February 18, 2021

Assembly Member David Chiu
c/o Riana.king@asm.ca.gov
Chair
Housing and Community Development Committee
1020 N Street, Room 156
Sacramento, California 95814

Senator Scott Weiner
c/o Brayden.borcherding@sen.ca.gov
Chair
Senate Housing Committee
State Capitol, Room 2209
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Zach Olmstead
Zachary.Olmstead@hcd.ca.gov
Chief Deputy Director
Planning and Community Development Division
California Department of Housing & Community Development
2020 West El Camino Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: REQUEST FOR EXTENSION- HOUSING ELEMENT

Dear Chair Chiu, Chair Weiner and Chief Deputy Olmstead:

The City of Thousand Oaks requests your assistance in obtaining an extension for our Housing Element deadline. The City sent an initial request to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on March 20, 2020 (Attachment 1).

The City has been working diligently on the Housing Element as well as a comprehensive General Plan update. While we are expediting our schedule in order to meet the State’s statutory deadline of October 15, 2021, the primary purpose of our request is to assure all residents are given ample time to participate in the public process.

Community involvement in local policies is paramount to good government. The City prides itself in promoting robust civic engagement and transparency. Although the City has conducted public outreach to all segments of our community, the COVID-19 pandemic, stay-at-home order, and statewide closures have changed the method of public participation.
In-person Public workshops have transitioned to virtual platforms and online settings, which not all residents are accustomed to or have the ability to participate in.

As one of the most vital components of the General Plan, the Housing Element will guide the City in addressing its housing needs for the next eight years. Public participation and support is key to successful adoption and implementation of our Housing Element. Providing additional time for residents to participate in online workshops; conduct due diligence of virtual documents, maps and plans; and provide ample opportunity for community feedback on this critical document is essential.

The City of Thousand Oaks is interested in working with you to provide our residents this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Claudia Bill-de la Peña
Mayor

CC: Governor Gavin Newsom
    Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
    Senate Housing Committee
    Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin
    Senator Henry Stern
    Art Yoon, Director of Public Affairs, SCAG
    David Mullinax- Regional Public Affairs Manager, dmullinax@cacities.org
    League of California Cities, cityletters@cacities.org
    Joe A. Gonsalves and Son

cmo:660-40/Housing Element Extension.ml
March 20, 2020

Zachary Olmstead  
Deputy Director  
State Department of Housing and Community Development  
Planning and Community Development Division  
Zachary.Olmstead@hcd.ca.gov

Re: Housing Element Deadline Extension Request

Dear Mr. Olmstead:

I would like you to consider requesting an Executive Order from the Governor related to the October 2021 Housing Element deadline.

Although it seems like this deadline is distant, there are many things that have to be done prior to adoption of the Housing Element. Currently, cities and counties are stretched thin personnel-wise due to the Covid-19 Emergency, and many of those employees have been pulled from their regular assignments to work on Covid-19 assignments. It is unknown how long this public health emergency will continue. Adoption of a Housing Element – in particular – requires public thought and input. Orders to self-isolate, closure of government facilities, and closure of many businesses will make it virtually impossible to engage the community in the manner required for this mandate. In fact, the State’s own guidelines encourage a robust community engagement plan. There are also statutory community meetings such as public hearings, CEQA scoping meetings, etc. In Thousand Oaks, we are also doing a comprehensive General Plan Update – one we have never done since the original General Plan was adopted at City incorporation.

One of the most significant documents a city utilizes, it requires meaningful community engagement and focused attention by City leadership and staff. Thousand Oaks is not alone in this endeavor either. Many other cities, including others in Ventura County, are preparing comprehensive General Plans in addition to their mandatory Housing Elements. Because of the necessary measures cities and counties must take during this public health emergency, it is unlikely cities and counties will be able to devote the time and attention necessary for adoption of a community-supported Housing Element in a timely manner.
The City therefore requests that you ask for an Executive Order by the Governor extending the Housing Element October 2021 deadline by at least 6 months. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss.

Best Regards,

Tracy M. Noonan  
City Attorney

c: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager  
Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin