income group (2007-2011 ACS):

\$35,000 - \$49,999 – 25  
\$50,000 - \$74,999 – 31  
\$75,000 - \$99,999 – 29  
\$100,000 - \$149,999 – 27  
\$150,000 - \$199,999 – 0\*  
\$200,000 or more – 0\*

\* The Planning Commission is skeptical of these numbers, and it is likely that there are households in Trinidad with annual income over \$150,000.

Owner occupied housing units paying... (2007-2011 ACS - Last 12 Months):

Less than 20% of income to housing – 44.2%  
More than 30% of income to housing – 44.2%

Renter occupied housing units paying... (2007-2011 - ACS):

Less than 20% of income to housing – 39.4%  
More than 30% of income to housing – 22.5%

The City of Trinidad median household income has risen every decade from \$29,583 in 1990 (Census), to \$40,000 in 2000 (Census), and to an estimated \$63,438 based on the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates. According to the 2007-2011 ACS, 25% of households in the City make less than \$34,999 annually. Trinidad's median household income has historically been higher than the County median household income, at least partially because housing prices in the City have historically been higher relative to the rest of Humboldt County (see section F.3) for additional information on housing prices and affordability). Due to the unique coastal headland location, scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of the City, housing and land prices are more expensive than most other parts of the County and it generally requires a higher income level to rent or own housing in Trinidad.

According to 2000 Census information, 29 persons in Trinidad (9% of the total population) were at or below the poverty level in 1999. (Note that the poverty designation does not have a direct correlation to the income level categories described above. The Census Bureau uses a detailed list of criteria such as age, gender, household size, etc. to determine poverty status). Of the 29 residents at or below the poverty level, all were white, 3 were younger than 5, and none were 65 years or older. None of these residents were married couples, but 5 were female, single-parent heads of household. However, this is on the datasets that is not being compiled / released for Census 2010; therefore we must rely on the ACS data. According to the 2007-2011

ACS 5-Year Estimates, 25 persons (6.8% of the total population) in Trinidad between ages 18-64 were below the poverty level. Of these 25 residents, 23 (92%) were white and 2 (8%) were Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 56% were identified as male and 44% as female.

b. Elderly

The total number of residents over age 64 in 2000 (Census) was 62, or 20% of the total population. At that time there were 50 households (29.7%) in the City with at least one person over age 65. Of these 50 households, 20 (40%) were one-person households, and 46 (92%) reported a person 65 or over to be the head of household. Of the 46 households headed by seniors, 38 owned their homes and 8 rented.

According to the 2010 Census, the total number of residents over age 64 in the City is 71, or 19.3% of the total population. In total, 30.5% of households (57) in the City were shown to have a person over age 65, and 15% of households were headed by a householder living alone over the age of 65.

c. Female-Headed Households

Female-headed households are considered a disadvantaged group because most single-parent households are headed by women, and these families are twice as likely to live in poverty as male-headed households or individuals (National Center for Law and Economic Justice). In 2000 (Census), 27% of Trinidad households were headed by women. According to the 2010 Census, 27.3% of households were headed by women. Table 8 below compares various characteristics of female-headed households between the 2000 and 2010 Census.

**Table 8 – Female-Headed Households**

	2000 Census		2010 Census	
<b>Female-Headed Households</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Female householders living alone	31	18.5	30	16
Female householders with children under 18 years	5	3	14	7.5
Female householders over 65 years old			12	6.4
Other female-headed households			7	3.7
<b>TOTAL female-headed households</b>			<b>51</b>	<b>27.3</b>

d. Disabled

Disabled persons tend to encounter housing problems similar to those of other residents with special needs. Because their incomes are often limited, people with disabilities are more likely to pay a disproportionate share of their incomes to housing than other residents. Disabled persons may also have unique needs not experienced by other groups. Although needs can vary widely, disabled persons may need special facilities to help them overcome their disability or make their housing units more convenient. Some

of these amenities include wide doorways that can accommodate wheelchairs, special bracing for handrails, lower countertops and switches and outlets at an appropriate height. Unfortunately, very few housing units have these features and consequently, they must be remodeled to serve the disabled.

The City enforces building code requirements for retrofitting homes for accessibility. The City has adopted and utilizes the most current version of the California Building Code. The City has not made any amendments to the UBC or CA building code that would diminish the ability to accommodate persons with disabilities. The City of Trinidad implements State requirements for the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and will continue to review new development for compliance.

The State Department of Rehabilitation provided information in 1986 on types of disabilities for the area consisting of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. The Department indicated that the relative disability types would also be typical of Humboldt County. The highest proportion of disabilities, muscular/skeletal (39%), are those that concern access to and in buildings, such as wheelchair access.

The City does not currently have written guidelines for requesting 'reasonable accommodation' with respect to zoning, permit processing, or building laws, and the enforcement of building codes and the issuance of building permits. Reasonable accommodation includes changes to rules, policies, practices or services, when such accommodations are necessary to allow persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling. Reasonable accommodation goes beyond the building code and standard ADA requirements. Under the Fair Housing Act, an accommodation is considered 'reasonable' if it does not pose an undue financial or administrative burden and if it does not fundamentally alter the zoning ordinance. Unless a municipality can prove that an accommodation request is unreasonable according to the above criteria, the municipality must grant the accommodation. In order to provide a process for requesting "reasonable accommodation" the City will develop a "reasonable accommodation" process during the effective period of this element. Once the process for "reasonable accommodation" is developed, the City will make this information available to the public as part of permit application packets.

Work disability status (2000 CENSUS – No current data available):

Total – 68 (21.9% of the population)

Male – 40

Female – 28

Between 16 and 64 years of age (working age) – 31

65 years and older – 37

Several seniors who used to reside in Trinidad have relocated near Mad River Hospital in Arcata (14 miles away) to be closer to needed services. It is possible that the creation of a special care facility would benefit some city residents. This could be especially true for those older residents who would like to remain in Trinidad when they are no longer capable of maintaining their homes. However, more transportation options may be a

more realistic solution for allowing seniors to stay in Trinidad as they age. Some assistance for disabled persons is provided by Mad River Community Hospital. The Adult Day Care Program provides daytime care for disabled adults. Transportation for participants is generally provided through the program as long as two or more Trinidad residents are part of the program. The City should encourage affordable transportation options provided to seniors and disabled to access services in larger nearby towns.

#### e. Large Families

According to the 2000 Census, there were only 5 households (3%) in the City that consisted of five or more persons. All were family households of whom four were home owners and one was a renter. The five units were occupied by a minimum total of 26 people or 8.4% of the total population. According to the 2010 Census, there were also 5 households (2.6%) in the City that consisted of five or more persons. All were family households of whom 2 were home owners and 3 were renters. The five units were occupied by a minimum total of 28 people or 7.6% of the total population.

The number of large family households in the City has remained the same over the last decade, but has become a slightly smaller percentage of the total households as the City has grown. The number of households, families, and average number of persons per household has increased since 2000, but the majority of family households in the City (78.4%) still contain 2-3 persons.

#### f. Overcrowding

Overcrowded housing is defined by the Census as an average of more than one (1) person per room in a housing unit (excluding bathrooms, porches, and hallways). The incidence of overcrowded housing is a general measure of whether there is an available supply of adequately sized housing units.

According to the 2000 Census, only 4 housing units (2.4%) in the City had 1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room. Of these, 2 were owner occupied and 2 were renter occupied. According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, only 2 housing units (1.3%) in the City had 1.01 to 1.50 occupants per room, and they were both owner occupied (0 housing units had more than 1.5 occupants per room). This data indicates that the City of Trinidad has an available supply of adequately sized housing units, and is not overcrowded.

The number of households with an average of more than one person per room has decreased over the last decade, and is not specific to renters as is common in other jurisdictions. Surprisingly, the average household size of renter-occupied units is substantially lower, at 1.54 people, than the household size of owner-occupied units, at 2.27 people. This is partially explained by the fact that most renters live in smaller one and two bedroom units. Table 9 below shows the size of rental units in the City compared to the persons per rental unit.

**Table 9 – Rental Unit Size vs. Renter Household Size (2007-2011 ACS)**

Rental Unit Size		Renter Household Size	
# of Bedrooms	# of Units	Persons per Household	# of Households
0 (studio)	2	1	45
1	37	2	25
2	22	3	1
3	10	4	1
4	1	5	0
5	0		
TOTAL	72	(102 renters total)	72

The data in Table 9 indicates that the City could use some additional 0-2 bedroom rentals to accommodate the small rental households. However, some of these renter households may be living in larger housing units by choice, and may not necessarily have a need or desire for smaller housing units. Ultimately, the data illustrates that overcrowding is not a problem in the City of Trinidad.

**g. Students**

College students are typically income limited individuals in need of inexpensive rental housing. Students from nearby Humboldt State University (HSU) and College of the Redwoods make up a small portion of Trinidad’s population. In 2000, 32 residents (10.3% of the total population) were enrolled in college. Of these, 12 (3.9% of the total population) were between the ages of 18-24. This would indicate that the majority (62.5%) of those enrolled in college were age 25 or older at that time. According the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, only 8 residents (2.2% of the total population) in the City were enrolled in college, all of which were female and 25 or older. This data indicates that since 2000 the City’s student population has decreased substantially and become older in age. Though one of the Planning Commissioner noted that both she and her brother were enrolled at HSU at the time, and both were younger than 25.

Traditionally, college students between the ages of 18-24 reside in the less expensive section of the City’s housing stock (e.g. second units, mobile homes, trailers, studios, etc.) or share single-family dwelling units. Considering that most of the City’s student population is over the age of 25, they may not necessarily be as income limited and in need of smaller inexpensive housing units. Some of these individuals may live in family households in larger single-family dwelling units. Due to the high cost of housing and distance from local colleges, the City of Trinidad has not traditionally been a highly desirable location for college students to live.

**h. Farm Workers**

According to the 2000 Census, no Trinidad residents are employed in the farming industry. According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 25 persons in the City are employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining industries. It is not anticipated that any of these individuals are farm workers since no labor intensive farming activities occur within or near the City of Trinidad due to the lack of land suitable for agricultural use. In addition, due to the high cost of housing, Trinidad would not be a desirable location for farm workers to reside.

#### i. Housing for Homeless Persons

The City is located adjacent to Highway 101, the primary corridor through Humboldt County. Due to this, homeless persons occasionally stop in the City along their way primarily during the summer months when travel is more frequent. However, the City of Trinidad is a less desirable and convenient location for homeless persons due to the exposed coastal location resulting in harsh winter weather conditions and even very windy or foggy summer days, the remote location, small populations, lack of social services, and the absence of a centralized downtown.

The City's Zoning Ordinance contains no language that would preclude development of housing or services for homeless persons. Contact with several Humboldt County social service agencies and review of City records indicate that housing for the homeless is not a significant problem in Trinidad. Like other smaller rural cities in Humboldt County, Trinidad would utilize the Eureka Rescue Mission and the local churches and service groups to provide for the needs of any homeless persons, on an as-needed basis. In addition, Women for Shelter provide emergency shelter for women and children, particularly battered women.

In order to provide housing and / or shelter for homeless persons in the event they begin to reside in the City of Trinidad, the City would consider entering into a multi-jurisdictional agreement with the surrounding cities and unincorporated communities in Humboldt County if this option were available.

## **F. HOUSING MARKET INFORMATION**

The Trinidad housing market is part of the North Humboldt County market area, which also includes the cities of Eureka, Arcata, Blue Lake, and the unincorporated community of McKinleyville. Home ownership and affordability in Humboldt County are lower than for other areas of the state, and housing prices are beyond the means of many low-income persons (Humboldt County Housing Element, 2012). Trinidad exhibits a distinct housing market where this problem is exacerbated due to its physical size constraints and its unique, scenic location along the Pacific Coast. Demand for housing in the City is remarkably high, accounting for the rise in property values over the past several decades.

Trinidad has historically been a small community composed mainly of single-family dwellings. Its distinctive lack of manufactured homes, condominiums, townhouses, and

apartments, as compared to other cities, is attributable to its rural location, early build-out, and reliance on septic systems for all wastewater disposal. Density of development in the City of Trinidad is necessarily limited by the lack of a municipal sewer system and the land area to accommodate on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS).

The 1976 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to the City’s General Plan concluded that many alternative housing types were “not consistent with the character of the City” and that they “should not be permitted” within City boundaries. These statements provide historic insight into the nature of local values and the preference for single-family homes. However, a small number of apartments, second units and mobile homes have been developed in Trinidad since the 1976 EIR. In addition, the two RV Parks in town contain a fair number of permanent residents .The use of such units has benefitted Trinidad’s housing program in assuring affordable housing for all income levels and special needs groups.

The City of Trinidad Zoning Ordinance has a policy which limits housing units to a 2,000 sf maximum. As stated in Section 17.60.040(H)(1): “Residences of more than two thousand square feet in floor area and multiple family dwellings or commercial buildings of more than four thousand square feet in floor area shall be considered out of scale with the community unless they are designed and situated in such a way that their bulk is not obtrusive”. This helps to keep housing prices down and maintain the small town character of the City.

## 1. Housing Stock

This section discusses the types, size and occupancy of housing found in Trinidad. One thing to keep in mind when reviewing this data, as explained in section E.1.a, is that the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates are not consistent with the 2010 Census data for housing in the City of Trinidad. However, it was also pointed out in that section that the ACS data actually appears to be more accurate than the Census data in terms of total housing units. The Census did not published detailed information regarding types of housing units, but the CA Department of Finance estimates these numbers based on the Census data, so they are included for comparison. Though this data may not always be accurate, it is useful in showing trends and relative distributions.

**Table 10 - Type of Housing Units**

	CA Dept. of Finance 1/1/2012	2007-2011 ACS
Single, detached	186 (73.8%)	148 (67.3%)
Single, attached*	2 (0.8%)	0
Two to four units	32 (12.7%)	36 (16.4%)
Five plus units	7 (2.8%)	11 (5.0%)
Mobile homes	25 (9.9%)	18 (8.2%)

Boat, RV, van, etc.	NA	7 (0.3%)
Total housing units	252	220

\*An attached single-family residence shares a wall with another residence, but is located on its own lot, such as a townhouse or row house, but not a duplex.

This data shows that approximately 70% of the existing housing stock in the City is made up of conventionally built, single-family homes. Multi-family housing accounts for about 15% to 20% and mobile homes account for a little less than 10%. Neither dataset is completely accurate though, since there are no known developments with 5 or more housing units in Trinidad, unless the RV parks are included in those numbers. Tables 11 and 12 further characterize housing units by the number of bedrooms and rental status. The data shows that more than 90% of the housing units are 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms and are fairly evenly split between these. Table 12 also shows that most rentals are located in the smaller housing units.

**Table 11 – Bedrooms per Housing Unit (2007-2011 ACS)**

# of Bedrooms	# of Units	% of Total
0 (studio)	10	4.5
1	64	29.1
2	68	30.9
3	71	32.3
4	7	3.2
5 or more	0	0

**Table 12 – Number of bedrooms per housing unit by occupancy (2007-2011 ACS):**

# of Bedrooms	Total # of Units	# of Units Rented
1 or less	74	39
2-3	139	32
4+	7	1

According to both the 2010 Census and 2007-2011 ACS, the vacancy rate in the City (25% - 30%) is much higher than the County (9.0%) or State (8.1%). This is most likely due to the number of housing units in the City which function as vacation rentals or second homes. The 2000 Census identified 26 (11.5% of total housing units) vacant housing units which were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. According to 2010 Census data, the number of vacant housing units used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use has increased by 46.2% to 38 since 2000. Table 13 below shows the status of vacant units in the City at the time of the surveys. At least some of the variation can be explained by the potentially rapidly changing status of some of these categories. Though the data only represents one point in time, it does indicate relative distributions and general trends.

**Table 13 – Vacancy Status**

<b>Vacancy Status</b>	<b># Units (2010 Census)</b>	<b># Units (2007-2011 ACS)</b>
For Rent	11	22
Rented, Not Occupied	0	13
For sale only	5	0
Sold, not occupied	1	0
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	38	30
For migrant workers	0	0
Other vacant	10	6
<b>TOTAL VACANT</b>	<b>65 (25.8%)</b>	<b>71 (32.3%)</b>
Total Housing Units	252	220

The rental vacancy rate, according to Census information, increased substantially from 1.5% in 1980 to 14.5% in 1990. However, it went down to 12.5% in 2000 and increased slightly to 12.9% in 2010. According to 2010 Census information, the rental vacancy rate in the City is much higher than the County (3.6%) or State (6.3%). This high rate may be reflective of the generally high vacancy rate in the City. The ACS does not differentiate long-term versus short-term rentals, which means the high vacancy rates may be due to the number of vacation rentals and second homes, the high cost of rents, or even students that are gone for long periods of time.

## 2. Housing Condition

The majority of the City's housing stock can generally be described as aging. Table 14 below lists the number of units constructed in corresponding time intervals.

**Table 14 - Housing Age (# of housing units built over time)**

<b>2010 Census</b>		<b>2007-2011 ACS</b>	
TOTAL	252	TOTAL	220
		2005-2011	0
2000-2010	27*	2000-2004	5
1990-1999	22	1990-1999	47
1980-1989	23	1980-1989	28
		1970-1979	48
1960-1979	89	1960-1969	34
Prior to 1960	91	1950-1959	27
		1940-1949	20
		1939 or earlier	11

\* As explained in earlier sections, this # does not match the City's file records, which show that 6 new houses were constructed between 2000 and 2012.

This data indicates that the majority of housing in the City was constructed prior to 1980, with the largest increases in the number of units occurring in the 1960's and 1970's; the ACS data shows another spike in the 1990's. Approximately 5% of housing units are very old, having been built prior to 1940.

The 1976 General Plan EIR states that the main sources of affordable housing in Trinidad at that time were numerous small, older homes. The EIR stressed the importance of preserving these units and reported that many of them were in need of repair.

Due to lack of funds and limited staffing, no recent survey of housing conditions has been performed. A photographic architectural survey of all properties was conducted in 2008. This was a brief survey, including only one photo of the front of each house; the intended use was to inform community design issues. However, any future housing assessment would benefit from the information provided through such a survey, and, if feasible, one should be completed by the end of the fourth housing element planning cycle which ends June 30, 2014. The City may be able to apply for grant funding and / or contract to with an outside entity, such as RCAA, to conduct the survey.

In lieu of surveying each individual property, for the 1998 Housing Element, discussions were conducted with local realtors, contractors, and the City Building Inspector to gain insight as to the condition of the Trinidad housing stock. The general conclusions reached through these interviews were as follows, and it is likely that conditions are still similar:

- Many of the “old” homes (over 35 years) need at least minor rehabilitation. “Ungrounded” electrical systems in old homes may need to be grounded or replaced.
- Many of the City’s homes, including some newer units, need roof repair. Leaky roofs seem to be a common problem, and in conjunction with other problems, could require major rehabilitation efforts.
- Many of the older homes have not been constructed to withstand shaking resulting from earthquakes as was experienced in nearby Ferndale and Rio Dell in spring 1992. Similar shaking in Trinidad could result in a loss of much of the older housing stock
- Many of the older homes have old septic systems that, although not necessarily indicating problems are below current standards. Some of these lots are small and offer few other alternatives should the system fail.

Some housing units in the City, particularly those with ocean views, have been remodeled since the 1997 Housing Element update. However, the high cost of rehabilitation is a discouraging factor for households with limited incomes. Households eligible for low-interest rehabilitation loans are referred to as “targeted households” by the California Department of Finance (DOF). The agency defines targeted households using area median income statistics. Specifically, the definition quotes:

- The **Targeted Group** is persons / families whose income is 80% of the estimated / adjusted median family income for Humboldt County.

- The **Lowest Targeted Group** is persons / families whose income is 50% of the estimated/adjusted median family income for Humboldt County.

According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the median family income in Humboldt County is \$52,317. Based on this, the Targeted Group would be persons / families whose income is \$41,854 or less and the Lowest Targeted Group would be persons / families whose income is less than \$26,159. Based on the above definition and according to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, approximately 30% of Trinidad households are at or below 80% of the median family income for Humboldt County and may be eligible for housing rehabilitation assistance from the State (see section E.2.a). The City should provide information regarding these programs to those requesting it at City Hall, even if it is just to direct them to a website for additional information.

### 3. Affordability

The City of Trinidad is situated in a unique and extremely scenic location on the Northern California coast, which keeps housing prices well above the average for Humboldt County. Properties in the City with ocean views are highly valued, and housing units adjacent to these areas are also more valuable than similar housing in other local jurisdictions due to the proximity to the coast. Many of the housing units in the City will never be affordable for persons with less than above moderate income levels. Relatively affordable housing in the City includes apartments, mobile homes in the trailer park, second units, and studio units. Efforts to increase affordable housing in the City should focus on the development of more of these types of units, with special consideration given to environmental constraints. City policies such as limiting single-family housing units to 2,000 square feet also help to keep the price of housing down. In addition, the City recently adopted an ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units (second units), but it has yet to be certified by the Coastal Commission.

#### a. Housing Value

Housing Valuation (2007-2011 ACS):

Value of Housing – 9 less than \$100,000

**Median Value (2000 CENSUS) - \$321,200**

**Median Value (2007-2011 ACS) - \$647,300**

Median Value (2009 city-data.com) - \$529,577

Median mortgage with monthly costs - \$2,650

Median rental price - \$817

The cost of purchasing or constructing a home in Trinidad has increased substantially over the last three decades. Table 15 below shows the increase in median value of housing units from 1980-2011. According to this data, the median value of housing in Trinidad has approximately doubled every decade since 1980. The most recent data is tempered somewhat by the recent housing market crash.

**Table 15 – Median Value of Housing Units**

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Median Sales Price</b>
1980 Census	\$73,500
1990 Census	\$150,000
2000 Census	\$321,000
2007-2011 ACS	\$647,300

The significant increase in housing prices in Trinidad is well illustrated by looking at the percentages of the highest priced homes. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 12% of the homes in Trinidad exceeded \$500,000 in value, with 0 over \$1,000,000. However, according to the 2007-2011 ACS data, even after the slump in housing prices, 71% of homes were valued at over \$500,000 and 28% exceeded \$1,000,000 in value. One oddity in the housing market data that turns up in the most current ACS data is the value of the cheapest homes in Trinidad. In both the 1990 and 2000 Census, there were no homes listed as being valued at less than \$50,000. However, the 2001-2011 ACS data shows that 9% of homes (or 20) are valued at less than \$10,000. It is not known by City staff which housing units in the City could be valued this low, unless it includes trailers in the RV parks.

**b. Housing Costs**

According to Census Data, median contract rent in the City increased substantially from 1980-2000 along with housing prices. However, according to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, median contract rent in the City has decreased by 2.4% since the 2000 Census, which could be the result of current economic conditions. Table 16 & 17 below show the change in contract rent in the City from 1980-2011.

**Table 16 – Median Contract Rent**

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Median Contract Rent (\$)</b>
1980 Census	238
1990 Census	475
2000 Census	663
2007-2011 ACS	647

**Table 17 – Contract Rents**

<b>Price Range</b>	<b>CENSUS</b>			<b>ACS</b>
	<b>% (1980)</b>	<b>% (1990)</b>	<b>% (2000)</b>	<b>% (2007-2011)</b>
Less \$200	35.9	6.5	5.3	0
\$200-\$399	42.2	16.1	10.5	0
\$400-\$599	12.5	37.1	22.8	38.8
\$600+	0	37.1	61.4	59.9
No cash rent	9.4	3.2	0	1.3
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Overall, the most important element in assessing housing affordability for a City is the ability of its residents to pay for housing. According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, contract rents are generally less than monthly mortgage payments in Trinidad, with the median contract rent (\$647) substantially lower than the median mortgage payment (\$2,650). Households paying more than 30% of their income to housing (rent or mortgage) are considered to be 'overpaying;' however, this can be by choice as well as necessity.

According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 22.5% of renter households were paying 30% or more of their respective incomes for rent. All of these households were classified as low or very-low income households. This figure represents a large decrease in the percentage of overpaying rental households from 2000 (42.1%). This data correlates with the fact that the median contract rent has decreased from \$663 to \$647 in the City since the 2000 Census.

According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 44.2% of homeowner households paid in excess of 30% of their incomes to mortgage costs. Only 8.8% of these households were classified as low or very-low income households. More than 50% of these households were classified as above moderate income households. This figure represents a large increase in the percentage of overpaying homeowner households since 2000 (30%). But the data does correlate with the fact that the median mortgage payment has increased from \$1,000 to \$2,650 since the 2000 Census.

The above data illustrates that overpayment for housing (based on income) has become a greater problem for homeowners than renters over the last decade. Of renters, overpayment is primarily a problem for low and very-low income households. Of homeowners, overpayment is primarily a problem for moderate and above moderate income households.

### c. Subsidized Housing

State law requires each City and County to analyze the status of existing housing units which, through the availability of subsidies, are provided to moderate low or very-low income households at below market rates. The purpose of the analysis is to determine whether such units are at risk of being converted to market rates within the next ten years. State law also mandates that local governments plan for the conservation of at-risk units. "Conservation" refers to actions taken to assure the future affordability of currently affordable units. The City has no locally subsidized units at risk, as the City has not issued mortgage revenue bonds, has not approved any density bonuses with financial assistance, does not have an in-lieu fee program, and has not assisted multi-family housing with redevelopment or CDBG funds. [See the constraints section for additional information as to why this is the case.](#) Public subsidies for renting could benefit many of the renters in Trinidad.

## 4. Land Availability

This section discusses vacant and underutilized properties in Trinidad which have the potential for residential development. As shown in Table 18 - Inventory of Land Available for Residential Development below, as of July 2013 there remained approximately 47 vacant, residentially zoned lots (UR, SR or PD) within City boundaries. However, probably only around 39 of them are actually developable; the others, with less than 4,000 sq. ft. of developable area, are likely too small or constrained to accommodate an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) and a residence. Vacant parcels are shown in Figure 2. All of the lots are subject to Trinidad's program of pre-development review (including sewage disposal capacity and design review), but the zoning accommodates such lower-cost housing types as manufactured / pre-fabricated units. The City has also submitted an ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units on residentially zoned parcels to the Coastal Commission for review and certification. The four Planned Development (PD) parcels are large enough to allow clustering of multi-family units and improvements.

Trinidad's inherent land-use constraints severely limit the development potential of all vacant land (see IV CONSTRAINTS). The developable lots described above are considered to be the build out for the City. These lots are zoned for single-family dwellings and carry a minimum lot size of 8,000 to 20,000 square feet and are dependent on lot constraints. Manufactured housing is permitted on all sites on a single-family use basis.

No redevelopment areas are currently defined within the City. Public facilities, such as the school and Town Hall, are available for use as temporary shelters in the event of a natural disaster. Emergency shelter or transitional housing is not designated in the City because of lack of expressed need, the City's rural location and close proximity to similar services in Arcata and Eureka. Aside from the existence of three large, currently undeveloped Planned Development (PD) parcels, no non-residential property in the City is available for conversion to residential use. The City has no industrial or agricultural zones. Most surrounding undeveloped property is within State Park boundaries or is Open Space and unsuitable for development due to geological instability or the existence of sensitive habitat and / or cultural resources.

Largely as a result of septic-system capability, slope stability constraints and the subdivision of most of the City into urban sized lots prior to zoning and other land use regulations, few previously developed parcels are available for subdivision for the purpose of creating more developable parcels. There are eight SR zoned lots and nine UR zoned that could potentially be subdivided (at least double the minimum lot size / maximum density). However, for most of these lots, subdivision is unlikely due to the configuration of the existing development and other constraints. Other than the potential for accessory dwelling units if the Coastal Commission certifies Trinidad's proposed ordinance, new housing development is generally restricted to the sites identified in Table 18.

**Table 18 – Inventory of Land Available for Residential Development by Land Designation and Zoning District**

Land Use Designation	Residential Zoning Classification <sup>1</sup>	Type of Development/Density	Number of Vacant Lots	Estimated New Unit Potential <sup>2</sup>
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	UR	Single-family 1 unit/8,000 sf Accessory dwelling unit*	19	11 <sup>3</sup>
SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL	SR	Single-family 1 unit/20,000 sf Accessory dwelling unit*	24	28
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT	PD	Multi-family 1 unit/8,000 sf Accessory dwelling unit*	4	37

\* Administrative approval if certain requirements can be met; otherwise Use Permit required; subject to ADU ordinance certification by the Coastal Commission.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to ZONING ORDINANCE: Zoning Classifications, Land Use Map, and Land Use & Zoning Matrix. The VS and C zones were not included, which allow development of a single-family residence with a use permit and accessory to another permitted use, such as a caretaker unit.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the allowable density of each zone and the number of vacant lots. Legally established lots are considered developable even if they are less than the current minimum lot size as long as they can accommodate an appropriate OWTS. The PD zone is the only zone that allows more than 2 units per lot. The estimated new unit potential does not include potential ADUs unless the lot is large enough to accommodate one under existing regulations. Some lots are also constrained by steep slopes, stability and creek setbacks, but most of these areas are zoned either SE or OS and were not considered developable for the purposes of this table. There may be additional constraints not considered herein that would further limit the potential number of new units that would have to be considered on a site-by-site basis.

<sup>3</sup> The new unit potential is less than the number of legal lots because lots that were less than 4,000 sq. ft. in area are considered undevelopable due to septic system constraints.

## G. CONSTRAINTS

This section attempts to identify the factors that may contribute to difficulties in meeting housing needs. Generally, such factors are attributed to governmental and non-governmental limitations. Housing constraints in Trinidad can best be described as:

- **Developmental Constraints**, including economic factors such as inability to pay and physical factors limiting housing development opportunities such as septic system capability and slope stability.
- **Governmental Constraints**, such as permitting difficulties and land use controls.
- **Non-governmental Constraints**, such as construction costs and land costs.

### 1. Developmental Constraints

#### a. Market Constraints

Market characteristics such as availability of housing and housing costs combined with the ability to purchase or rent housing define market constraints affecting housing in Trinidad. In addition to actual construction costs, housing costs include (or reflect, for rentals) those associated with financing, marketing, profit to developer or homeowner, infrastructure, utility hookups, property taxes, land division, and permit processing costs. Interest rates also impact the affordability of housing, as well as affecting housing costs. The ability to pay for housing, as well as housing availability, is discussed under Section F. Housing Market Information, subsection 3 - Affordability.

Increasing land values and costs of constructing or purchasing a home are prevalent in Trinidad, as well as the in the rest of the County and State. However, incomes in the area have also risen, somewhat offsetting the seemingly drastic increases in housing costs over the past 30 years. It is important to note that property values in Trinidad tend to exceed those in many surrounding areas due to the City's unique location, scenic beauty, and inherent recreational opportunities. Although market constraints are the least limiting of the developmental constraints, lower income groups may continue to require assistance in order to obtain affordable housing opportunities.

The City does attempt to mitigate the factors described above by encouraging the creation and preservation of affordable units. For example, the City adheres to State regulations which allow manufactured home placement on all lots suitable for single family dwellings as long as it is placed on a permanent foundation. Because manufactured housing generally incurs lower housing costs than do traditional, "stick built" homes, they serve as favorable sources of affordable housing. The City has also adopted an ordinance that would allow (when site conditions allow) the creation of ADUs as additional sources of affordable housing pending certification from the Coastal Commission.

In addition to assuring availability of affordable housing within City limits, the City encourages Humboldt County to allow a variety of housing types in residential areas surrounding Trinidad. Currently, there are numerous mobile home parks, single mobile homes, trailer parks, and at least some small multi-family developments in these outlying areas. Housing opportunities like these assist lower-income households in securing housing within the scenic Trinidad area.

Both State and Federal agencies continue to offer financial support for lower income groups in California. Subsidized rent and low-interest loan programs from these agencies are made available to Trinidad residents who meet specified criteria.

b. Circulation Infrastructure

All of the vacant and developable lots in the City are accessible by either by existing roads or private access easements and would not require substantial increases in road surfaces if developed. If a proposed subdivision or development may require the construction of additional access roads, the developer is responsible for such construction and such roads would be short in length with only minor traffic (less than 5 units).

c. Service Infrastructure

The primary constraints to development in Trinidad are limited septic capability and water availability.

i. *Wastewater*

Individual onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are currently the only means of sewage disposal in the City. Much of Trinidad is more densely developed with smaller lots than what would now be considered adequate for OWTS. Fortunately, much of Trinidad has ideal soils for OWTS, but there is also documented bacterial contamination in the water around the City. Significant increases in development and density in Trinidad is not feasible with the use of OWTS. OWTS are likely to remain the primary method of wastewater treatment as there are several major hurdles to the construction of a sewer treatment plant. The initial costs of construction are prohibitive to a community as small as Trinidad, and at this time, funding sources for a sewage treatment plant are generally unavailable. In addition, available land on which to construct such a plant is severely limited, and because the ocean surrounding Trinidad has been designed as an Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) with a zero discharge standard, location of a sewer outfall is also problematic. Trinidad has considered the feasibility of hooking into the McKinleyville Community Services District's sewer system approximately eight miles to the south, but that is also prohibitively expensive. In addition, there is a lot of community resistance to the idea of a centralized sewer due to the potential growth inducing impacts and resulting changes to the character of the community.

The variable soil and geologic properties found in Trinidad have implications for the location of septic systems. Marine terrace deposits and Franciscan bedrock have generally low permeability and include intermittent impervious layers, which can cause effluent to emerge at the ground surface in some areas. High water tables also present an obstacle to proper septic system functioning. Effluent is unable to percolate well through saturated soils, and groundwater may become contaminated. Before any new septic system is installed, or an existing one expanded, the proposed site should be evaluated for soil permeability, the possibility that effluent will seep to the ground surface at nearby locations, and local water table elevations (including seasonal variations)..

The City's land use regulations are based on the long-term use of OWTS for sewage disposal. In order to protect water quality, the City has adopted, and recently started implementing, an OWTS Management Program that requires all property owners to maintain an operating permit for their OWTS that requires periodic inspections and maintenance. City Staff have also obtained a Clean Beaches grant in 2008 which included funding for inspecting and repairing non-functioning septic systems. Through this program, 23 septic systems in the Trinidad-Westhaven area were repaired or replaced, and more funding is being applied for. By ensuring that OWTS are functioning properly development on existing lots under existing zoning can continue.

## ii. Water Supply

Trinidad withdraws its municipal water supply from Luffenholtz Creek, located 1.5 miles southeast of the City. All development within City boundaries (21~~84~~ connections), and some development within County jurisdiction (101 connections), is connected to this system for a total of 31~~95~~ metered connections and ~~15~~ unmetered connections. With current water use patterns, there is the potential to double the number of connections considering both the available flow of the creek and the treatment capacity of the City's water system. ~~Though this is an unlikely scenario due to other development constraints and concerns over the importation of water and due to its potential destabilizing effect on coastal bluffs;~~ therefore, water is likely not a limiting factor for development.

There is some conflicting data in the reports used as to the lowest expected flow conditions for Luffenholtz Creek. For the purposes of this analysis, the more conservative, or lowest estimate of 278 gallons per minute (gpm) has been used. The City's water right allows a maximum diversion of 251 gpm. CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife requires minimum allowable fish flows of 112 gpm in normal years, and 67 gpm in dry years (when the creek flow is less than 386 gpm). In addition, there is also 3 gpm worth of appropriated water rights below the City's water plant. Accounting for the fish bypass flows and downstream water rights, that leaves 208 gpm for diversion by the City in the most extreme drought conditions. Table 19 below presents a summary of the City of Trinidad's water system capacity and estimate of available capacity beyond existing demands.

**Table 19 – Summary of Current Water System Capacity, Demand and Availability**

Conditions	Flows (in gallons per day)	Notes
Current Treatment Capacity	316,800 gpd (220 gpm)	Maximum production capacity
Raw Water Available (worst case drought conditions)	299,520 gpd (208 gpm)	Maximum diversion under existing water rights
2009 City Peak Day Demand	150,000 gpd (104.2 gpm)	Current system peak demand
Available System Capacity	149,520 gpd (130.8 gpm)	

There is little potential for development approved by Humboldt County outside City limits to impact the City's water supply. Existing County policies protect Luffenholtz Creek from significant additional development through its designation as a critical water supply. The approval of a recent subdivision verified the County's commitment to protecting the City's water supply through the imposition of several strict conditions. In addition, current State law (Government Code Section 56133) does not allow the City to extend services outside of its jurisdictional boundaries without approval of the Humboldt County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) and in most cases only in emergency situations such as a contaminated well.

d. Seismic / Slope Conditions

i. Seismicity

The City of Trinidad lies within a geographic region laden with numerous seismic faults and shear zones. The entire northern coast of California is subject to seismic activity, due mainly to the proximity of the Mendocino Triple Junction (MTJ)-Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ). Multiple tectonic plates (pieces of the Earth's crust) collide off the coast of northern California and southern Oregon to form the MTJCSZ. In particular, this is where the San Andreas Fault meets the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ), a 750-mile-long thrust fault capable of producing a megathrust quake of magnitude 9.0 or more. The tectonic activity most relevant to Humboldt County is the movement of the Gorda and Juan de Fuca plates underneath the North American plate. This movement causes the Earth's crust to compress and break, resulting in an extensive system of onshore faults and frequent offshore earthquakes. The Trinidad Fault, an active fault that is part of the Mad River Fault Zone, runs through a portion of town. There are also several other small offshoots of the Mad River Fault that run through Trinidad's Planning Area, or just offshore, most of which are not considered active.

Most local earthquakes originate offshore, within tectonic plates rather than along plate boundaries. The Gorda plate is most susceptible to seismic activity because it undergoes a large amount of stress, and consequent fragmentation, as it is pushed beneath the North American plate. Offshore, intraplate quakes are generally less

damaging to human communities than onshore quakes, but they can still be quite large. The type of potentially damaging quake most likely to occur would be centered offshore with a magnitude between 5.0 and 7.5. Onshore earthquakes are less probable, having an average recurrence interval of 20 years. This type of quake could have a magnitude of 7.5 to 8.0, which would be more intense, and more damaging, than any modern historic quake. Although most earthquakes in the region originate offshore within the Gorda plate, they can also occur on the CSZ boundary. Evidence of prehistoric subduction zone earthquakes suggests that they could have magnitudes of 8.0 to 9.0 ore more on an interval of every 300 to 600 years; the most recent one occurred in 1703. There is little that can be done to prepare for and mitigate damage from a large CSZ quake other than warning and evacuation systems

The general risks associated with earthquakes in the Trinidad area are structural damage, slope failures, liquefaction, and tsunamis. With the exception of tsunamis, these risks tend to be greater in areas of unstable slopes, wet conditions, alluvial deposits, or fill material. Trinidad is less vulnerable to damage and inundation of residential areas resulting from tsunamis due to its elevation and protective bluffs, but significant toe erosion could occur, compromising slope stability. In addition to occasional tsunamis, the City is susceptible to violent wave attacks during harsh winter storms. Development in the lower, more exposed portion of the near shore area must continue to be avoided to ensure its protection from waves.

## *ii. Stability*

Local topography is characterized by a series of marine terraces, which in cross-section have the appearance of wide stair-steps. These gently sloping surfaces were formed in the geologic past by wave erosion and deposition, and have been moved above sea level due to periodic sea-level changes and uplifting of the coastline. The terrace surfaces range in elevation from about 140 feet at the western edge of town, to 600 feet at the eastern edge of the Trinidad area. Most of the ground surface in Trinidad has a slope of 15% or less, but steeper slopes are found at sea cliffs, stream banks, and the boundaries between marine terraces.

The Franciscan bedrock that underlies Trinidad is composed of pieces of relatively resistant rock within a matrix of sheared, unstable material. Area geology is characterized by outcroppings of this material, especially at the coastline, and by the poorly consolidated alluvial deposits that cover the surfaces of the marine terraces. These different materials are subject to erosion and various types of slope failure.

Portions of Trinidad are composed of moderately to highly unstable slopes. Such slopes are prone to accelerated erosion and mass movement during earthquakes, storms, periods of high water tables, and as a result of poorly planned nearby construction. The City requires geologic reports for any parcel mapped as 'unstable' or of 'questionable stability' on Plate 3 (Slope Stability) of the City's General Plan (Figures 9a or 17 in the Draft General Plan update). It is also worth noting that development may be limited in

areas near bluffs. Areas that have been mapped as being 'unstable' have been zoned either Open Space (OS) or Special Environment (SE) to limit or preclude development.

Rates of ~~cliff-bluff~~ retreat vary along the coastline depending on local bedrock characteristics and degree of protection from waves. Coastal bedrock varies from sheared and fractured shales, which are highly erodible, to erosion-resistant diorite and greenstone. ~~Cliff-Bluff~~ retreat also occurs at different rates over time, as rates of sea level rise and geologic uplift change. Most of the Trinidad coast is approaching an equilibrium state, meaning that sea cliff erosion is more or less balanced by geologic uplift. The rates of these processes, however, are not constant and cannot be predicted.

Steep slopes and unstable geologic material create erosion and landslide hazards in some of the Trinidad area. Coastal bluffs are especially subject to these hazards because of continuous wave erosion, which could be exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise. Development should be located far enough from the edge of the bluffs so that structures are not in danger of being undercut by wave activity in the foreseeable future. Development should also be restricted in areas of steep slopes or those dominated by the clayey matrix component of the Franciscan Complex, as these materials are susceptible to earthflows and debris flows

#### e. Construction

Financing opportunities have become more restricted due to the recent housing crisis in the United States, which may potentially affect development County-wide, especially the development of vacant land. However, there is no indication that this has been a significant constraint to development in the City of Trinidad. Construction costs have remained relatively consistent throughout the County and are not considered to be a constraint on development in the City. However, land values in the City are continuing to rise and some of the vacant or underutilized parcels have physical constraints which limit their development potential. Most physical limitations can be translated into cost-related constraints. Many of these cannot be overcome in Trinidad due to the City's unique location and restricted size.

~~Zoning classifications, estimated amount of vacant land, and estimated amount of vacant land subject to specific constraints are outlined in the Inventory of Land Available for Residential Development (F. Housing Market Information, 4. Land Availability).~~

## 2. Governmental Constraints

Many of Trinidad's governmental constraints to development are directly related to the physical limitations described above. The City also requires Design Review for all development that adds, expands or modifies structures, including limited protection of private and public views from new development. In addition, the City has to comply with and implement a myriad of State laws that limit development. The most notable of these constraints are the mandates set forth by the California Coastal Commission (CCC) pursuant to the California Coastal Act. Almost the entire City of Trinidad falls within the

Coastal Zone, meaning that all proposals for new development are subject to the standards and regulatory procedures included in the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP). At the heart of the LCP is the Trinidad Land Use Plan (LUP), equivalent to a General Plan, which establishes numerous land use regulations relevant to the City's coastal location and characteristics.

In general, the purpose of an LCP is to allow for a partnership between the State and local governments in protecting the Coastal Zone from expansive, environmentally detrimental development. Several ~~general~~ Coastal Act policies may apply to development proposals in Trinidad. These should be considered when assessing governmental constraints to development within the City. They are as follows:

- Maximum public access and recreational use of the coast must be provided, with consideration of private property rights and the environment;
- Marine and land resources, including riparian areas, tide pools, wetlands, and rare and endangered habitat areas must be protected;
- The scenic integrity and viewsheds of the coastal landscape must be preserved

It is also important to note that, under the Coastal Act, coastal-dependent development proposals (such as those oriented toward recreation or tourism, or those involving the organized study of coastal/marine resources) receive higher approval priority by the Coastal Commission than do non-coastal-dependent developments (such as residential dwellings). This is particularly true in certain designated areas such the Trinidad Harbor area and Visitor Service areas; in addition the CCC generally encourages short-term / overnight accommodations, including vacation rentals, as long as coastal resources are protected.

#### a. Regulations Regarding Physical Limitations

##### i. *Service Infrastructure*

The current minimum lot size in Trinidad, ~~as determined by limited septic capabilities~~, is 8,000 s.f. for the Urban Residential (UR) zone and 20,000 s.f. for the Suburban Residential (SR) zone. Both of these minimum lot sizes are less than what the County Division of Environmental Health (DEH), which serves as the City's Health Department, currently allows for lots that utilized septic systems. The minimum lot area allowed in the Planned Development (PD) zone is 2,500 s.f. per lot for planned developments with five or more dwellings, but the maximum density is still one residential unit per 8,000 sq. ft. There are many lots in town that do not meet the minimum size requirement, A but least 4,000 to 5,000 sq. ft. would be necessary to accommodate a small residence with a septic system. Under the City's Land Use Plan (LUP), all new individual septic systems must meet the minimum standards set by the State and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and ~~the County Division of Environmental Health (DEH) serves as the City's Health Department~~. Septic requirements will likely be a limiting factor for any

future developments. Existing vacant lots which are below minimum lot size, but are otherwise considered developable, may be developed where an acceptable on-site waste water treatment system (as determined by the County DEH) can be provided.

The City has an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Management Program in place that requires all systems to be regularly inspected and maintained through an operating permit system.

The City's water treatment plant is currently in compliance with state potable water treatment standards. Trinidad's water system currently consists of a 220 gallons per minute (gpm) (316,000 gallons per day (gpd)) capacity surface water treatment plant. This includes recent construction of a new membrane filtration system which has increased capacity from a previous maximum of 176 gpm (253,440 gpd), which was limited due to the State's filtration rate standard. Raw water is collected from an infiltration gallery located 10 ft. below Luffenholtz Creek and treated by direct filtration and chlorination. The City maintains three wet well pumps capable of delivering 120 gpm. The City typically only operates one of the three pumps, but during peak demand periods, the City can run two pumps with the combined flow rate of 220 gpm. The distribution system consists of approximately 13 miles of predominantly asbestos-cement piping and includes two 150,000 gallon redwood storage tanks. 180,000 gallons of storage is reserved for fire flows, leaving 120,000 gallons of storage available for regular use. Periodic upgrades and updates are done as the need arises and funding becomes available.

Several evaluations of the City's water system and the available capacity of Luffenholtz Creek were completed between 2008 and 2010 in relation to a proposed subdivision in the Luffenholtz Creek watershed and a request by Cal-Fire to hook into the City's water system to supply water to their fire station north of Trinidad due to well contamination (the capacity of Luffenholtz Creek, peak demand, and available capacity are discussed further above in section G.1.c.ii). The City's system serves 31~~85~~ metered connections and 1~~5~~ unmetered connections; 21~~84~~ of the metered connections are within City limits, and 10~~04~~ are located outside the City. One of the unmetered connections includes the largest water user, Trinidad Rancheria. The largest water users are generally the Rancheria / Casino and the Seascape / Harbor Area.

The City currently supplies an average of approximately 40075,000 gallons of potable water per day to meet the demands of the City' water service area. The peak demand during the summer period reaches approximately 150,000 gpd, corresponding to a peak hourly demand of 25,000 gallons per hour, or 416 gpm for a period of one-hour. During peak water use in the summer, demands are higher than the maximum feed rate supplied by the pumps. Additional water to meet peak demands is supplied from storage. This results in decreased stored water availability. However, the peak summer demand is less than the daily system pumping capacity, and thus storage used during the day can be replenished during the night. However, available storage could be a limiting factor for future development. The City continually improves and upgrades its water system as funding allows.

One problem that the City is trying to address is water loss from the system. Of the 75,000 gpd average produced by the water plant, only about 50,000 gpd is delivered through meters, representing a loss of approximately 1/3 of the water produced. The City has been testing sections of the water system in an attempt to find leaks, and the current 32% loss is better than the 40% it was a few years ago. The City has also recently connected meters to all but 1 of the remaining unmetered connections, which will also help to identify where losses have been occurring. In addition, policies in the draft general plan update direct the City to develop a water conservation program.

#### Table of available connections

#### *ii. Seismic / Slope Protections*

Within the City, the Trinidad Fault (part of the Mad River Fault Zone) has been designated under the Alquist-Priolo Act of 1972 (Fig. 17, Noise and Safety Element).

~~Several parcels~~ Approximately 60 acres in the Trinidad area lie within ~~this~~ Special Study Zone, as designated by the State Division of Mines & Geology under the Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zoning Act. Although this equates to approximately 19% of Trinidad's land area, much of it runs along the freeway corridor, and most of the affected lots are large, or already developed, and ~~many several~~ of the parcels have already been investigated for faults. The purpose of the Zone is to ensure that local development patterns do not create seismic hazards. In this ~~z~~Zone, any subdivisions or new development of structures for human occupancy, other than a single-family wood-frame dwelling less than 2 stories, would be required to undergo a geologic study ~~before a building permit would be issued~~. According to the Alquist-Priolo Act, no buildings may be constructed within 50 feet of any active fault in the Zone. All buildings outside this buffer, and throughout the rest of Trinidad, are subject to specific design guidelines established by the City including a Fault Study for subjected properties. All of Humboldt County falls under UBC zone 4, which is the highest factor of safety for seismic hazards. There are also several other small offshoots of the Mad River Fault that run through Trinidad's Planning Area, or just offshore. These faults do not constrain development because they are either located offshore or are older and not considered active.

The Trinidad Land Use Plan (LUP) states that no new development may occur on unstable lands. Such development may include the construction of buildings and driveways or the placement of individual septic systems. These specific development types may not occur on sites of questionable stability, or within 100 feet upslope of such sites, unless the proposed development is analyzed and found not to increase instability ~~be detrimental~~ by a registered geologist. In addition, no new structures may be located on the shoreline less than 20 feet above the Mean Lower Low Water line, with the exception of harbor and public access facilities. Most development of unstable and shoreline site is restricted by the City's zoning regulations, and most of these areas are zoned Open Space and Special Environment, which prohibit most development in these locations.

#### b. Fiscal Restraints

Aside from the physical limitations listed above, development in Trinidad is subject to overall financial constraints. These are mainly related to the City's fiscal limitations which have been recently exacerbated by cutbacks at the State level. The City currently receives grants that help to defray the costs of certain activities and that allow many projects to be constructed that the City otherwise could not afford ~~public works, water systems, etc.~~ including infrastructure and utility system improvements.

Planning permit costs (averaging \$1,000-\$2,000) are not unreasonably high in Trinidad relative to the rest of the County, although they may seem so to small-town property owners and developers. It is important to note also, that because of its small size and limited staffing capability, permit costs can be quite variable due to neighbor / public involvement in the Design Review process which often occurs regarding due to concerns about the protection of private views and the bulk of residential structures. Trinidad relies on private consultants and consulting firms to perform necessary project review activities. This can, at times, result in higher fees than those incurred by larger cities, although Trinidad fees generally remain lower than the County average and those of nearby cities like Arcata and Eureka.

There is evidence to suggest that the City's permit fees do not prevent development. In recent years, no proposed projects have been abandoned as a result of developers' inability to pay permitting fees. Considering the price of land in the City and construction costs, permit fees are a very small portion of the cost of residential development projects. With such a limited budget, the City is unable to subsidize permitting costs to reduce the burden on applicants. ~~However,~~ the City will be considering amendments to its design review criteria to make them more objective, which should reduce permitting time and costs as part of the current LCP update.

Although it may slightly impact fees, the use of consultants does not increase permit processing time (normally 1-3 months). The processing time for planning permits varies depending on the complexity of the project, the date of application submittal, and the date of the once-a-month Planning Commission meeting. All project reviews are completed well within the maximum time allowed by the State Permit Streamlining Act.

The City adopts the most current Uniform Building Code. There are no local amendments to the Codes; hence, building codes are not excessive and do not present a constraint. Building permits are generally processed in less than 4 weeks. The City typically requires a \$ water improvement fee for all new connections. However, there are no school impact or other fees currently in the City of Trinidad.

A few Hhistoric structures in the City have ~~not~~ been formally designated but special historic preservation codes ~~are in effect~~ have not been adopted. New development near these structures is reviewed for its impact on historic structures. As part of the current general plan update, the City will be considering historic preservation policies. Whether this occurs or not will have only minor affect on housing affordability.

The City’s Local Coastal Plan (LCP) implements Coastal Act policies which include review of new development for compliance with design review and view protection findings. These tend to result in design-some restrictions on development to minimize the bulk or structures, or ‘mansionization’ and to preserve viewsheds. However, there are no known cases where development was precluded. All policies are applied as equally as possible, considering the somewhat subjective criteria and public involvement, regardless of the type of development proposed.

On- and off-site improvement requirements consist primarily of paving of off-street parking and construction of wastewater and drainage facilities. These requirements are comparable with other surrounding jurisdictions and are not excessive. Most streets in Trinidad don’t have sidewalks or curbs, and improvements aren’t usually required for new development, which reduces some of the burden on property owners. Some additional septic and storm water regulations or conditions are being considered as part of the current General Plan update may be warranted because of bluff saturation issues and the sensitive environments around Trinidad, including the Trinidad Head Area of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) / State Water Quality Protection Area (SWQPA) and Tsurai Study Area. Setbacks and lot coverage restrictions are also comparable to surrounding jurisdictions and do not represent a constraint to development. Trinidad does have a 2,000 sq. ft. maximum floor area guidelines for residential structures, which helps to keep homes modestly sized and priced.

Due to the small lot sizes and septic space requirements, off-street parking requirements may limit the number of could be a limiting factor for potential new development, particularly residential units added to existing commercial structures as promoted by policies to encourage mixed use. To some extent, parking requirements (1 additional space) may also limit the development of second units on small residential lots, but it is likely that septic requirements are more of a factor. This is not considered a significant constraint, ~~however,~~ due to the high level of build-out on these properties and the low number of inquiries desiring second units; ~~septic requirements would likely be more restrictive~~. The City’s Zoning Ordinance currently has a parking-in-lieu alternative when there would otherwise be a shortage of off-street parking in the mixed use (PD) zone. However, this alternative has not been used for many projects since being incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance and has been controversial when used; variances for parking have been more common. Development standards for the three residential zoning designations are shown in Table 20.

**Table 2017 – Development Standards from the City of Trinidad Zoning Ordinance\***

ZONE	Use Permit	Minimum Lot Area	Density Unit/s.f.	Setbacks F-R-S	Off-Street Parking # Spaces/Unit
<b>SR (Suburban Residential)</b>					
Single-Family	No	20,000 s.f.	1/20,000	30-20-10	2/unit
Two-Family	Yes	20,000	1/20,000	30-20-10	2/unit

		s.f.			
<b>UR (Urban Residential)</b>					
Single-Family	No	8,000 s.f.	1/8,000	20-15-5	2/unit
<b>PD (Planning Development)</b>					
Less than 5 Units	Yes	8,000 s.f.	1/8,000	20-15-5	2/unit
5 or More Units	Yes	2,500 s.f.	1/8,000	*	1.5/unit

\*This does not include provisions for accessory dwelling units that have been adopted by the City, but have not yet been certified by the Coastal Commission for implementation.

\*\*Where the two-thousand five hundred square foot minimum lot area applies (For Planned Developments with five or more dwelling or commercial units), no setbacks are required, except when adjacent to any other zone the yard shall be the same as that required in the adjacent zone.

## H. ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS HOUSING PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS

### ~~1. Review of Existing Housing Related Policies~~

#### ~~a1.- State Objectives~~

As described in the Introduction and Overview section at the beginning of this Housing Element, every City and County in California is required to develop a housing program which meets State standards for adequacy. These programs must be delineated in each locality’s General Plan as its official Housing Element. The State mandates that Housing Elements include measures to accomplish certain objectives that are described in detail in Section A.1 Overview. This document represents an update of the 1997 Housing Element and one of the State requirements is to review and revise the Housing Element, including an evaluation of the previous one to include the following three factors: (1) progress in implementation of the previous element; (2) effectiveness of the previous element in achieving its goals and policies; and (3) an assessment of the appropriateness of the goals, objectives and policies of the previous element.

#### ~~b2. Evaluation of Existing City Housing Policies~~

Listed in italics below are the existing City Housing Policies from the 1997 Housing Element with an assessment of their progress and effectiveness following in normal text.—The 1997 Housing Element was the first one adopted by the City of Trinidad and replaced the Housing Section in the 1976 General Plan:

- The City shall review all new residential development to be consistent with the rural, uncrowded, rustic, unsophisticated, small, casual, open character of the community and shall blend stylistically with existing development. This policy is still a cornerstone of the City’s design review findings. However, the language is relatively vague, and can hinder the permit process for new development. The*

- City's General Plan update will refine the design review and view protection guidelines to minimize their subjectiveness and increase consistency in their application.
2. *Due to existing physical constraints, the City of Trinidad retains the existing emphasis on single-family dwelling units in residential designated areas. As long as Trinidad properties continue to rely on septic systems for wastewater disposal, this will necessarily be the case, as that is the single biggest factor limiting development potential in the City. Other environmental constraints further limit the density of potential development in the City.*
  3. *The City shall develop a program for notifying all residents of the availability of housing programs and funding. No formal program has been adopted. However, the City does provide a variety of information such as this in City Hall, as it is available, to those who request it.*
  4. *The City, in its review of development proposals, shall consider exceptions or revisions to City ordinances relating to zoning, density, services or other incentives based on the merits of the project to provide or improve living conditions of its residents, as feasible. Requests for accommodation have been very rare. The PD zone was written to allow flexibility in development design. Other zones do not allow much flexibility, except for a view protection finding that allows the Planning Commission to reduce setbacks for a structure in order to reduce view impacts to other residents. Revising zoning ordinance provisions to accommodate individual requests is generally not feasible, since such changes must be approved by the Coastal Commission, which can take substantial effort and time. There was one request to reduce a side setback requirement to accommodate a handicap accessible ramp on a residential addition/ remodel. This was approved through the granting of a variance.*
  5. *The City shall pursue appropriate local, State, and Federal housing and economic development programs. After the approval and certification of the 1997 Housing Element, the City was informed that it could not qualify for these grants because the median income was too high. This is still the case for most of these grants. Further, there has not been a significant demand indicated for such programs that would justify the effort and expense to apply for them.*
  6. *The City shall not permit discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, family size, marital status, national origin, ancestry, or other arbitrary factors. Safeguards will be instituted to ensure fair housing opportunities. The City has not knowingly permitted discrimination. Land use regulations are applied consistently to all applicants. Safeguards are provided though state and federal laws, and additional measures have not been found necessary in Trinidad.*
  7. *The City shall give the housing needs of the elderly and the handicapped high priority of consideration in future land use decisions. There are several new*

- policies in the General Plan update that provide for the needs of the elderly in particular, due to the high percentage of seniors living in Trinidad. Many of these focus on providing seniors access to services so that they can continue to live in Trinidad, which is isolated from many services. Many of these policies would also benefit handicapped residents.
8. *The City shall encourage provisions for access for the handicapped in new or rehabilitated residential and commercial developments. New development is required to meet current ADU standards. The City has been proactive in including accessibility in improvements to public facilities, including sidewalks and Town Hall.*
  9. *The City shall continue to allow manufactured housing to be permitted on sites where single family dwellings would otherwise be allowed. This has continued to be the case; there are no plans to change it.*
  10. *The City shall encourage the use of private initiated and/or public-funded programs to provide housing for low-and moderate-income families. No such projects have been proposed since the 1997 Housing Element. City staff have made an inquiry to a private property owner regarding the possibility of pursuing an appropriate, small-scale, affordable / senior housing development on a large parcel near the center of town.*
  11. *The City shall encourage the County to allow a variety of housing types in the residential areas surrounding the City during the development of the current General Plan Update. The City has been monitoring the County's general plan update, but has not found a need to submit any comments.*
  12. *The City of Trinidad encourages the use of multi-family developments in Planned Development designations provided ~~designations provided~~ that the density does not exceed the physical limitations of the land. This is accommodated through the flexible zoning regulations for the PD zone. There are several large, vacant lots in town that are designated PD, but there have been no development proposals on these properties since the last Housing Element. Most of the other PD designated properties, located along Main and Trinity Streets, are already developed and mostly built-out, but uses on the properties can and do change.*
  13. *The City shall encourage the use of energy conservation measures and materials for all new residential development and rehabilitation. Though there are no land use regulations that require energy conservation, the City does enforce the most current provisions of the building code. The City's General Plan update includes a comprehensive chapter addressing energy use and climate change within the draft Circulation Element.*
  14. *The City shall promote conservation and improvement of the existing housing stock, with emphasis on older structures. Specific areas of concern include*

*electrical wiring, foundation stability, potential for water damage, and septic tank failure.* ~~Most permit applications in the City are for additions and remodels to existing structures. The City utilizes the most recent version of the UBC. Because the issue of septic system failures affects public health and water quality throughout the community, the City has adopted an OWTS Management Program that requires periodic inspections and maintenance of all systems in town. In addition, the City has pursued and received grant funding to monitor bacterial pollution and to upgrade systems that are found to have problems.~~

### **23. Effectiveness Assessment of the 1997 Housing Element**

The goals, policies, and implementation in the 1997 Housing Element were more specific and addressed the inadequacies of the Housing policies from the 1976 General Plan. ~~The Housing section of the 1976 General Plan made no mention of any effort to minimize governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of housing. However, the 1976 General Plan background report, Community Infrastructure, addresses several related issues.~~

~~First, the report states that many existing housing units which fail to conform to current building codes are protected under the “grandfather clause”. This means that they were legally developed prior to the adoption of current codes and therefore do not need to be brought into conformance until a structure remodel or expansion is proposed. This protection of non-conforming housing units minimizes housing costs for many City residents. The report also stresses the importance of careful judgment on the part of the City and County when imposing expensive code requirements on older buildings. It is noted that these older buildings are the primary source of affordable housing for limited income households within the City.~~

The previous Housing Element (1997) provides an overview of Trinidad’s unique housing situation and the make up of its population as well as defining the City’s general plan policies regarding the assurance of affordable housing to all income groups and special needs populations. The 1997 Housing Element does not, however, specifically address all issues currently required for analysis by the Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) or State Housing Law.

~~It is important to note that due to several factors, the ability of the City of Trinidad to provide for the variety of housing types requested by the State is limited. These factors include:~~

- ~~1) The small size and population of the City of Trinidad (367 residents in 2010), and one of the smallest City’s in the State of CA at approximately 1 sq. mile in size; much of that area includes sensitive environments, cultural sites, unstable bluffs and open space owned by the State as part of the Park system.~~
- ~~2) The lack of a municipal sewer system~~

~~3) High property values in the City due to the unique location, scenic beauty, and inherent recreational opportunities~~

As described earlier, Trinidad's options for providing a variety of housing types is limited to several environmental factors outside the City's control. As stated in the following statement from the Housing section of the 1976 General Plan is still applicable:

*"The role the city can play in providing for a variety of housing types in the regional housing market is limited. The city is essentially a small neighborhood of owner occupied single family dwellings that will probably be built out within the next ten years. Because it has no mobile homes, mobile home parks, condominiums, and only a few apartment units it has a singular residential identity that is greatly value by property owners. Older, small houses on septic tanks are a supply of moderate cost housing. This is the only low to moderate cost housing available in the City. High density low cost rental units require sewers. Eureka and Arcata have the main role in ensuring that adequate housing for all incomes and age groups is available in Humboldt County."*

As noted throughout the 1997 Housing Element, a major housing conservation measure taken by the City of Trinidad is the attempt to limit housing costs for residents in older, moderate-cost dwellings, which is still the case. Preservation of the rural character of the City, allowance for existing non-conforming structures and mobile homes, and avoidance of expensive code requirements on older buildings (for new homeowners) all work toward this end.

At the time of the adoption of the 1997 Housing Element, no concerted effort was put forth by the City to improve the condition of deteriorating housing units, as very few of these units were reported to exist at that time. With the absence of a current housing conditions survey, it is not known by the City how many units are in need of rehabilitation or demolition. Due to limited budget and staff, the City has not had the ability to spearhead such an effort since adoption of the previous Housing Element. However, City Staff does not anticipate there is a great need for the rehabilitation of deteriorating housing units. The vast majority of development permits issued by the City since the last Housing Element have been for remodels of and additions to existing residencies.

Within the past 15 years there has been no evidence of any restrictions on housing choices to special needs groups in Trinidad, except in cases where property values exceed those affordable to limited-income households. No concentrations or groupings of minority or poor-quality housing exist within the City. Furthermore, no fair housing or housing discrimination complaints have been received by the City since the adoption of the previous Housing Element-General Plan (Discuss with City Clerk). Though no subsidized housing currently exists in the City, it is a potential option for residents; The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (HUD) provide rent subsidy assistance to low-income households in certified existing housing units in Trinidad. Locally, this

assistance is administered through the Humboldt County Housing Authority ~~(Discuss with City Clerk).~~

Table 2148 below shows the number of housing units allocated to the City for the two previous Housing Element planning cycles which were 1994-2001 and 2001-2008. A total of 20 units were allocated to the City of Trinidad from 1994-2008.

**Table 2148 – RHNA by Income Group 1994-2001 & 2001-2008**

Income Group	# of Units	
	1994-2001	2001-2008
Very Low	1	0
Other Low	2	2
Moderate	2	2
Above Moderate	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>

According to the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census approximately 52 units were added to the City from 1990-2010. This is approximately 32 more housing units than was allocated to the City during this time period. However, based on City building permit records a more accurate number is approximately 15— housing units developed over this time period ~~(Need # from permit records)~~. Many of these units were in the above moderate income group which is the majority of what was allocated to the City during the two previous planning cycles.

The above data indicates that existing City policies are relatively effective in limiting the barriers to the development of adequate housing. Market factors and environmental constraints limit housing development more than any City-imposed limitations. The greatest constraints on future housing development are inherent property values, a lack of adequate sites within City limits, the density limitations imposed by septic systems, and the capacity of the water system environmental considerations.

~~This Housing Element update is being done to update the demographic statistics in the document, discuss what changes have occurred with the City's housing stock over the last fifteen years, and plan for the housing needs of the City which have changed since the 1997 Housing Element.~~

## **I. ENERGY CONSERVATION IN HOUSING**

State housing law (Govt. Code §65583(a)(1-8)) requires each Housing Element to include an analysis of energy conservation opportunities. Some background is included here insofar as it pertains to housing, but a more detailed discussion and specific policies related to energy use and conservation have been included as Chapter G in the Circulation Element.

Energy costs are often immense household expenses, second only to rent or mortgage payments. Combined with energy costs, home insurance premiums and mortgage/rent payments can easily exceed 50% of a household's income. Although Trinidad's proximity to the Pacific Ocean ensures fairly stable year-round temperatures, conditions are such that artificial heating systems are necessary in all residences.

According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the primary modes of space heating for housing units in Trinidad were propane (28.2%), electricity (27.5), and wood stoves / fireplaces (24.2%). Use of wood stoves / fireplaces has decreased over the past decade in Trinidad, as it has in other parts of the County. ~~Traditionally, local sources of firewood were relatively plentiful. The booming lumber industry assured the availability of cut mill ends, many of which were donated to local residents for free. Also in large supply were trees subject to individual harvest for firewood.~~ Cutbacks in the timber industry and the enactment of strict regulations on timber harvest in recent decades have now caused the once-abundant supply of firewood to diminish. It is expected that the cost of locating and purchasing acceptable firewood will continue to increase in the future. Even in light of the problems surrounding firewood availability, many households may find wood-burning economically beneficial due to its otherwise-still relatively low energy costs.

All new construction in Trinidad meets California Title 24 Building Energy Standards. The rigorous and conservative Title 24 guidelines mandate housing that requires only a fraction of the energy needed to heat older homes. The City of Trinidad recognizes that careful design and construction are integral components of any successful energy-conservation program.

An important housing improvement, aside from overall rehabilitation, is weatherization. Adequate weatherization of units minimizes household heating expenses. Many Trinidad residences have not yet been weatherized to meet current energy conservation standards. ~~According to the 2007-2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 28.2% of Trinidad households use propane, 27.5% use electricity, and 24.2% use wood as a heat fuel source.~~ The City recognizes that all residents should be made aware of energy conservation measures which pertain to their specific living situations. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the local utility gas supplier, commonly offers financing programs to assist households with the implementation of residential energy conservation measures. Qualifying property-owners are eligible to receive cash rebates or no-interest loans for weatherization improvements to their homes. Such improvements might include weather-stripping, use of water heater insulation blankets, caulking, or installation of storm windows, low-flow showerheads, or automatic setback thermostats.

It is important to note that low-income households may have difficulty meeting the criteria for these programs. Common criteria include a mandatory high credit rating and the "up-front" purchase of weatherization materials with only partial, subsequent reimbursement. The Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) offers energy audits for residences through funding from PG&E. Through this process RCEA conducts site visits,

offers specific recommendations for conserving energy, and provides information about incentive programs to lower the cost for improvements to homeowners free of charge in many cases. ~~(Contact RCEA for additional info on energy conservation measures and current incentive programs)~~

~~Energy, conservation and climate change are discussed in further detail in Section G of the Circulation Element.~~

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## Community Design

Some communities are a hodge-podge of disconnected development. Others have a unique character - a sense of unity. What residents and visitors see and hear form their impression of a community. In Trinidad they experience rugged coastal headlands and islands, beaches and surf, the vast expanse of ocean, the sound of the whistler buoy, the cozy harbor with fishermen unloading their salmon, children poking among tidepools, seals barking in the distance, homes tucked into the hillside looking out over each other at the scenery, and boats, burls, driftwood and crab pots in the yards. The people visitors meet are walking in the narrow streets, willing to give directions or pass the time of day.

This is the atmosphere that draws people seeking a place to retire. It is the reason that people are willing to commute twenty-five miles into Eureka every day, and the reason that sport fishermen come back again and again.

### Development Preference

Property owners strongly preferred that new development be consistent with the present character of the community. Everyone agreed that the city has unique characteristics. When asked to describe Trinidad, they mentioned these terms: rural, uncrowded, quaint, rustic, peaceful, unsophisticated, small, casual, a feeling of openness, no tract houses, not commercialized. Sometimes they put it in terms of what they didn't want: no high density housing, no mobilehomes and trailer parks, no buildings greater than two stories, no motel-hotel-condominium complexes, no commercial exploitation and garish signs.

## RECOMMENDED POLICIES

71. The city shall establish a design assistance committee with responsibility for approving the design of all development proposals including signs and building relocation. The committee should not be concerned with construction of accessory structures, normal maintenance such as painting, or minor exterior remodeling.
72. The beaches and sea cliffs which border the southern and western sides of the city (identified as Open Space) shall be preserved from further development and allowed to remain in their present, essentially natural, state.
73. Trinidad Bay and the bay bordering Trinidad on the west, including all their islands, shall be preserved in their present state. These marine areas offer two of the most uniquely beautiful views, combining ocean, islands, bay and rugged, timber shorelines, that can be found anywhere along the California coast. The islands provide habitats for marine organizations and serve as refuges or rookeries for birds and marine mammals, including sea lions and harbor seals. A breakwater, mooring expansion, or other harbor development should be visually compatible with the bay vista.
74. The lands designated as open space lying seaward of Edwards and Van Wycke Streets shall remain entirely undeveloped and preserved in their present state. It is from these lands that the unparalleled view to the south is obtained.

The city is allocated \$500 per year for underground utilities. Because the city is considered particularly scenic, an advance of \$50,000 was made available and the power and telephone lines along Edwards Street have been undergrounded. This is the most scenic area in the community but there are other scenic corridors where views would be improved if utilities could be undergrounded. Undergrounding of utility lines in new developments would also help to minimize the visual impact of overhead utility lines.

## RECOMMENDED POLICY

75. Utility lines serving new buildings and utility connections to existing power poles should be undergrounded for all new construction within the Planned Development, Commercial and Special Environment categories. Undergrounding of utility lines should be encouraged in other areas particularly where scenic views are involved. If undergrounding is not proposed in such areas the design review committee shall require reasonable conditions on the nature and location of overhead utility lines and supports to minimize the visual impact.

# Appendix B

## Community Design Considerations

The General Plan Report includes a policy regarding the establishment of a design assistance committee to review new developments in the city. This appendix elaborates on the policy recommendation providing additional information on the purpose, organization, and procedures of the committee and some design review criteria.

Purpose. The purpose of the design assistance committee is to assist property owners in designing developments so that they are consistent with the existing character of Trinidad, and, to ensure that non-residential land uses are located and designed to minimize glare from exterior lighting, noise, traffic congestion, and any other aspect that could cause a disturbance to surrounding land uses. Where the committee finds the alteration of design is needed the suggested alterations should be the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of the committee.

Geographic scope. It is intended that the design assistance committee review all new development in the city limits. The area west of the freeway is the focal point of the community, the area most visible to the visitor, and the area with the prime views of the shoreline and the townsite. In this area consistency with existing development and preservation of community aesthetics justifies careful review of development. In the area east of the freeway existing development is less intense and of varied character. Design review in this area should focus on encouragement of good design and minimization of impacts on neighboring property and public facilities.

Applicability. Building relocation, any major remodeling, all new residential or commercial structures, proposed signs, and any other land use change that visually alters a large area (such as a parking lot) would be subject to review by the design assistance committee. Construction of accessory structures no larger or higher than a typical two car garage, normal maintenance such as painting, minor exterior remodeling, and changes in landscaping around existing buildings would not be subject to review.

Committee members. The committee would consist of one member of the City Council, and the City Planning Commission.

Procedures. A simple application form would be completed and submitted to the City Clerk. The City Clerk would schedule a meeting between the applicant and the city Building Inspector or Planner to go over the plans and to obtain clarification prior to the committee meeting. After the preview meeting the City Clerk would send notice of the committee meeting, describing in general terms the nature of the proposal, to all property owners within 100 feet of the subject property and post notice outside the City Hall. The meetings would be not sooner than five days from the date the notice is mailed. The committee members should have the opportunity to review the plans and visit the site prior to the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to allow the applicant the opportunity to explain the proposed design, its necessities and advantages; and, to allow interested residents of the city to comment on the compatibility of the development with the community and surrounding land uses. City staff would be present to explain applicable regulations. After the public has been given full opportunity to present comments the committee would proceed to make its findings and upon formal motion to approve, approve subject to modification or object to the proposal. The committee should keep a record of its actions and periodically meet to review and expand its adopted design criteria.

The applicant or affected city residents would have five days to submit an appeal, otherwise the action of the committee would represent a condition of issuance of the building permit or other city authorization. City staff could request committee review of revised plans to determine if conditions of approval have been satisfied. Appeals would be heard by the City Council after five days written notice and posting as required for the original application. The decision of the City Council would be final. The committee or, on appeal, the City Council could continue their meeting from time to time provided all interested parties are aware of the time and place of the continued meetings. The design assistance committee should take action on an application within 15 days of submittal or the design would be considered approved.

The application form, in addition to standard information (i.e., address, phone number of the applicant, the location of the proposal, etc.) should include scale drawings sufficiently detailed to indicate parking areas, landscaping areas, location, size, height, and type of structures, including signs, walls, and fences, location and dimension of all yards and setbacks, a building elevation showing general design, architectural features and building materials and the type and location of any exterior lighting.

Following are design guidelines suggested for consideration by the design assistance committee in establishing design criteria for the area west of the freeway.

1. Structures in, or adjacent to, open space areas should be constructed of materials that reproduce natural colors and textures as closely as possible.
2. Where possible, structures on sites visible from the beach should be set back as far as possible to make the structure as visually unobtrusive as possible.
3. Except for necessary public safety facilities, structures should blend with the natural visual form of the area and not unnecessarily extend above the natural silhouette or the silhouette of existing structures in the area.
4. Buildings, fences, paved areas, signs and landscaping, and similar developments shall not be allowed to significantly block views of the shoreline from key public viewing points or from view points inside structures located uphill from the proposed development.

5. Materials and colors used in construction shall be selected for compatibility both with the structural system of the building and with the appearance of the building's natural and man-made surroundings. Pre-set architectural styles (e.g., standard fast food restaurant design) shall be avoided.
6. Plant materials should be used to integrate the man-made and natural environments, to screen or soften the visual impact of new development and to provide diversity in developed areas. Existing attractive vegetation common to the area shall be used.
7. The visual destruction of natural land forms caused by cutting, filling, grading or vegetation removal shall be minimal. Structures should be designed to fit hillside sites rather than altering the land form to accommodate structures designed for level sites.
8. After any permitted temporary alteration of natural land forms during construction, timber harvesting or mineral extraction, the topography shall be restored to as close to the natural appearance as possible and the areas suitably landscaped.
9. Where off-premise signs are needed to direct visitors to commercial establishments, well designed, integrated displays at appropriate locations should be preferred to scattered, variable design, off-premise signs. Such signs should not exceed four square feet in area and not more than three should be clustered in any one location. They should be less than four feet above ground level and should never block scenic views. Such signs should only indicate the name of the business and the direction or distance.
10. On-premise signs should be designed as an integral part of the structure and should complement or enhance the appearance of the surrounding area.
11. Whenever possible, new development should include underground service connections. When above ground facilities are the only alternative they should follow the least visible route (e.g., tree rows, ravines), cross ridgelines at the most visually unobtrusive locations, be well designed, simple and unobtrusive in appearance, have a minimum of bulk and make use of compatible colors and materials.

**MINUTES OF THE 8 APRIL 2002  
TRINIDAD PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING**

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm. Commissioners in attendance were Blue, Odom, Cuthbertson, Snell and Golledge-Rotwein. Commissioners absent were none. Staff in attendance were Brown and Parker.

II. AGENDA ITEMS

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

A. Community Design: Blue explained that this meeting had been scheduled in response to recent community criticism of the design review/development approval process and Commission decision making. The Commission is concerned because people show up to speak against projects and also later complain to the Commission about approvals and denials, but no one shows up to General Plan updates to discuss these issues. The Commission would like to discuss various options and receive community input on the following five Community Design Considerations. The Commission would like to develop some rules or guidelines that everyone understands. The following points were made and issues discussed for each topic. Observations made about what the community seems concerned about was inferred from public comments made during and after past project reviews. The outcome was that the Commission would like to have this item on the April agenda as a recommendation to the City Council to allow/direct the Commission to pursue a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

1. Size/Scale/Bulk of Structures in Trinidad:

- There are lots of small lots in Trinidad with small existing homes and there will be a lot of proposals to remodel and add on to these structures in the future – what direction does the City want to go with these properties?
- The only actual standards in the Zoning Ordinance are the 2000 s.f. max (unless “unobtrusive”), a 25’ height limit and a 1500 s.f. 15’ tall minimum residence allowed on vacant parcels – all recent proposals tend to be around 2000 s.f. and just under 25’ tall.
- Possible height limitations based on proximity to bluff (lower in front) – but is that fair to the people in front who pay more for the property? Is it too late to do this because the bluffs are already almost fully developed?
- How should garages be considered – should there be different standards for sloped lots where the garage is under the house and not seen from above verses flat lots where the garage is separate?
- “Mansionization” means a huge box that fills the lot setback to setback and to the max height, not just a large house.

2. Floor-to-area ratios:
  - Should percentage be based on total lot square footage or the percentage of the buildable portion of the lot (excluding setbacks, leachfield, steep slopes, easements, open space, etc.), or look at both numbers to consider projects from different angles (currently, numbers are based on total lot size)? Several numbers may be more confusing, but also allow different comparisons and analysis in different situations to help assess the real impacts of a project.
  - Floor area is based on the definition in the Zoning Ordinance and includes the wall to wall area of the residence but excluding garage space – staff reports include statistics with and without garage for comparison purposes.
  - Lot coverage percentage could also be a number to consider.
  
3. Setbacks:
  - A major concern of the community seems to be crowding and the closeness of structures.
  - Leachfield requirements are effective open space that reduces crowding without the need to increase setbacks.
  - Trinidad setback requirements are fairly standard in a City setting
  - Zoning Ordinance language (view protection) allows the Commission to alter the configuration and placement of structures on a lot (i.e. reducing setbacks) without a variance in order to protect views. Is this legal?
  - Arcata has a “2:1” standard for remodels where setbacks vary with height, and setback requirements can be reduced with an O.K. from the neighbor.
  
4. View Protection:
  - There is a conflict in the design review/view protection criteria between minimizing the alteration of natural landforms and digging into a site to lower the house and minimize view blockage.
  - Community members are mostly concerned about the impacts to their own personal views.
  - Coastal Act requires protection of public viewsheds, but not private views; Trinidad is the only coastal City in CA that protects private views.
  - Views get taken out of perspective (views get more consideration and debate than other issues) – there should be some kind of weighting on private views to determine “significant blockage” – which is worse, impacting a larger percentage of a miniscule view or a smaller percentage of an open view – primary verses secondary views?
  - Impacts to the site from keeping a structure low but spreading out to keep same size and protect views.
  - Interior lot views verses bluff lot views – should they be distinguished and how?
  - Blockage of potential views (adding on to or developing a structure in front of a house that could potentially add a second story and have a view in the future).

- To what extent should private views be protected?
- Contractors can spend a lot of time and money to develop a plan that meets all known parameters, but then private view considerations halt the project at the public hearing, this should be minimized.
- “Good neighbor” design approach verses strict standards.

5. Landscaping:

- Heyenga has stated that he has been working on developing a hedge ordinance with enforcement measures; the Commission would like to pursue this.
- There are many mixed feelings about trees; residents speak about the same tree as both blocking views and enhancing views.
- Species and size standards (regardless of setbacks) and maintenance requirements.

Other general issues/options discussed:

- General Plan language is purposely left vague to allow the Zoning Ordinance to further define standards and to allow the Commission to consider individual projects on a case-by-case basis.
- Should the Commissioners narrow down specifics that would allow them to make more objective/quantitative decisions but leave less flexibility for individual circumstances?
- The Commission and staff should just better define the existing standards.
- It would be helpful to have some kind of overlays that illustrate existing development verses potential development under various zoning/ design standards.
- The price of property in Trinidad verses strict development limitations.
- Possible design review and view protection ‘areas’ or zones; areas east of the freeway and in the southeast portion of the City along scenic drive – both have different issues and considerations for development than the main part of town and each other.
- Exemptions from coastal development permits/design review – minor projects like enclosing an existing porch require review while 500 s.f. accessory structures are exempt in most areas.
- Guidelines should be just that, guidelines and not law.
- Brown was directed to develop a worksheet with all the various calculations, which differentiates between sloping lots and flat lots.
- How will nonconforming structures on alleys be dealt with – there is lots of potential in this category?
- Removal of off-street parking requirements in PD zone for residences converted to a commercial use and parking-in-lieu fee.
- Illegal signage and update sign ordinance.
- Public noticing and encouraging public participation.
- Nuisance abatement / enforcement of conditions of approval and regulations.

Various ways of approaching these issues was also discussed. The Commission could adopt specific language in the General Plan or amend the Zoning Ordinance to implement policies. An alternative would be to adopt informal policies, such as Design Review Guidelines that are used by all Commissioners and staff to assess individual projects. Individual Commissioners could also come up with their own standards to use in reviewing individual applications. These policies, formal or informal, can utilize actual minimums and maximums and ratios that are quantifiable, objective and easy to apply, or they can be more like vision statements that are more subjective, but that allows flexibility in different situations. The Commission would like to leave some flexibility for considering individual circumstances for each project.

Some guidelines and standards that are currently used were discussed so that everyone understands what they mean and how they are applied. No specific language/policy changes were finalized. However, it was generally decided that the General Plan language should remain general to allow the Zoning Ordinance and the Commission to narrow down specific policies. It was also determined that several sections of the Zoning Ordinance should be amended at this time. For example, specifically the exemption from a coastal development permit (and therefore design review) for 500 s.f. accessory structures where enclosing an existing porch is not exempt. Other revisions will include clarifying some of the ambiguous and confusing language and possible modifications the design review and view protection guidelines. Some administrative approvals for certain projects such as the enclosing of an existing porch may also be added. Certain areas of the City may also be separated out to have different requirements. For example, areas east of the freeway may be made exempt from design review and/or view protection criteria. Other modifications that may be considered will be off-street parking, landscaping, lighting, signs, nonconforming structures and public noticing.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Trever Parker  
Assistant City Planner/  
Secretary to the Planning Commission  
City of Trinidad

**MINUTES OF THE 17 APRIL 2002  
TRINIDAD PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. Commissioners in attendance were Blue, Golledge-Rotwein, Cuthbertson, Snell and Heyenga (Liaison). Commissioner absent was Odom. Staff in attendance were Brown and Parker.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 20 March 2002 regular meeting.

Cuthbertson asked about the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph of page 2 where Christine Stewart stated that she lived “one house in from the woodlot.” It was clarified that there was one house between her and the woodlot. Cuthbertson asked who “he” was referring to in “He asked for a motion” in the first paragraph of page 5. Parker stated that it was meant to refer to Blue; Blue stated it was based on Twoomy’s request. It was agreed to change the statement to “Blue asked for a motion based on Twoomy’s request. Snell pointed out the McComb was referred to as both Melinda and McComb. Parker agreed to change any “Melinda” to “McComb.” Snell made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Cuthbertson seconded. Golledge-Rotwein abstained from voting since she had been absent from the March meeting. Motion passed 3 to 0.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Blue stated that the design review and conditional use permit for the Indian Beach Trail Markers had been withdrawn based on advice from Council. Cuthbertson pointed out that there was a misstatement in the first paragraph on page 2 of the staff report. It states that the City helped to pay for the construction of the Axel Lindgren Memorial Trail. The City actually did not contribute the funding for the trail. Golledge-Rotwein moved to strike the trail markers off the agenda and to move the approval of the April 8 special meeting minutes to the next item, because the minutes should all be approved at once. Snell seconded. All in Favor.

Approval of the Minutes of the April 8 Special Meeting: Cuthbertson asked about the statement that Trinidad was the only coastal City to protect private views, because he felt that Trinidad did not protect private views. Brown explained that Trinidad did consider and protect private views. This requirement is found in the View Protection findings in the Zoning Ordinance. It was clarified that views are not protected 100%, but that they are considered and protected as much as possible. Golledge-Rotwein moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Snell seconded. All in favor.

IV. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Scott Heller made a request for the June 19 meeting to be postponed a week to June 26. He plans on submitting an application to build a new house in May and would like it on the June meeting but is getting married and will be out of town on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Heyenga stated that the Council Chambers was scheduled for a Lion’s Club dinner that night, but the Main Hall was available. Brown reminded the Commission that they could not take action on this item since it was not on the agenda. Blue asked Brown and Parker to check their schedules to make sure they were available and put this item on the May agenda.

## V. AGENDA ITEMS

### PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Use permit and design review for Trail Markers for the primary and secondary Indian Beach Trails – Withdrawn.

### PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. Outdoor lighting concerns: Blue explained that concerns about lighting pollution had been expressed at the April 8 special meeting and the item had been put on this agenda for discussion. Blue invited the audience to participate in the discussion. Snell stated that two light sources in particular had been brought up at the special meeting – the 24 hr. Chevron Station and the Rancheria's new improvements at the Casino – both of which impact residents inside the City. Several other light sources were brought up and discussed.

The Chevron station is a concern because the whole site is very bright, it is open 24-hours and the tall sign is also a concern. The station is brighter now since the 1993 remodel and drowns out views of the night sky at night.

There are two lights at the pier that bother people, one at the end of the pier and one by the Seascape restaurant. There was a discussion about these lights, which shine out toward and over the bay so that they impact people on Scenic and Westhaven. There were suggestions that they could be directed downward more. It was also pointed out that those lights are important for the harbor and the commercial fisherman as security for the boats and as a homing beacon.

There was also a discussion about street lights. Heyenga stated that the street lights used to have shields on them, but that they are not longer made. He felt that some type of shield could be designed and installed on Trinidad's street lights. Snell suggested a different type of bulb that has a softer glow. There was also some discussion about lowering the height of the lamp posts and/or making them more decorative. Heller expressed concerns about the lights by the Memorial Lighthouse, one of which is no longer perpendicular. He felt that the lights there should be more decorative and less intrusive, and he offered to help with that effort. Heyenga stated that this lighting was an issue that the Gateway Project is considering. Snell suggested that the Gateway Project was focusing on daytime aesthetics, but they should also consider nighttime aesthetics as well.

Heyenga stated that the Rancheria has approached the City to discuss installing street lights on Scenic Drive for nighttime and fog safety. Golledge-Rotwein stated that there should be some lighting under the freeway overpass and up Westhaven Drive because it is dark and people sleep under there so it is a pedestrian safety hazard.

Golledge-Rotwein asked Brown how Cities deal with light pollution. He used two shopping centers in Arcata as an example: The area around Safeway on F Street has the old type of lighting which is on tall poles with bright flood lights verses the newly designed Co-op which as lights on low poles that are directed downward. Brown stated that Trinidad has no light standards currently. He suggested that the Commission could require another standard condition of approval that lighting on new development not encroach on neighboring properties. Brown also stated that it would be difficult for the City to adopt standards requiring the modification of existing lighting. He suggested taking the "soft" approach as with the signs, asking owners to alter their lighting. Stearns, an audience member, suggested also using an energy saving angle to approach lighting concerns. Blue asked Brown to compile some information on different lighting options. Blue also requested that the Council consider exempting properties in certain areas in the southern part of the City along Scenic Drive from hedge height requirements so those residents can shield their property from the new Casino lighting, as well as those east of the freeway, views are not much of a concern in that area. Blue also asked the Gateway project to consider nicer fixtures and less overall light in the City's street lighting and to consider adding lights under the freeway overpass. Blue also asked Heyenga to approach the Rancheria about altering the lighting at the pier so that it shines outward less. Heyenga responded that he had already asked Lin to talk to them. Golledge-Rotwein stated that they should also talk to the commercial fisherman about safety issues.

- 2, 3. Community Design Issues and Recommendation to City Council to direct/allow the Commission to pursue a zoning ordinance amendment relating to community design. Brown explained that the draft letter to the Council from the Commission Chair in the packets was a result of the April 8, 2002 special meeting. Blue read the draft letter that explained the request and why it was being made. Brown explained the zoning ordinance amendment process: 1) Commission reviews proposed language, holds a public hearing and recommends amendments to the Council; 2) Council reviews and approves the amendments; 3) Coastal Commission has to certify the amendments before they take effect. The Coastal Commission allows administrative approvals for what they determine to be minor amendments, where major amendments require staff analysis.

Golledge-Rotwein asked Brown what the difference between major and minor amendments was. Brown answered that setback changes would be minor, design review criteria for remodeled homes should be minor, but parking could be either major or minor. Blue stated that the letter to the Council should explain the Coastal Commission's criteria for distinguishing minor and major. Cuthbertson stated that the Council would also want to know how much the amendment would cost. Blue asked Brown to add more details to the letter such as that the hedge ordinance is for street sight distances and public safety rather than any sort of landscape plan and control, and that the Commission wants to remove the 500 s.f. accessory structure exemption. Heyenga stated that since the Council did not necessarily have any planning background, specific code was not necessary, but the problems that would be addressed and the budget were important.

Blue pointed out that if the zoning ordinance was clarified, there would be less future staff time needed, but there would be up front costs including the legal review. Golledge-Rotwein added that this was not a frivolous cost but a necessary one. Blue also said that if these issues were discussed at Council meetings, then maybe there would be more public involvement. It was generally agreed that Brown could leave the current draft letter as it is, but add an attachment with the additions discussed. Phillips, an audience member, asked if the list in the April 8, special meeting minutes were all of the things that would be changed. Golledge-Rotwein answered no, that they were just issues and problems to discuss in considering a zoning ordinance amendment.

V. STAFF REPORT

Brown handed out copies of an aerial photo of the City that Blue had made notes on and stated that the items could be put on the next agenda if the Commission wanted. The items were two railings on Trinidad Head Trails for public safety, a directional sign for a spur trail, and a viewing platform to see the working lighthouse, especially for tourists and the lighthouse passport program. Blue requested that it be put on the next agenda. Blue also reported that a contract had been worked out with Spencer Engineering for Building Official, reviewed by the attorneys and was ready to sign. Blue asked Heyenga what the Council's process was for the contract. Heyenga answered that the Council would hold a special meeting to adopt it and he would sign it.

VI. COUNCIL LIAISON

Blue read through the items that Heyenga had submitted and summarized in writing: 1) Building inspector contract, which Blue already addressed; 2) Rancheria letter regarding deed restriction; 3) Proposal for new procedures involving bedroom/septic condition. The Commission generally agreed with the process proposed in (3), but felt it was a ministerial policy and did not need to be on a future agenda. Snell stated that garages that get converted to apartments are not addressed by the policy and should be. Golledge-Rotwein stated that she felt the Commission could address that issue with the other community design considerations.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Golledge-Rotwein moved to adjourn the meeting. Cuthbertson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Trever Parker  
Assistant City Planner/  
Secretary to the Planning Commission  
City of Trinidad

## **COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT**

### **A. Purpose**

The Community Design Element is concerned primarily with the visual quality of the City, or what residents and visitors see. The City's appearance is essential to the quality of life in Trinidad. Visual quality and amenities go hand-in-hand with long-term economic development strategies, and strengthen the stability and desirability of the community. To be attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses, the City must be concerned about its appearance, physical character, and livability. Existing residential real estate values and the desirability of businesses that depend on tourism are closely tied to the visual character of the community.

The Community Design Element establishes goals, policies, and programs to preserve and enhance Trinidad's authentic, small town character. The community is defined in part by its isolated location on the magnificent coastline of Humboldt County. Its sense of place derives from its heritage as a regional center for the mining, timber and fishing industries. As the economy evolves to a more tourism and service-based economy, the community has acknowledged the importance of maintaining the cultural and historic identity of the town and the integrity of the residential neighborhoods, while enhancing views and access to the coastline and planning for managed growth and development.

This element contains sections addressing Design Review, **historic preservation**, and public art and spaces.

### **B. Community Design and the Coastal Act**

Protection of visual resources is called for by the Coastal Act. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states that the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be signed and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas to minimize alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded area.

Trinidad has many valuable visual resources in the Coastal Zone, including high bluffs, the jutting headland of Trinidad Head, rugged offshore rocks, coastal streams and riparian areas, beaches, dunes and a quiet harbor. The southern and western views to, from and along the coastline, particularly from Edwards Street provide an important visual resource. Scenic resources attract many visitors to these areas and provide the basis for the City's tourist industry. Visual resources can be readily degraded through poorly-designed and located structures, roads, signs, and utility lines that block coastal views, alter natural landforms, and detract from the small town character of the community.

Trinidad has traditionally been very protective of its views. One area where Trinidad's view protection has differed from the Coastal Act is in its regulatory protections of private views from residences. These protections have been in place since at least the adoption of the 1976 General Plan that was certified by the Coastal Commission in 1980. Since this time, the City has also restricted the size of homes and commercial structures as well as the use of 'franchise' development.

## C. Design Review

Most new development in the City is subject to a design review process which is intended to ensure that it preserves and enhances the aesthetic character of its setting. The Planning Commission is tasked with design review approvals along with CDPs and other required land use approvals for new development. Compliance with the **Design Guidelines** is the basis for Design Review approval. While the Guidelines are flexible in order to encourage innovative and creative designs, they do include many requirements that are qualitative statements rather than quantitative standards. There are many acceptable ways to meet each of the Guidelines.

### 1. Scenic View Policies

#### Goal CD-1 Preserve and enhance scenic views.

*CD-1.1* Visual Resources: Permitted development shall be designed and sited to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance scenic views in visually degraded areas.

*Program CD-1.1.1* Require Design Review of new development or significant expansion to existing development (west of Hwy 101?)

*CD-1.2* Unobstructed coastal views from Edwards Street shall be retained to the extent feasible

*CD-1.3:* New development shall be sited and designed to minimize adverse impacts on scenic areas visible from scenic roads or public viewing areas to the maximum feasible extent.

*CD-1.4:* All new development shall be sited and designed to minimize alteration of natural landforms by:

1. Conforming to the natural topography.
2. Preventing substantial grading or reconfiguration of the project site.
3. Minimizing flat building pads on slopes. Building pads on sloping sites shall utilize split level or stepped-pad designs.
4. Requiring that man-made contours mimic the natural contours.

5. Ensuring that graded slopes blend with the existing terrain of the site and surrounding area.
6. Minimizing grading permitted outside of the building footprint.
7. Clustering structures to minimize site disturbance and to minimize development area.
8. Minimizing height and length of cut and fill slopes.
9. Minimizing the height and length of retaining walls.
10. Cut and fill operations may be balanced on-site, where the grading does not substantially alter the existing topography and blends with the surrounding area. Export of cut material may be required to preserve the natural topography.

**CD-1.5** Fences, walls, and landscaping shall minimize blockage of scenic areas from roads, parks, beaches, and other public viewing areas.

**CD-1.6** Bluff Face and Bluff Retreat Setback Development. Development on the bluff face and within the bluff retreat setback shall be limited to the following uses with a conditional use permit where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize all adverse environmental impacts. And allowable structures are designed be visually compatible with the surrounding area to the maximum extent feasible.

- (a) engineered accessways or staircases to beaches, boardwalks, viewing platforms, and trail alignments for public access purposes,
- (b) pipelines to serve coastal dependent industry,
- (c) habitat restoration,
- (d) hazardous materials remediation, and
- (e) landform alterations where such alterations re-establish natural landforms and drainage patterns that have been eliminated by previous development activities.

**CD-1.7** Blufftop development shall incorporate a setback from the edge of the bluff that avoids and minimizes visual impacts from the beach and ocean below. The blufftop setback necessary to protect visual resources may be in excess of the setback necessary to ensure that risk from geologic hazards are minimized for the life of the structure, as detailed in **Policy SF-B**.

**CD-1.8** Exterior lighting (except traffic lights, navigational lights, and other similar safety lighting) shall be minimized, restricted to low intensity fixtures, and shielded so that no light shines beyond the boundary of the property or into Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas.

**CD-1.9** All proposed divisions of land and boundary line adjustments shall be analyzed for consistency of potential future development with the visual resource protection policies of the LCP, and no division of land or boundary line adjustment shall be approved if development of resulting parcel(s) would be inconsistent with these policies.

*CD-1.10* New development shall minimize removal of natural vegetation. Existing native trees and plants shall be preserved on the site to the maximum extent feasible.

## 2. Design Review Policies

### **Goal CD-2: Ensure that new development demonstrates excellence of design and sensitivity to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.**

*CD-2.1* Design Review: All development that has the potential to affect visual resources shall be subject to Design Review, unless otherwise exempt from Design Review pursuant to **Coastal Land Use & Development Code Section 18.71.050**. Design Review approval requirements shall not replace, supersede or otherwise modify the independent requirement for a coastal development permit approved pursuant to the applicable policies and standards of the certified LCP. Ensure that development is constructed in a manner consistent with the **Citywide Design Guidelines**.

*CD-2.2* Ensure that commercial and mixed use development, fits harmoniously with the scale and design of existing buildings and streetscape of the City.

*CD-2.3* Ensure that second dwelling units, manufactured units, and single-family residences are sited and constructed in a manner harmonious with surrounding development.

*CD-2.4* Discourage Sameness and Repetitive Residential Designs.

*CD-2.5* Ensure that development does not adversely impact scenic views and resources as seen from a road and other public rights-of-way.

*Program CD-2.5.1* Adopt additional Citywide Design Guidelines for scenic views and resources identified in **Map CD-1**. Consider including, at a minimum, the following guidelines:

- a) Discourage continuous buildings that block scenic views and require view corridors providing unobstructed views of the shoreline and/or the sea from public rights-of-way.
- b) Require bluff setbacks for development adjacent to or near public areas along the shoreline.
- c) Cluster development to avoid blocking viewsheds to the maximum extent feasible.
- d) Minimize the size of advertising, business identification, and directional signs to ensure scenic views are not obstructed.
- e) Design night lighting of buildings to be indirect with no source of light visible, and lighting should not intrude on adjacent property or cause glare.
- f) Prohibit or require screening of the following uses in scenic view corridors: signs and fencing which block the scenic views, mechanical equipment, refuse containers such as dumpsters, and the outdoor storage of materials.

**CD-2.6** Ensure that properties are well maintained and nuisances are abated.

*Program CD-2.6.1:* Continue to implement and enforce the City's nuisance abatement ordinance, and update it, as necessary, to ensure that property values are maintained throughout the City.

*Program CD-2.6.2:* Consider adopting regulations in the Municipal Code requiring that alleyways in residential areas be kept free of obstructions to ensure unimpeded access at all times.

*Program CD-2.6.3:* Provide Code enforcement for immediate health and safety violations in conjunction with the building inspection process.

**CD-2.7** Encourage attractive native and drought-tolerant landscaping in residential and commercial developments, and that won't grow to eventually block coastal views.

**Parking?**

**Lighting?**

## **Public Art and Open Space**

### **Goal CD-8 Support Public Art and Open Space.**

**CD-8.1** Encourage the provision of murals, fountains, sculptures, and other forms of public art in public spaces and parks.

*Program CD-8.1.2:* Consider implementing an ongoing outdoor sculpture exhibit adjacent to City Hall and/or in other locations, with an emphasis on supporting and showcasing local artists and reflecting the cultural life of the community.

**Policy CD-8.2** Encourage the development of public open spaces for gatherings and fairs in commercial areas of the City.

*Program CD-8.2.2:* Encourage the inclusion of public open spaces in new commercial development that is sufficiently large to accommodate such uses.