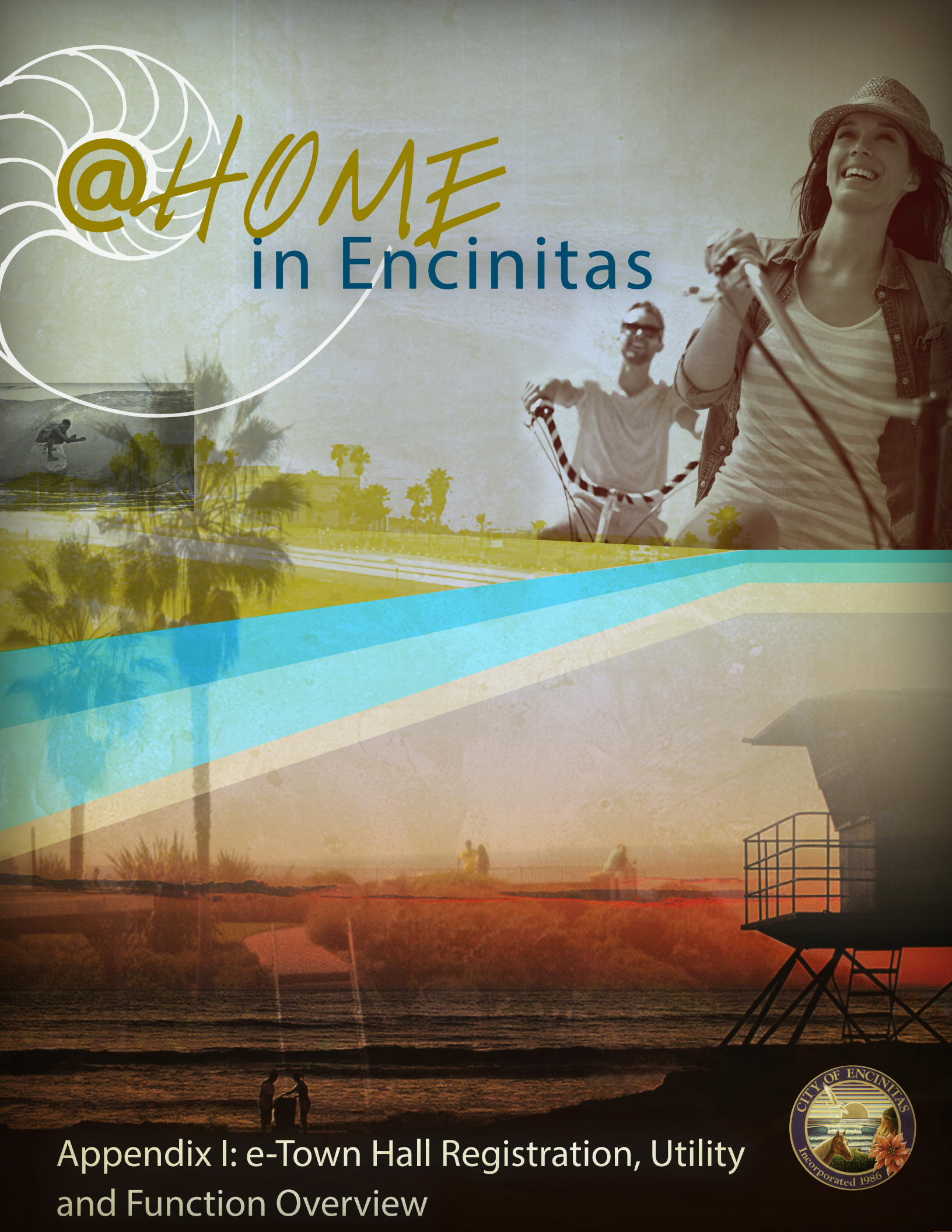# @HOME
in Encinitas

Appendix I: e-Town Hall Registration, Utility and Function Overview

CITY OF ENCINITAS
Housing Plan Results
E-Town Hall Registration, Utility and Function Overview

Once a participant accessed e-Town Hall, the forum provided a series of interactive maps that helped citizens learn about where new housing could potentially be built – and gave folks a chance to look at different types of housing that could go there, and then select the option they like best for that specific community.

1. Utility and Function Overview

   Once an individual reviewed the information that was presented in the Community Dialogue Session, or on the City's website at www.AtHomeinEncinitas.info, they were poised to make an informed decision about where future housing should go in their community. Participants of e-Town Hall were provided two "scenarios" in which to provide their input and feedback on where future housing should be located within a particular community: The "Ready-Made" and "Build-Your-Own" topics or scenarios.

   a. *Ready-Made Topic/Scenarios*

      The "ready-made" scenarios are intended to offer different strategies for providing a range of housing choices on a different combination of viable housing sites. As applied with a different focus and mix of sites, each strategy finds a different way to accommodate a community's future housing needs. There were three different scenarios available for participants to choose from.

      • Mixed Use Places

         This housing strategy idea takes advantage of the benefits of mixing housing with retail and employment land uses. It introduces new mixed use allowances into existing mixed-use places or existing commercial areas and allows new housing development within other places where it would be most compatible with existing community characteristics.

      • Major Corridors

         This housing strategy idea focuses housing primarily in the medium and large underutilized sites along major corridors.

      • Highly Concentrated

         This housing strategy accommodates necessary housing in the simplest manner to comply with State law. Neighborhoods would primarily be three-story condo flats and apartments.

b. Build-Your-Own Topic

The second option, called "build your own," required a bit more time and focus, but the website allowed a participant to individually select a viable housing site and assign a neighborhood prototype to it. The participant would continue doing this until he/she met the targeted number of housing units for that community.

c. Community Characteristics
Participants were also asked to share comments about the unique characteristics found in their community and to clearly describe them so that decision-makers can consider those views as part of the planning process. Ultimately, City staff will use this information to create design standards for future projects, so that the community can be confident that housing will fit in with existing neighborhoods. This information will be critical when the City starts looking at modifications to housing policies and programs, which will be discussed more March.

2. Participant Registration

Once participants provided their comments and scenario choices on housing, they were required to fill out and submit a registration page, which asked for their name, address (residence or business) and email address. Following submittal of the registration page, as a final step, the participant would receive an email from Peak Democracy instructing them to 'verify' that they were the ones who participated on e-Town Hall. Participants would complete this final step by accessing a link that was included in Peak Democracy's email.

However, upon reviewing the data we found that some participants did not complete all of the steps in the registration process. As such, participants in the process have been grouped into one of the following three categories.

a. On-Forum

The comments/selections that were made by individuals who successfully completed all of the required registration steps are considered "On-Forum" comments.

b. *Off-Forum/Unverified*

The comments/selections that were made by folks who submitted the registration page, but failed to 'verify' via the link provided in Peak Democracy's email are considered "Off-Forum/Unverified" comments.

According to Peak Democracy, this scenario is not uncommon as participants often feel that they are done with their participation once they "submit" the registration form. As such, they often delete the follow-up email. Also, it is not uncommon for Peak Democracy's follow-up email to go directly into a user's "junk mail".

c. *Off-Forum/Unclaimed or Uncertified*

The comments/selections that were made by folks who did not complete the registration process are considered "Off-Forum" or "Unclaimed" comments. According to Peak Democracy, there are a number of reasons why folks would elect not to include their personal information. For example, some may be wary of placing that type of sensitive information on the web for others to see; others may be uncertain how the government agency requesting the data will use the information; some may not want to be contacted; and, still others may not want to take the time to register.

Because "on-forum" comments are associated with a specific level of data from a participant, participant responses can also be filtered or separated out from other responses, creating different subgroups. Because there is a need to see what community residents and business owners think about potential land use changes in their immediate neighborhood, the subgroups that were created include:

- "community resident";
- "community business owner"; and,
- "all others" (resident or business owner outside the subject community).

While there are a number of different ways this information can be grouped and presented, only these three key "on-forum" subgroups have been highlighted in the report. Comments and preferences from participants who did not include registration information ("off-forum") were also separately categorized ("unclaimed"), but were not separated into these subgroups.

3. <u>Participant Demographic Information</u>

In addition to being asked to provide a home or work address through the e-Town Hall registration process, participants were also asked to provide other specific profile data, such as age group and gender information. This collected demographic data helps identify salient characteristics of the participants to make sure different groups were involved in the process.

Gender Category	Ready Made Topic	Build-Your-Own Topic	Comm. Character Desc. Topic
Male	29%	40%	19%
Female	31%	29%	34%
No gender specified	40%	31%	47%

Age Category	Ready Made Topic	Build-Your-Own Topic	Comm. Character Desc. Topic
<20 years	<1%	<1%	1%
20-29 years	2%	7%	2%
30-39 years	10%	6%	6%
40-49 years	17%	14%	19%
50-59 years	13%	19%	11%
60-69 years	13%	16%	6%
70-79 years	4%	5%	3%
>79 years	<1%	1%	0%
No age specified	40%	31%	52%

The data shows that regardless of the topic, the participation rate between different demographics didn't vary significantly. Also, the appropriate mixes of participation from different demographic groups were achieved.

4. Tracking System Abuse

Public concerns have been raised about participants using a false identity or submitting multiple times on e-Town Hall. Peak Democracy, the vendor who manages e-Town Hall, has launched close to 1,800 forums for other cities and public agencies. The founders of this company indicated that they monitor IP addresses and browser cookies to prevent false registrations. While this does not provide a 100 percent guarantee that a false registration could not be entered, it is a safeguard to prevent widespread abuse of the system. In their extensive experience with these online forums, they have found that the few false registrations that have occurred are not sufficient to sway the overall direction of public input.

When reviewing entries, Peak Democracy ignores cases where three or fewer posts are made from the same IP address. Three posts are selected because in their opinion, it is normal for multiple people within one residence to participate --- posts from two spouses and grandparent or older child are common.

Peak Democracy found five instances where there were more than three responses from a single IP address; however, upon further investigation, City IT staff and Peak Democracy found that the elevated post counts could be traced back to the City computers (Verizon wireless routers) that were used at the Community Dialogue

Sessions (see chart below). As such, there does not appear to be an abuse of the system.

IP ADDRESS	ENTRY DATE	DIALOGUE SESSION	NUMBER OF POSTS
70.183.94.130	November 13th	Cardiff; Seaside Center for Spiritual Healing	17
70.209.231.208	November 15th	Old Encinitas; City of Encinitas Public Library	40
70.209.207.185	November 13th	Cardiff; Seaside Center for Spiritual Healing	20
70.209.235.86	November 17th	Leucadia; Beacon's Bible Church	12
70.209.209.190	November 22nd	New Encinitas; Diegueno Middle School	16

5. <u>Use of e-Town Hall to Oppose the Project</u>

There were three primary questions for each community: Select Your Favorite Ready-Made Housing Strategy, Build Your Own Housing Strategy and Describe Your Favorite Characteristics. The latter question did not require selecting housing sites. In order for a participant to submit opinions on e-Town Hall, preferences or comments on where to locate housing also had to be submitted. While encouraging most people to spend some time coming up with a solutions on how and where to locate future housing, some individuals provided feedback in the "ready-made" and "build-your-own" topic exercises just to leave comments opposing the process. Even though these written statements are important to record in association with other public comments received during this outreach, it is not known how these "ready-made" or "build-your-own" selections should be considered. Therefore, there could be some concerns about using some of these selections or preferences, when that was not the intent or motive of the participant when submitting them.

However, the total count of these types of comments is relatively low when factoring in the total amount of preferences or comments received. Therefore, the inclusion of these selections has no significant influence on the resulting preference maps, especially since results yield clear preferences.

- Old Encinitas: This occurred in only two instances in the "ready-made" scenario exercise, one coming from an "on-forum" comment (from a resident) and the other coming from an "off-forum" comment ("unclaimed").

- New Encinitas: This occurred in several instances in the "ready-made" scenario exercise, ten coming from "on-forum" comments (residents) and five coming from

"off-forum" comments ("unclaimed"). This also occurred in two instances in the "build-your-own" scenario exercise.

- Leucadia: This occurred in several instances in the "ready-made" scenario exercise, five coming from "on-forum" comments (residents) and four coming from "off-forum" comments ("unclaimed").

- Cardiff: This occurred in two instances in the "ready-made" scenario exercise, one coming from an "on-forum" comment (resident) and one coming from "off-forum" comment ("unclaimed").

- Olivenhain: This occurred in several instances in the "ready-made" scenario exercise, six coming from "on-forum" comments (residents) and two coming from "off-forum" comments ("unclaimed"). It also occurred in two instances in the "build-your-own" scenario exercise.