

2016 General Plan Annual Implementation Progress Report



Permit and Resource Management Department

February 2017

GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

Staff has prepared this Annual Progress Report (Report) to update the Board of Supervisors on the status of implementing the programs contained within the Sonoma County General Plan and to comply with State Law. California Government Code Section 65400(b)(1) mandates that the County Planning Agency prepare and transmit this report to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Report is required to contain certain housing information, including the County's progress in meeting its share of regional housing need and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing.

OVERVIEW

Government Code Section 65300 requires every city and county to prepare and adopt a "comprehensive, long term general plan for the physical development" of the community. On September 23, 2008 the Board adopted the current General Plan (commonly referred to as GP2020) and adopted the current Housing Element on December 2, 2014. The Government Code also requires that these plans include seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Noise, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, and Housing. GP 2020 includes these mandatory seven elements and four additional, optional elements: Water Resources, Air Transportation, Agricultural Resources, and Public Facilities and Services. Notably, Sonoma County was the first jurisdiction in California to adopt a Water Resources Element. Each of these elements contains a set of goals, objectives, policies, and programs.

The broad purpose of GP2020 is to "express policies which will guide decisions on future growth, development, and conservation of resources through 2020 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the County's residents." GP2020 provides policy direction to multiple departments and jurisdictions beyond the Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma). The attached spreadsheet (Attachment 1) summarizes the implementation efforts of all General Plan programs, including the responsible department and estimated completion date. Below is a list of notable accomplishments completed in 2016.

Overall progress continues with the implementation of General Plan programs. The 2014 Housing Element contains 57 programs, many of which are ongoing or underway. The County has initiated several new programs, but several have not been started because we are at the beginning of the 8 year implementation cycle. Changes in the percent of General Plan programs completed since 2014 are a result of the new Housing Element programs. Of the 166 General Plan programs 102 have been implemented or are ongoing programs implemented on a continuous basis. Another 31 programs are either partially complete or currently underway (see a description of major initiatives underway, below). An additional 29 programs have not been started, and a small number of programs are on hold for a variety of reasons. Attachment 1 provides a detailed description of the General

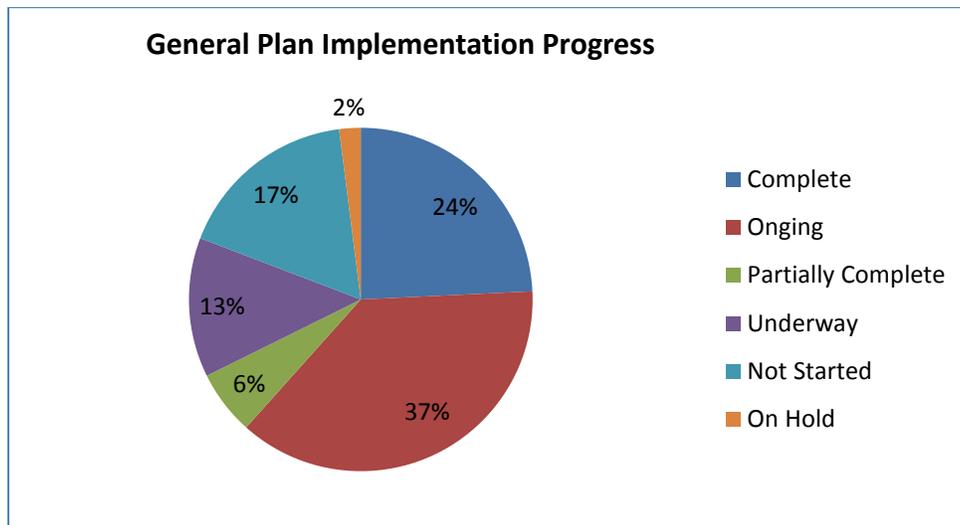
2016 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

Plan Implementation Programs for the following elements: Agricultural Resources, Air Transportation, Circulation and Transit, Land Use, Noise, Open Space and Resource Conservation, Public Facilities and Services, Public Safety, Water Resources, and Housing. Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a summary of implementation progress.

Table 1: General Plan Implementation Progress 2016

Program Status	Total Number	% of Total
Complete	40	24%
Ongoing	62	37%
Partially Complete	10	6%
Underway	21	13%
Not Started	29	17%
On hold	4	2%
Total	166	100%

Figure 1: General Plan Implementation Progress



CURRENT PRIORITY GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Multiple programs are in the process of being implemented by Permit Sonoma as part of the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan. Permit Sonoma also works collaboratively with other departments such as Transportation and Public Works and Regional Parks to implement General Plan policies and programs. Below is a list of major planning efforts that were completed or underway in 2016.

Development Code Modernization

The Development Code Modernization represents the first major reorganization of the County's Zoning Ordinance since the 1960s and will include new definitions and land

2016 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

use types that reflect contemporary planning. The proposed new format will be consistent with most of the newer code formats used in Santa Rosa, Windsor, and Sonoma, which will make the code more familiar and user-friendly to the public. Proposed changes in the development include reformatting the allowable land uses listed in every zoning district into easy-to-read tables; terms and permitting levels; and addition of a new Permits and Procedures Chapter consolidating the various procedures currently listed throughout the Code. Staff intends to produce a public review draft by fall of 2017 and commence the Planning Commission's review.

Local Coastal Plan Update

The Local Coastal Plan is a separate, stand-alone plan for the coastal zone, mandated by the California Coastal Act. The Local Coastal Plan Update is a focused update limited to integrating General Plan 2020 policies and addressing public access; adaption to climate change, particularly sea level rise; biological resources; public safety (geologic, flood hazards, and coastal erosion); and water quality. In 2016 Permit Sonoma staff worked on revising the Preliminary Draft based on comments from the public and Coastal Commission. The Draft Local Coastal Plan is expected to be published in the spring of 2017. Once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the Local Coastal Plan must be submitted to the Coastal Commission for certification before it becomes effective.

Sea Level Rise Grant

The County was awarded a \$150,000 grant to study and plan for the impacts of sea level rise along the entire Sonoma coast. In 2016 staff completed mapping efforts to identify the location and severity of future inundation, bluff erosion, and habitat vulnerability from sea level rise. Permit Sonoma staff hosted a public workshop in Bodega Bay to present the maps and elicit feedback on possible adaptation strategies. Staff is preparing a Community Adaptation Plan for Bodega Bay and developing sea level rise policies that will be included in the Local Coastal Plan.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

County Emergency Management Agency and Permit Sonoma updated the Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Staff expects the California Office of Emergency Services to approve this plan in early 2017. The update reports on progress made implementing mitigating actions identified in the current plan. The new Hazard Mitigation Plan evaluates hazards related to climate change and resulting impact to emergency management strategies in the County. The 2016 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan includes a new five year implementation plan incorporated into the General Plan as policy through Program PS-11.

Unreinforced Masonry Building Ordinance

The County has initiated a multi-phase seismic hazard reduction project. The program builds on lessons learned from the south Napa earthquake, and focuses on retrofit of high

2016 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

occupancy unsafe buildings. Staff is preparing a draft ordinance that would require retrofit of all unreinforced masonry buildings in non-residential uses. The proposed ordinance will implement General Plan Program PS-6. In Phase II of the project, the County will begin inventorying a wider range of hazardous buildings including soft story and under reinforced concrete structures.

Climate Action Plan 2020

In 2013-14 the County was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the Strategic Growth Council for climate action planning in collaboration with the nine cities, the Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA), and non-profit groups. The countywide Climate Action Plan was adopted by the RCPA as the lead agency in 2016. The CAP was challenged and is currently in litigation. It establishes a framework for greenhouse gas emission reductions and a coordinated framework for the cities and county. County staff continues to work with legal counsel & RCPA on litigation efforts prior to bringing forward for adoption by the Board. Once adopted by the County, development projects that conform to the Climate Action Plan will receive streamlined review of greenhouse gas impacts of individual projects under CEQA.

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

The County and the Water Agency are currently collaborating to address provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (2014) that calls for formation of one or more Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA), development of Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans, and managing medium and high priority groundwater basins in a sustainable manner by 2022. The County has jurisdiction in three medium priority basins: Sonoma Creek, Petaluma River, and the Santa Rosa Plain. The County anticipates participation in each of the three basin GSA that will be formed by the State deadline of June 30, 2017. The new law requires coordination between Groundwater Sustainability Plans and the General Plan. Moving forward, the County must review land use assumptions and other General Plan policies to ensure consistency with future Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

The General Plan Water Resources Element includes a program to monitor groundwater, identify special study areas (high priority areas), and evaluate impacts to groundwater from existing pumping and future growth. These programs will be reviewed and integrated into the County's Sustainable Groundwater Management Program.

Springs Specific Plan

The County was awarded a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to develop an area plan for the Springs community. This plan will guide development and gradually shape the Springs into a more vibrant and sustainable pedestrian-oriented community. The Springs Specific Plan will implement many transit and circulation policies of the General Plan and will also include community design features to promote

2016 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

healthy living in the communities of Boyes Hot Springs and Agua Caliente. The County is committed to engaging the community in the development of the Specific Plan and, therefore, initiated this planning effort by forming a Community Advisory Team (CAT). The CAT serves as a liaison to area residents, businesses, and organizations and provides input on the plan.

Three community workshops were held during the first half of 2016 to receive comments from the public. Background reports were prepared and three alternatives were drafted and are being reviewed. The alternatives and draft document will be reviewed by the public, CAT, and Technical Advisory Team in 2017. A preferred alternative will be identified and the CEQA review process will be initiated.

Airport Area Specific Plan

The County was awarded a grant from the Sonoma County Transportation Authority to update the Airport Area Specific Plan, including a Station Area Plan for the new Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station. The goal of this effort is to transform the car-centric land use model into a transit-oriented employment center with the new SMART station as the central component. The project includes a robust community process to develop the area with a mix of land uses and enhanced multimodal connectivity to promote healthy living and greenhouse gas reduction by encouraging active forms of transportation and increased use of transit. The Specific Plan is scheduled to be adopted in the spring of 2018.

Community Separators

Open Space and Resource Conservation Program 6 calls for expansion of Community Separator lands and renewal of voter protections. The County completed this effort in 2016. In August the Board expanded Community Separator lands to protect a total of 53,867 acres, updated relevant General Plan policies, and placed the voter protection ordinance on the November ballot. This ordinance, called the Community Separators Protection Ordinance (Measure K), passed with 81.1% voter approval. It extends voter protections to Community Separator lands for 20 years.

Cannabis Land Use Ordinance

The Board of Supervisors provided direction in early 2016 to establish a regulatory framework for cannabis operations including cultivation, testing labs, distribution, transportation, manufacturing, and dispensaries consistent with the California Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA). The land use ordinance was adopted December 20, 2016. A health ordinance to regulate dispensaries and manufacturing was adopted December 13, 2016. A special election will be held March 7, 2017 to consider imposing taxes on cannabis businesses to fund essential services such as code enforcement and environmental protection. Permitting will not begin until after the tax passes or another funding source is identified.

Housing Element

Sonoma County has made significant achievements in its efforts to provide housing for all economic segments of the county. Affordable housing production has quadrupled over the last 10 years compared to the previous 10 year period. In the decade from 1992 to 2002 only five projects containing 110 total units were produced. By contrast, in the period between 2003 and 2012 a total of 11 projects, totaling 450 units, were produced.

Current Housing Element Efforts

The 2014 Housing Element includes a number of implementation programs to allow for homeless shelters, permanent supportive housing, and transitional housing. Other programs aim to retain affordable units, assist affordable housing developers, and explore non-traditional housing structures. See Attachment 1 for a complete list of all General Plan Programs, including Housing Element Programs, beginning on page 15.

The 2014 General Plan Housing Element was adopted on December 2, 2014 and has been certified by the State Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) as meeting all requirements of State law. The planning period covered by the 2014 Housing Element is 2015 to 2023.

Regional Housing Need

The County is required to report certain housing information in accordance with State Housing Element Law (Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584) and the State HCD's guidelines for reporting the County's progress toward meeting its regional housing needs. The Association of Bay Area Governments has adopted a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), pursuant to Government Code Section 65584, for all jurisdictions within the County of Sonoma. To provide housing for the projected population growth within the region, Sonoma County's share of the regional housing need was allocated at 936 new housing units for the 8-year period between 2015 and 2023, including 160 units affordable to moderate-income households, 127 units affordable to low income households, and 220 affordable to very-low income households. Of the 220 very-low income households, 50% must be available to extremely low income households. This report includes reporting on extremely low income units.

We are two years into the 2015 – 2023 Housing Element planning period. In 2016, the County issued permits for 344 new housing units, including 63 extremely low income units, 51 very low income units, 21 low income units, 55 moderate-income units, and 154 above-moderate income units. The unmet RHNA need at the end of 2016 was for 29 extremely low income units, 53 very-low income units, 60 low-income units, 61 moderate-income units, and 196 above moderate income units. See Table 2, below.

Table 2: Sonoma County’s Progress in Meeting its Regional Housing Needs 2015-2023 Reporting Period Ending 12/31/2016

Income Group	Regional Housing Need 2015-2023	Permits Issued 2016	County Need Met through 12/31/16	Remaining Need at end of 2016	% of 2015-2023 Regional Housing Need Met
Extremely	110	63	81	29	74%
Very-Low	110	51	57	53	51%
Low	127	21	67	60	53%
Moderate	160	55	99	61	62%
Above Moderate	429	154	233	196	54%
Total	936 units	344 units	537 units	399 units	57%

With 22 percent of the planning period having elapsed, the County has met 57 percent of its overall Regional Housing Need Allocation. Of the housing unit permits issued during this planning period, 39 percent were affordable to low, very low, and extremely low income households. This is due to recently granted entitlements for several affordable housing projects.

The County is working collaboratively with the City of Santa Rosa to annex and redevelop the unincorporated community of Roseland. Once the annexation of the Roseland area into the City of Santa Rosa has been completed, RHNA “credit” for the housing projects that lie within that area will be transferred to the City. This transfer will remove 24 extremely low income units, 32 very low income units, and 22 low income units from the progress shown above. Additionally, the County and City have agreed to split the RHNA credits for the 78-unit Crossroads Apartments project due to shared work efforts and funding. This split will remove 26 extremely low income units, 10 very low income units, and 3 low income units.

The RHNA figure is used by the state to determine whether a jurisdiction has zoned adequate land for the development of housing; the actual housing need is much greater than is reflected in the RHNA. While the RHNA is an important figure from a regulatory perspective, it does not reflect the actual need for affordable housing within our communities. For this reason, in addition to the RHNA objective the County maintains Quantified Objectives for non-RHNA housing types that serve the most vulnerable populations. For the current planning period, the Quantified Objective for non-RHNA housing includes 47 Single Room Occupancy units. In February of 2016 the Palms Inn opened, providing 104 SRO units to extremely low income households. Sonoma County will continue to facilitate the development of SRO facilities and other non-traditional types of housing to meet the needs of our special needs and homeless populations.

2016 Construction and Permitting Activity

The number of permits issued for residential construction was up significantly in 2016, with the County issuing 192 permits for 344 residential units. Units affordable to low and moderate-income households comprised more than half (55 percent) of the permitting activity during 2016.

The County's Affordable Housing Program requires all new development to contribute to affordable housing, and incentivizes the construction of second dwelling units to meet the affordable housing contribution requirement for individual single family dwellings. Because of their limited size, second dwelling units are considered affordable; a survey conducted during 2006 and updated during 2013 established the average level of affordability at "moderate" for newer detached units and at "lower" for older units and attached units. In 2016 the County issued 53 permits for second dwelling units, including 49 detached units, one attached unit, and four manufactured homes.

Building HOMES Toolbox

The newly adopted Housing Element calls for a diverse housing stock that provides housing for all income levels. The County has undertaken planning to end homelessness that includes evaluation of alternative housing types, such as community supportive housing, small mobile units, and temporary housing. These initiatives, called the Building HOMES Toolbox, were adopted by the Board in 2015 and implement several policies of the 2014 Housing Element. In 2016 Permit Sonoma and Community Development Commission staff initiated a tiny homes pilot project, hosted a Homeless Summit resulting in topic-specific committees, and performed substantial work on Accessory and Junior Unit regulations to implement the Toolbox.

Accessory and Junior Units

The County started to update the accessory dwelling unit (formerly second unit) ordinance in compliance with SB 1069 and AB 2299. Notable changes include reduced setbacks, a ministerial approval process, and a prohibition on requiring separate utility connections in certain urban circumstances. The County included Junior Units in this work effort, as allowed by AB 2406, to provide additional small rental units. The Planning Commission considered these regulations in December 2016 and the Board adopted in January 2017. These regulations implement Housing Element policies to provide small rental units and prevent transient occupancy (e.g., vacation rentals) of these units.

Builders of new market-rate housing units of more than 1000 square feet are still required to participate in the County's Affordable Housing Program in one of several ways, including the payment of affordable housing in-lieu fees. Property owners may defer

2016 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

payment of this fee with an agreement to provide and rent an accessory dwelling unit to a low-income household for a 30 year period. Property owners may be released from the 30 year obligation upon payment of a pro-rated Affordable Housing Fee. The County allows the option to opt out by paying an affordable housing fee that is used by the County to fund affordable housing projects.

Vacation Rentals

The County revised its vacation rental ordinance in January 2016 with substantial public input. The ordinance addresses neighborhood compatibility and enforcement concerns while expanding opportunities where compatible with surroundings. Notably, property managers must be certified with the County. The Vacation Rental Exclusion (X) Combining Zone was adopted as part of this action and applied to much of Sonoma Valley where conversion of housing stock has been a major concern. The X Combining Zone may also be applied to other areas of the County where vacation rentals are not appropriate due to lack of housing stock, safety issues, or neighborhood incompatibility.

CONCLUSION

Sonoma County General Plan 2020 continues to provide a broad policy framework for city-centered growth in the County. In 2017 the County will focus on Housing Element programs and completing the Local Coastal Plan update. Substantial progress was made during 2016 to implement many important General Plan 2020 programs. The most notable progress includes updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan, expanding Community Separators and updating related policies, and working on sustainable groundwater management. The 2014 Housing Element and housing programs have been effective in adding housing for all economic segments of the community during 2016.