

The Workforce Housing Organization

HOUSING REPORT

For The Pescadero Community Foundation

2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT COULD BE

Stage Road, a vibrant downtown street, could connect bicyclists, hikers, and car club visitors touring San Gregorio, Pescadero and La Honda to sample the range of local pasture-raised beef, pork, vegetables, berries and wine. Weekend visitors could discover artisanal crafts and foods in local shops prepared by micro businesses connected to local farms and ranches. A special express bus could bring visitors to rent kayaks or bikes locally, explore the marsh, then go home again with no traffic or parking worries. Local institutional landowners such as Peninsula Open Space Trust could collaborate with County and community organizations on bike parking, bathrooms, maps and interpretive signage.

During the week, parents could push strollers along the new trail next to the creek, making a loop to the high school to get their fitness steps in, while high school kids ride their bikes the other way to their afternoon jobs, or a bus to one of the local community colleges for classes. Kids looking forward to local careers, and someday raising their own families in the area, might start by renting an ADU from extended family members, saving money until they can afford their own home. Later, they might offer an ADU to aging parents, who can walk to groceries and a public transit stop in town. New housing offers space for

teachers and other essential workers to live within the community at affordable rates—even more affordable because they can walk to their places of work.

WHAT IS

Pescadero High/Middle School students can't drink the water. Downtown Pescadero and surrounding areas regularly deal with flooding that grinds daily business to a halt. Good teachers leave the community because there is virtually no housing they can afford. Farmworkers struggle to find safe places to live and pay exorbitant rents to live in inadequate, even squalid, housing. Visitors and locals stand in line for the porta-potty that enjoys pride of place on Pescadero's primary downtown intersection. Because Pescadero is unincorporated, with no paid staff, community volunteers struggle to invest the time needed to deal with the layers of regulation around housing and coastal community issues.

Each of the communities of the south coast is treated very differently under planning rules, with no coherent overall strategy for developing resilient neighborhoods, while institutional landowners continue to acquire larger tracts of land to turn into parks that will attract even more visitors. The under-resourced school district struggles to attract and retain teachers

as home prices skyrocket. The district maintains large areas of land for a shrinking student population, even as it struggles to budget for critical building maintenance and repair. The schools also function as emergency shelters, voting centers, health clinics, and every other type of community resource because they're the only large community space. Local HOAs in Butano Canyon and La Honda provide some amenities, but only for members of their own communities.

WHAT'S IN THE WAY

County government, institutional landowners, community organizations, local businesses and residents bicker about who is in charge and who is at fault for the lack of housing, as well as the lack of a coherent plan for moving toward a more resilient and sustainable future. A sewer solution the county proposed is too expensive for local residents to shoulder. A divisive and underfunded planning process has made it difficult to achieve momentum for necessary infrastructure investments. Different community organizations with different goals approach the problems from unique perspectives, but without the funding for a professional planning process to drive community planning toward a specific plan to implement change, roadblocks to new housing like lack of wastewater treatment remain insurmountable obstacles.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

We can build an inclusive, resilient future with a truly integrated planning process that brings the community together and includes representatives of every part of the community -- past, present, and future: institutional owners, individual owners, and those who own nothing. Recent events have shone a light on the deplorable living conditions for so many in the rural south coast, in a way we have been unable to do for the 25 years represented in this report. It's time, now, to move this forward. We could be a

sustainable, resilient, equitable community with an appropriate investment in planning. Residents have an important role to play in this process, attending workshops, voting, contributing as volunteers for community organizations like The Pescadero Community Foundation, Puente de la Costa Sur, and the school district. Institutional landowners like POST, MidPen, and LHPUSD must play key roles as stakeholders, with County government removing obstacles as a funder and planning gatekeeper.

INTERACTIVE DOCUMENT

This document is a printable PDF as well as an online, interactive document. URLs are underlined and blue. If you are reading a printed copy, you may visit <https://indd.adobe.com/view/eofbb4eb-9286-45a9-be2c-3e30f863f4f2> to read the interactive version, in order to take full advantage of the bookmarks, cross-references and links.



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Kelly Greenwood is a landscape architect, artist, and proud Loma Martian. She wrote this and took all the photographs not otherwise credited. You can find more about her work online at www.kellygreenwood.com.

