

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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October 26, 2023

Christina Rivera, County Administrator
County of Sonoma
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Christina Rivera:

RE: County of Sonoma's 6th Cycle (2023-2031) Adopted Housing Element

Thank you for submitting the County of Sonoma's housing element, which was adopted August 22, 2023 along with authorized technical modifications that were received October 25, 2023 and minor edits on October 26, 2023. All technical modifications were authorized by Resolution Numbers 23-0429 and were made available to the public for seven days before HCD's review. The County confirmed the technical modifications are consistent with the direction and authority granted by Resolution 23-0429. In addition, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) considered comments from Kevin Burke and Tim Massey pursuant to Government Code section 65585, subdivision (c). Pursuant to Government Code section 65585, HCD is reporting the results of its review.

HCD is pleased to find the adopted housing element, including all technical modifications and minor edits, in substantial compliance with State Housing Element Law (Gov. Code, § 65580 et seq) as of the date of this letter. The adopted element, including all technical modifications and minor edits, meets the requirements described in HCD's March 30, 2023 review.

Additionally, the County must continue timely and effective implementation of all programs including but not limited to the following:

- Program 1 (Continue Implementation of Housing Programs)
- Program 4 (Actions to Meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA))
- Program 5 (Displacement Avoidance)
- Program 12 (Permit Procedures, Priority Processing and Farmworker Measures)
- Program 15 (Update Zoning Code and General Plan)
- Program 16 (Expand AH Combining District)
- Program 19 (Funding Sources for Affordable Housing)

- Program 25 (Promote Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior ADU (JADU) Development)
- Program 28 (Reasonable Accommodation and Code Enforcement)
- Program 31 (Housing Equity and Action Plan)

For your information, pursuant to Assembly Bill 1398 (Chapter 358, Statutes of 2021), as the County failed to adopt a compliant housing element within 120 days of the statutory deadline (January 31, 2023), programs to rezone and make prior identified sites available or address a shortfall of capacity to accommodate the regional housing need allocation (RHNA) (e.g., Program 4) must be completed no later than one year from the statutory deadline. Otherwise, the local government's housing element will no longer comply with State Housing Element Law, and HCD may revoke its finding of substantial compliance pursuant to Government Code section 65585, subdivision (i).

The County must monitor and report on the results of these and other programs through the annual progress report, required pursuant to Government Code section 65400. Please be aware, Government Code section 65585, subdivision (i) grants HCD authority to review any action or failure to act by a local government that it determines is inconsistent with an adopted housing element or housing element law. This includes failure to implement program actions included in the housing element. HCD may revoke housing element compliance if the local government's actions do not comply with state law.

Several federal, state, and regional funding programs consider housing element compliance as an eligibility or ranking criteria. For example, the CalTrans Senate Bill (SB) 1 Sustainable Communities grant, the Strategic Growth Council and HCD's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program, and HCD's Permanent Local Housing Allocation consider housing element compliance and/or annual reporting requirements pursuant to Government Code section 65400. With a compliant housing element, the County now meets housing element requirements for these and other funding sources.

HCD appreciates the dedication and work put into the housing element update and review process. HCD also applauds the leadership and collaboration of the County taking meaningful steps towards compliance. HCD wishes the County of Sonoma success in implementing its housing element and looks forward to following its progress through the General Plan annual progress reports pursuant to Government Code section 65400. If HCD can provide assistance in implementing the housing element, please contact me at paul.mcdougall@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Paul McDougall
Senior Program Manager