

Draft Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy will form the housing policy roadmap for unincorporated Sonoma County and will become Section 2 (Goals, Policies, Programs and Quantified Objectives) of the County’s 2023 Housing Element. The Housing Strategy includes data, trends and community opinions received to date, as well as the input received from the Housing Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission. Policies and programs achieved since the 2014 Housing Element have been replaced with new policies and programs to address new statutory requirements, changing housing needs and community input. New or substantively changed programs and policies are marked with a ▲.

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

August 8, 2022

2.1 HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Government Code Section 65583(b)(1) requires that Housing Elements contain "a statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing." This Section provides the goals, objectives, and policies for Sonoma County. The policy framework sets forth six overarching housing goals. Subordinate to each of these goals are policies that express how the goals will be achieved.

The collective programs and policies administered by Sonoma County and set forth in this Housing Element comply with and further the requirements and goals of Government Code Section 8899.50(a) and (b). As demonstrated through its policies and programs, the County is committed to taking meaningful actions to fulfill its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing and will take no actions that would be materially inconsistent with that goal.

Goal 1: Protect and Improve Housing Programs and Units

Discussion: Most of the County's housing programs have been successful and will continue as the basis of the County's affordable housing programs. It is also important to retain the County's existing housing units, and to continue rehabilitation programs.

Sonoma County continues to experience an increase in the use of permanent residential units and lands for vacation uses, such as when single-family homes are removed from the housing stock to be utilized as short-term rentals. This trend has led to a loss of the county's scarce urban residential homes and lands to visitor-serving uses. Many vacation homes are purchased as second homes for later retirement and rented as furnished vacation rentals when not used by the owner. Census data show that the number of homes in the unincorporated county that are used for seasonal or recreational use increased from 9.4% (of total housing stock) in 2010 to 10.9% in 2019, and from 4.05% to 4.22% within the incorporated cities. The County adopted a vacation rental ordinance in 2011 to regulate the use of homes as vacation rentals and is currently amending the vacation rental ordinance to provide more effective enforcement measures. Continued restrictions on the conversion of housing stock and urban residential lands to visitor-serving uses and investment uses will be needed to ensure that the existing housing stock is protected.

The Rental Housing Opportunity Area Program (formerly the "Type A" Program) has been very successful and has been utilized by both non-profit and for-profit developers to produce both affordable and market-rate rental housing units. The Rental Housing Opportunity Area Program provides by-right densities of between 12 and 30 units per acre subject to affordability levels being met; at least 40% of total units must be affordable to low- or very-low income households. Sites eligible for the Rental Housing Opportunity Area Program are located in urban areas only and are defined as those which have a medium or high density residential general plan designation (UR6 through UR15) and are zoned R2 (Medium Density Residential) or R3 (High Density Residential). Rental housing projects that meet the density and design standards are

permitted uses in these zones, allowing projects to move quickly through the permitting process. Development Standards used for rental housing projects allow increased height, reduced parking requirements, and less stringent setbacks so long as privacy is maintained. Incentives are also available pursuant to Government Code Section 65915 (Density Bonus Law), but the Rental Housing Opportunity Program is not considered a density bonus program.

The Ownership Housing Opportunity Area Program (formerly the "Type C" Program) has decreased in popularity during the last two planning periods due to changed housing market conditions. Like the Rental Housing Opportunity Area Program, the Ownership Housing Opportunity Area Program allows a density of 11 units per acre for ownership housing projects so long as affordability levels are met: 20% affordable to low-income households and 80% affordable to moderate-income households. The fact that the Ownership Housing Opportunity Area Program has not been used in the recent past indicates that the housing market has changed, and that the incentives offered no longer provide enough benefit to the developer to offset the required affordability levels.

The State Density Bonus Program has had limited success with for-profit developers of for-sale housing. Under this program, the County provides a density bonus of up to 35% and grants up to three (3) incentives for projects whose developer agrees to provide a designated percentage of project units as affordable. The County Supplemental Density Bonus Program builds on the state program but is better utilized because it provides a greater density bonus (up to 50%) if deeper levels of affordability are provided. The Supplemental Density Bonus Program also incentivizes projects utilizing renewable energy and those providing universally designed units.

It will be important to continue existing Community Development Commission (CDC) efforts and programs, specified in the Sonoma County Consolidated Plan, to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other sources to provide comprehensive rehabilitation loans, to complete flood and earthquake hazard mitigation measures, to eliminate health hazards by connecting properties to public water and/or sewer systems, and to carry out access modifications for units occupied by persons with disabilities, when those units are owned and/or occupied by extremely-low, very low and low-income households. Funding may be provided for conventional single and multifamily housing, for mobile homes, and for special needs and/or accessible housing units.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-1a: Continue all existing County and CDC sponsored funding programs, including but not limited to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Asset Fund (LMIHAF), and County Fund for Housing (CFH) programs. Continue to require that all rental units assisted with CFH funds be affordable to very low-income households (up to 50% of area median income [AMI]), and 30% of all LMIHAF-assisted rental units be affordable to extremely low-income households (up to 30% AMI), with an additional 50% being affordable to households with incomes up to 60% AMI.. Continue to use these funding sources for financing of predevelopment activities for affordable or special needs housing projects. Evaluate existing programs in view of changing housing needs and policies

and seek opportunities for program expansion and more efficient use of limited resources. (Existing; revised to incorporate previous Policy HE-4h)

Policy HE-1b: Continue the County's existing housing program, including its state and County Supplemental Density Bonus Program as well as the Rental Housing Opportunity Area Program and the Ownership Housing Opportunity Area Program. Continue to evaluate these programs in view of changing housing needs and policies and expand or modify as needed to increase opportunities and further incentivize affordable housing. (Existing; modified to distinguish between Opportunity Area Programs and Density Bonus Programs)

Policy HE-1c: Continue to ensure that design review, development standards, and conditions of approval for affordable housing projects do not result in a reduction of allowable project density, or in the number of affordable units. Where possible, reduce permitting levels and replace discretionary review processes with objective standards. (Existing; revised to address Housing Accountability Act (Gov. Code § 65589.5) ("HAA") and SB 35 (Gov. Code § 65913.4, as amended))

▲ Policy HE-1d: Include the acquisition and maintenance of affordable units, and the acquisition of market-rate units to convert to affordable units, as one of the funding priorities. In partnership with a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and nonprofit asset manager, utilize tax exempt bonds to fund construction of new units, or the acquisition of existing market-rate properties, or affordable properties at-risk of conversion to market-rate uses where those units will be restricted to long-term occupancy by low-, very low- and extremely low-income households. (Existing; revised to incorporate use of new JPA program)

Policy HE-1e: Continue to protect mobilehome park residents, including administration of the County's Mobilehome Park Space Rent Stabilization Ordinance; enforcement of Sonoma County Code Section 26-92-090 (or successor ordinance) regarding the conversion, closure, or cessation of use of mobile home parks; and preventing conversion of parks to other uses when such conversions are not supported by the residents. Assist nonprofit organizations in the purchase of existing mobile home parks, where desired by the residents, in order to maintain long term affordability of mobile homes. (Existing; combines previous policies HE-1g, 1h, 1m, 4e, and Objective HE-4.4)

Policy HE-1f: Continue existing County employee housing programs: First Time Homebuyer Loan Program, the Rehabilitation Loan Program, and the Rental/Mortgage Assistance Program. (Existing)

Goal 2: Incentivize Development of Urban Housing Sites

Discussion: While the Housing Site Inventory effort has identified an adequate number of sites to meet the (RHNA) housing sites identification requirement, policies are needed to enhance the opportunities for affordable housing production on these sites and to ensure that infrastructure is in place to support residential development. Policies are needed to enhance opportunities for affordable housing production on all suitable sites with adequate infrastructure and proximity to

services.

In addition, state law (Gov. Code § 65863, the “No Net Loss” law) now requires jurisdictions to maintain adequate sites in inventory with appropriate zoning to accommodate their share of the regional housing need throughout the entire Housing Element period. Under this law, a jurisdiction may not approve a project at a density or level of affordability lower than that listed in the housing element inventory unless it makes written findings that the remaining sites identified in the housing element are adequate to accommodate the remaining RHNA. If a jurisdiction does approve a project at a density or affordability level of less than the site was listed for and it does not have enough other sites with appropriate zoning to accommodate the remaining RHNA, it must identify and rezone adequate sites within 6 months – a timeframe that is infeasible. HCD is authorized to notify the Attorney General if a jurisdiction fails to replace sites within 6 months (Gov. Code § 65585).

This Housing Element utilizes a new strategy that has been accepted by HCD in recent Southern California Housing Elements. Under this approach, the inventory is revisited each year during preparation of the Annual Progress Report (APR). Following the adoption of the Housing Element, County staff prepare an administrative backup list of sites that are appropriately zoned for housing but that were not included in Housing Element inventory. Upon each annual review, these additional sites can be added to the inventory list if required. The County would need to replace any inventory site that was identified as available for low-income housing if the site is developed with another use, with a lower affordability, or with fewer units than projected. If the program is included in a certified housing element, then the revised inventory would not trigger a new HCD review of the housing element.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-2a: Enhance opportunities for affordable housing production on all appropriate sites with adequate infrastructure and proximity to services by assisting developers and other interested parties in locating sites and accessing programs for the development of affordable and mixed-income housing, especially rental housing. (Existing; updated to reflect current technologies)

Policy HE-2b: Maintain a public information program regarding the County's housing programs. (Existing)

▲ **Policy HE-2c:** Prepare objective design and development standards and checklists for new residential and mixed-use development. (Existing; revised to address Housing Accountability Act (Gov. Code § 65589.5) (“HAA”) and SB 35 (Gov. Code § 65913.4, as amended))

Policy HE-2d: Continue to provide priority permit processing for affordable housing projects and units. Expand the current policy utilized by Permit Sonoma to other County departments that participate in permit review. (Existing)

Policy HE-2e: Provide ongoing, dedicated Permit Sonoma and CDC staff support for Housing

Element implementation programs, and to coordinate all County departments involved in the permitting and review of affordable housing projects. Continue to assign these dedicated staff to be responsible for planning functions associated with implementation of the Housing Element, including affordable housing project approvals. (Existing; combined previous Policy HE-2a, 2e, and Objective HE-2.2)

Policy HE-2f: Ensure that service providers are aware of their obligation to plan for and maintain adequate infrastructure capacity for housing units affordable to moderate and lower-income households, pursuant to Government Code Section 65589.7. (Existing; revised to include former Objective HE 2.4)

▲ Policy HE-2g: Curtail the loss of existing housing stock and urban housing sites to visitor-serving uses. Prohibit the use of residential land in urban land-use designations for vacation or time-share uses, continue to regulate the use of existing residences on residential lots for vacation rentals, and encourage owner- and long-term renter-occupied residential uses. Continue to prohibit the use of Accessory Dwelling Units for vacation rentals and extend this prohibition to primary residences on lots containing Accessory Dwelling Units. (Existing; combined existing policies 1j, 1k, 1l, 2j; adds extension of prohibition to all properties containing an ADU)

Goal 3: Increase Production of Affordable Housing Units

Discussion: In order to increase the available opportunities for housing, it is essential that the County actively promote affordable housing production. Such promotion has occurred and will continue to occur primarily through implementation of the County's existing programs, as well as through changes in programs and zoning regulations as necessary to meet a full range of housing needs in a changing housing market. Included in this Goal are eliminating unnecessary regulatory constraints on housing production and promoting the availability of the County's many housing programs.

It is vitally important that the County's scarce urban lands be preserved for land uses that require urban services and locations. Additional urban lands are not available: each of the County's incorporated cities have adopted voter-approved Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) to direct future growth inside of cities and their UGBs. LAFCO policy prohibits extension of services outside of service districts and urban limits prior to annexation. Community Separators were adopted within the County's 1989 General Plan, and General Plan amendments to limit urban service extensions and land use changes within Community Separators were approved by the voters in 1996 and 1998. In 2016, Measure K extended these provisions with over 81% of the vote in a countywide election. City and County voters also approved and extended a quarter-cent sales tax and created the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in 1990, and in 2006 the tax was renewed by 76% of voters in a countywide vote to fund the acquisition of more than 122,000 acres of open space throughout the county.

The General Plan contains policies to preserve agricultural and open space lands in Sonoma County to maintain a viable agriculture-based economy, prevent urban sprawl, direct growth and

development into existing cities, and promote infill and smart growth. Despite these concerted efforts to concentrate future growth in the County's urban centers, a large RHNA allocation to the unincorporated County challenges the County's commitment to city-centered growth. Infill development in the County's urbanized areas is a necessary priority to reflect community intent, and it is important to remove constraints to such development. Community members also expressed interest in increasing infill development, avoiding sprawl, and preserving the natural character of the rural unincorporated area.

The County's previous growth management program was not carried forward in GP2020 and is no longer in use by the County. However, the zoning code still includes two former growth management areas (Sonoma Valley and Sebastopol area) and the allocations to be made in each area. Even though the growth management program is no longer used, it has been identified as a potential constraint to development because its continued presence in the zoning code conflicts with current provisions to increase housing production and could disqualify the County from some funding sources. A program is needed to eliminate this obsolete language from the code in the first year of the 2023-2031 Housing Element cycle.

Public input received in 2022 during the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update highlighted the need for increased housing supply at all income levels the impact of constraints to housing, including cost of development, availability of infrastructure, and complications with permitting processes.

Stakeholder input from housing developers indicates that unincorporated Sonoma County is more difficult to develop in than other surrounding jurisdictions, primarily because of the lack of sites with sewer availability. Public members and stakeholders shared innovative ideas to help overcome constraints to the development of affordable housing. Developers also noted that the current "silo" approach to development permitting (planning entitlements as the first silo, then approvals needed by engineering/grading, stormwater, plan check and building code tions, etc.) was a development constraint that could be better coordinated to save time and money.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-3a: Eliminate unneeded regulatory constraints to the production of affordable housing, including infill housing. Repeal references to the Sonoma Valley and Sebastopol area Growth Management Program areas in the County Code. (Existing; updated to reflect current status)

Policy HE-3b: Continue to allow manufactured homes, factory-built homes and modular homes on any residential lot, in compliance with state law and subject to all other County Codes. (Existing)

Policy HE-3c: Continue to review and revise the County's density bonus programs and Housing Opportunity Area programs in order to encourage builders and developers to take full advantage of such provisions. (Existing; language broadened)

▲ **Policy HE-3d:** Expand allowance for non-traditional housing and consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow long-term residential occupancy of travel trailers, recreational

vehicles, and similar facilities such as tiny homes when public health, safety and welfare criteria are met. (Existing; modified to reflect HAC and public input related to tiny homes)

Policy HE-3e: Continue to encourage affordable infill projects on underutilized sites within Urban Service Areas by allowing flexibility in development standards pursuant to state density bonus law (Government Code 65915). (Existing)

Policy HE-3f: Continue to apply the minimum residential density requirement to all Urban Residential parcels. (Existing)

▲ Policy HE-3g: Strive to focus affordable housing development in moderate and high-resource areas well-served by public transportation, schools, retail, and other services. Continue to consider developer requests to add the Affordable Housing (AH) and Workforce Housing (WH) combining districts to sites in light industrial and commercial zones and other appropriate urban zones when designation criteria are met. (Existing for AH; revised to add WH Combining district and to address Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) considerations)

Policy HE-3h: Review the noise standards for urban residential land uses in the next General Plan update and consider options to reduce the standards to facilitate the development of housing in these areas while continuing to protect public health. Meantime, continue to use indoor noise standards for mixed use and urban infill residential development, including but not limited to Single Room Occupancy, Mixed Use Projects, and Caretaker Units in compliance with Noise Element Policy NE-1b. (Existing; revised for coordination with General Plan)

Goal 4: Maintain and Expand Funding for Affordable Housing

Discussion: Continuing production of affordable housing units requires ongoing sources of funding and subsidy programs, as well as cooperative efforts with other agencies and private entities. This goal includes reducing the costs of developing affordable housing.

It will be important to maintain and, where feasible, increase the public revenue base that can be utilized to accomplish Housing Element programs. The County must continue to actively seek additional public/private partnerships to increase the funding available for building affordable housing.

The Prohousing Designation Program was recently created by state law to prioritize awards for housing and infrastructure to jurisdictions that facilitate housing development by adopting qualifying innovative policy measures. Achieving the prohousing designation would make the County more competitive for a growing list of funds, including Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC), Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG), Transformative Climate Communities (TCC), and Transit and Intercity Rail Capital (TIRCP) programs. As the Prohousing Designation Program is new, only one jurisdiction in the state has received the designation to date. To qualify for the designation, the County must adopt a prohousing resolution and complete an application that scores at least 30 points out of 69 available on the State's checklist. Adoption of a certified Housing Element with continued and new housing programs and policies that align with the State's checklist will assist the County in achieving a successful application.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-4a: Allocate funds annually to and from the County Fund for Housing (CFH). Use these funds to assist in the production, conversion, and rehabilitation of affordable housing units, or to support non-unit housing objectives including homeless or transitional housing beds as allowed by the Board. These units should be affordable to very low- and low-income individuals and households. (Existing; revised with broader language)

Policy HE-4b: Continue using County Fund for Housing (CFH) monies to subsidize development fees for multifamily housing projects where the units are affordable to extremely-low, very-low and low income households. Continue to allow fee deferrals for housing projects until issuance of the certificate of occupancy. (Existing; revised to reflect new state laws)

▲ **Policy HE-4c:** Consider fee waivers/subsidies for multifamily housing projects where the units are affordable to extremely low-, very low- and low income households. Fee waivers or subsidies must be limited to a total amount that does not compromise the ability of the County or local special districts to provide adequate safety services and infrastructure for affected residents and businesses of the County. Ensure consistency with development fee and transparency requirements established by new provisions in the state Government Code (AB 602, 2021). (Existing; revised to reflect new state laws)

Policy HE-4d: Give funding priority for affordable housing projects to nonprofit organizations in order to increase the likelihood that units will remain affordable for a longer period of time. (Existing)

▲ **Policy HE-4e:** Continue using the community land trust model and consider additional ways in which the County could use this model to assist in the creation of perpetually affordable and special needs housing. (Existing; clarified and expanded)

Goal 5: Promote and Expand Housing Opportunities for Special Needs Communities

Discussion: While some special needs housing will be provided as a part of the affordable housing unit production targets, there are a number of special housing types that require specific effort, especially housing for the elderly, developmentally or physically disabled persons, the mentally ill, farmworkers, and homeless persons. Some non-unit types of housing for special needs populations may not be reflected in the RHNA but are reflected in the County's Quantified Objectives.

According to the Sonoma County Point-In-Time count there were 2,893 homeless individuals on February 25, 2022. Of these individuals, only 155 represented family households. While 72% of Sonoma County's homeless population was unsheltered, only 3% of family households were unsheltered. This data indicates the existing housing need for non-family households including adult individuals and couples.

The Homelessness Services Division of the County Department of Health Services is the lead agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC), a federal program designed to address the issues of homelessness. Among other programs and resources, the CoC member agencies provide supportive services for the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Permanent Supportive Housing Rental Assistance Program that assisted in housing 121 households, including families, elderly residents, disabled residents, and residents with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, there are 775 shelter beds, 371 transitional housing beds, and 1,051 permanent supportive housing beds countywide. The programs and policies within this Housing Element support the development of additional units available to persons exiting homelessness, including transitional and supportive housing and housing available to acutely low-income residents. The CoC is currently working on a new Strategic Plan via its Strategic Planning Committee. The plan includes a local Homeless Action Plan that will be finalized by December 31, 2022.

The Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC), located in Sonoma Valley, was a nationally recognized institution that provided services to persons with developmental disabilities for over 120 years. The State of California closed SDC in 2018 and moved the clients to smaller, community-based care facilities. Since before its closure, the County and locals have worked to come up with a comprehensive plan for the site. The State of California owns the property and has a relationship with Sonoma County that allows the County, with the community, to determine the future of the SDC site.

The County is working with the community on the Sonoma Developmental Center Specific Plan, a two-year, four-phased project including community outreach and input, analysis of existing conditions, development of project alternatives and development of a Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report. These items are being prepared for presentation at a public hearing in August 2022.

The SDC site provides an opportunity for new vibrant development that balances the environment, employment, history, and housing. Community members have identified a need for affordable housing, housing that addresses the needs of the disabled, multi-generational housing, and housing opportunities for young people and existing residents. This site is envisioned as becoming developed in a way that is inclusive, accessible, and inviting to the community, and that provides space for residents to thrive together while honoring the history of SDC, providing live/work opportunities, mixed use and affordable housing, and transportation infrastructure, while maintaining the rural character of the site and surrounding areas.

Public input during the preparation of the 2023 Housing Element Update included concern surrounding the lack of available, affordable, and accessible housing for the County's disabled and senior populations. Additionally, the public expressed concerns regarding lack of affordable options for single-person households and essential workers, and very limited housing resources for the unhoused populations. Community members expressed interest in housing solutions that increased small affordable units, alternative housing, and a variety of affordable housing options to address different needs. The demand for variety of housing types for populations with special needs is expected to continue to increase. Universally Designed housing and the provision of units that are accessible or fully adaptable have become increasingly important.

Housing for the changing needs of farmworkers also continues to be an important need in Sonoma County. Increasingly, farmworkers do not leave California during the non-farm season, but instead stay in the area and perform other farm related work or construction and odd jobs. Farmworkers and their families are typically housing cost-burdened or extremely cost-burdened. The housing needs of farmworkers are best addressed by year-round housing units, including additional farmworker family units or affordable housing options. However additional migrant units or an extended season for existing seasonal farmworker units should be explored. Based on the last County Farmworker Health survey, two-thirds of farmworkers lived in overcrowded dwellings in Sonoma County. Farmworkers who lived with their families were the most likely to live in overcrowded conditions. There are currently 238 housing units in the County dedicated to farmworker families. This Housing Element includes strategies to increase the availability and variety of housing options available to farmworkers in the County.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-5a: Review and revise zoning regulations for a variety of housing types, including special needs housing, programs, and facilities to ensure compliance with State law and encourage additional use of residences or construction of new facilities for these purposes.(Existing; revised to address State law)

Policy HE-5b: Support an interjurisdictional affordable housing coordinating committee to facilitate affordable and special needs housing projects in both the County and cities. (Existing)

Policy HE-5c: Continue to provide reasonable accommodation through implementation of SCC Chapter 26, Article 93 (Reasonable Accommodations).(Existing)

▲ **Policy HE-5d:** Strive to provide for senior housing needs. Focus senior housing projects in areas well-served by transit, accessible sidewalks, and amenities. Consider adoption of a Senior Housing (SH) Combining district with additional incentives. Promote Universal Design principles in new residential construction. (Existing; expanded to include locational factors)

Policy HE-5e: Encourage construction of new farmworker housing, including housing for farmworker families, including both rental and ownership housing; year-round housing for unaccompanied farmworkers and other migrant workers, and seasonal housing for unaccompanied farmworkers. Seek funding, including grants, loans, and Joe Serna funds, for various types of farmworker housing. (Existing, combined policies 5k, 5m, 5n)

▲ **Policy HE-5f:** Provide additional on-farm housing opportunities where appropriate, especially for small-scale farmers and leaseholders who wish to live where they farm. (Existing; revised in response to public input; extended bunkhouse portion eliminated as this was achieved during 5th cycle)

Policy HE-5g: Continue to encourage the retention and further construction of small rental units such as accessory dwelling units, rental studios, and SRO units. Encourage and facilitate the development of large rental units with more than 3 bedrooms to meet local housing needs. (Existing; modified to update term and reflect ongoing actions)

Goal 6: Encourage Equitable and Climate Resilient Housing

Discussion: Developing equitable and sustainable housing opportunities and land use patterns is vital not only for the wellbeing of current residents, but for generations to come. The policies and programs implemented through this Housing Element consider safety, climate change, environmental justice, fair housing, and access to opportunity, and the relationship between these subjects and the development and preservation of housing for all residents.

Housing is a considerable source of demand for energy, water, and other natural resources. Existing regulations (e.g. Title 24, CalGreen) impose rigorous energy and water conservation measures on new housing, and additional resource savings may be attained with a concerted effort to fortify a more resilient existing housing stock. Prior Housing Element cycles have implemented state standards, and the County has additional opportunity to provide equitable access to building decarbonization resources, education, and funding.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) describes environmental justice as “ensuring equal protection from environmental and health hazards and providing equal and meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making process to achieve a healthy environment.” Environmental justice as addressed in the Housing Element includes minimizing the placement of affordable housing in areas impacted by fires, floods, extreme heat, and pollution. It also includes forming policy by centering the needs and input of communities and individuals with the greatest need for fair and safe housing, including farmworkers, renters, low-income households, communities of color, and people with disabilities.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) is a program intended to identify, reverse, and prevent housing segregation and discrimination and increase access to opportunity. Originally established as a federal program within the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) by the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and codified by the State of California in 2018 (AB 686; Gov. Code §§ 8899.50 et seq.) in the state Housing Element Law. This Housing Element Cycle is the first to implement AB 686, and implementation is a new process for both the jurisdictions conducting AFFH analysis and state regulators approving local plans.

Requirements for AFFH within Housing Elements include completing an assessment of fair housing (AFH), identifying and prioritizing contributing factors, addressing those factors through meaningful actions, and integrating fair housing considerations based on findings of the AFH throughout the entire Housing Element.

The County Analysis of Fair Housing draws from several sources. The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law has conducted a regional fair housing analysis and individual jurisdictional analyses for the sixteen jurisdictions of Sonoma and Napa Counties, supported by regional planning funding from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG/MTC). Regional data from the ABAG Housing Data Workbook has been pre-approved as a central data source for both the AFFH section and identification of housing needs and constraints. ABAG has also prepared a Regional Segregation Report with jurisdiction-specific findings, and the California Department of

Housing and Community Development's (HCD's) AFFH Data Viewer provides mapping resources illustrating various fair housing topics.

A key factor of AFFH is the designation of resources areas in the Opportunity Zone map by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC) and Department of Housing Community Development (HCD). These resource areas are determined by using economic, educational, and environmental indicators. Sonoma County has census tracts ranging from Low Resource to Highest Resource, meaning some areas of the County have poor results on these indicators. AFFH requirements include an analysis of the location of sites identified to meet the lower-income RHNA. In order to increase access to opportunity, prevent segregation, and address environmental justice, lower-income sites should be focused as much as possible in High Resource areas and not concentrated heavily in Low Resource areas. The High Resource areas of the unincorporated County with sewer access necessary to accommodate higher density housing development are Glen Ellen, Forestville, Bodega Bay, and Graton. However, these areas are encumbered by both environmental constraints including wildfire and flood risk and by greater distance from jobs and services with minimal public transportation.

Nondiscrimination and legal protection are the most visible aspects of fair housing policy and have comprised the majority of fair housing analyses in prior Housing Element cycles. This Housing Element, in compliance with AFFH and in order to address local needs, also addresses environmental justice, social equity, and social determinants of health and their connection to safe, sustainable housing.

The intent of this Housing Element is to affirmatively further fair housing by facilitating deliberate action to foster inclusive communities. The underlying concepts of fairness and equal protection are enshrined in protections for fair housing and nondiscrimination. Affirmatively furthering fair housing is a comprehensive commitment to reverse existing patterns of segregation and injustice and prevent taking any actions that exacerbate social inequities in housing and community development.

➤ **The following policies shall be used to accomplish the above goal:**

Policy HE-6a: Promote conservation of energy, water, and other natural resources as a cost-saving measure in existing residential development. (Existing; modified to broaden language and combine previous Policies HE-6a, 6b)

Policy HE-6b: Promote energy and water conservation and energy efficiency in new residential and mixed-use construction projects. (Existing; modified to broaden language and combine previous Policies HE-6c, 6d, 6e, 6h)

Policy HE-6c: Promote solid waste reduction, reuse, and recycling opportunities in residential and mixed-use construction. (Existing; modified to broaden language and combine previous Policies HE-6f, 6g)

▲ **Policy HE-6d:** Ensure that affected residents have the opportunity to participate in decisions that impact their health and well-being. Include residents, businesses, and organizations in all aspects of the planning process. Utilize multilingual, culturally appropriate approaches to

provide information, conduct outreach, and facilitate public participation, with reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. (New; Fair Housing)

▲ **Policy HE-6e:** Provide housing opportunities throughout the County for all household income cohorts while avoiding or mitigating displacement of existing residents. (New; Fair Housing)

▲ **Policy HE-6f:** Provide high quality and equitable public services, including public transportation, fire and police safety, crime prevention, parks, sidewalks, street lighting, and recreational facilities and programs in lower-resource areas through the use of place-based strategies and Community Plans. (New; Fair Housing)

▲ **Policy HE-6g:** Ensure that the County's programs and policies continue to reduce or eliminate the unique or compounded health risks of its existing disadvantaged communities, low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazard. (New; Fair Housing)

Policy HE-6h: Ensure compliance with fair housing laws and prohibit discrimination in housing by providing fair housing services that include public information, engagement, counseling, and investigation. Continue to support efforts by local fair housing and housing justice agencies to enforce antidiscrimination laws through mediation of disputes and provision of assistance in filing discrimination complaints. (Existing; broadened to address new requirements)

Policy HE-6i: Focus affordable and farmworker housing code enforcement activities to abatement of unsafe conditions and to expedite, where practicable, the rehabilitation and continued availability of housing units. (Existing)

2.2 HOUSING ACTION PLAN

Housing Element Program 1: Continuation of Housing Production and Programs

Program Description: Currently the County and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) provide funding assistance to affordable housing developments through CDBG, HOME, PLHA, CFH, and LMIHAF funds. These funding programs are administered by the CDC, which provides financing to developers who are then able to provide safe, affordable housing to households in a range of income groups. These funds can be used to construct new affordable housing as well as to rehabilitate existing units, which can be added to the permanent affordable stock through affordability restrictions. The County will continue its support of the CDC's activities and strategies outlined in the Consolidated Plan, and will support the Dept. of Health Services' Continuum of Care work to ensure that existing production levels are maintained, and will continue to require that all rental units assisted with County Fund for Housing (CFH) funds be affordable to very low-income households.

Currently, the County provides loans from CFH funds to housing projects located within cities. Given the 315% increase in the County's RHNA, the CDC will need to prioritize these funds to units within the unincorporated County to help the County meet its RHNA unless transfer agreements have been negotiated with the cities.

The County currently dedicates a percentage of its Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) to toward affordable housing. The Board of Supervisor could consider establishing an annual minimum percentage of TOT revenue for this purpose.

Timeline: Ongoing
Agency: Community Development Commission
Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 2: Retention of Affordable Units

Program Description: Currently the unincorporated area of the County has 5 affordable units that may be lost from the affordable housing supply within the next ten years due to expiring affordability restrictions.

2a The Community Development Commission will continue to maintain an inventory of units at risk of conversion to market-rate in the next 10 years. This list will be updated annually during the County's Annual Progress Report (APR) process.

Timeline: Annual

2b Owners will be contacted at least three years before expiration of affordability covenants to inform them of state preservation notice law requirements (Gov. Code Sections 65863.10, 65863.11, 65863.13) and to gauge interest in continuing affordability restrictions. The CDC will work with tenants of at-risk units and provide them with education regarding tenant rights and conversion procedures. The CDC will continue to assist qualified entities and developers with the acquisition of these properties or the

extension of affordability restrictions using CDBG, HOME, LMIHAF, and CFH funds. The CDC will strive to preserve as many “at-risk” units as feasible, subject to the availability of funds. Additional staffing and resources will be needed to execute this program.

Timeline: Review annually. Contact at least three years before expiration of affordability covenants

Agency: Community Development Commission

Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 3: Protections for Mobile Home Parks

Program Description: The County will continue to protect its mobilehome parks and its mobilehome park residents by undertaking the following actions:

3a Continue to implement mobilehome rent stabilization.

Timeline: Ongoing

3b Continue regulating closure or conversion of mobilehome parks to other uses by requiring a use permit and relocation (County Code Section 26-92-090); and

Timeline: Ongoing

3c Consider re-adoption of requirements for owner-initiated conversions of MHPs to resident ownership in order to ensure that residents are in favor of such conversions. Until such time that a new ordinance is adopted, continue to implement state law related to the conversion of MHPs to resident ownership imposed by SB510 in 2013, Government Code, Sections 65863.7 and 66427.4 and Civil Code Section 798. (existing; 2 previous programs combined, and a new action added to consider re-adoption of MHP conversion regulations).

Timeline: Consider ordinance by 2026

Agency: Permit Sonoma, Community Development Commission

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 4: Rezone to meet RHNA

Program Description: As part of the General Plan update, the County shall rezone sufficient sites in order to demonstrate an adequate inventory of sites to meet its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Allocations. These sites shall meet the standards set forth in Government Code Section 65583.2.

Timeline: Rezone sites within one year of adopting the Housing Element

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 5: Replacement Housing Program

Program Description: The County will require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code Section 65915(c)(3) when any new development occurs on a site in the Sites Inventory if that site meets any of the following conditions:

- Currently has residential uses or within the past five years has had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished; and
- Was subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low- or very-low income; or
- Subject to any form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power; or
- Occupied by low or very-low income households.

Timeline: Ongoing
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 6: Development of Subregion for 7th Cycle RHNA

Program Description: Instead of relying on ABAG to determine the regional fair share of housing for the County and its cities, the County will support and promote the formation of a subregion, as allowed by State law, for a more equitable RHNA allocation process in subsequent RHNA cycles.

Timeline: End of 2027
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 7: Density Bonus and Housing Opportunity Programs

Program Description: The County currently administers two density bonus programs, including the State Density Bonus program and the county supplemental density bonus program, and the Rental and Ownership Housing Opportunity Programs. These programs will be continued. Additionally, the County will evaluate these programs and determine if the programs can be expanded or modified to create additional opportunities for housing.

Timeline: Ongoing
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 8: Protect Residential Lands and Units

Program Description: Housing stock data and public input indicated a high proportion of local units being used as short-term rentals or used as second homes, vacation homes, or seasonal homes. These uses decrease the housing stock available to long-term renters and homeowners. In order to address this, the County will take the following actions:

8a Address loss of housing stock to short-term and vacation rental uses in the update to the Vacation Rental Ordinance to review loss of housing stock to short-term and vacation rental uses.

Timeline: End of 2024

- 8b (potential program)** For vacation and short-term rentals, evaluate options to mitigate the impacts of the loss of resident-occupied housing, including evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of a special property tax that exempts owner and long-term renter-occupied units. Funding derived from such a 'vacant unit tax' could be used to mitigate the impacts of loss of resident-occupied housing, such as subsidies to build and sustain low and moderate, income housing units.
Timeline: End of 2025
- 8c (potential program)** Evaluate options to incentivize rentals of 30 days or more for owners of short-term rental properties. For example, consider implementation of a program that provides grants to homeowners who convert a second home or short-term rental to a long-term lease.
Timeline: End of 2025
- 8d (potential program)** Modify County Code to prohibit vacation rentals on any urban residential lot.
Timeline: End of 2025
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget, Transient Occupancy Tax

▲ Housing Element Program 9: No Net Loss of Residential Capacity to Accommodate RHNA

Program Description: In order to ensure sufficient residential capacity is maintained to accommodate the RHNA for each income category, County staff will prepare standards and procedures to monitor the status sites on inventory and provide replacement sites as needed.

- 9a** Staff will develop and implement a formal, ongoing (project-by-project) administrative evaluation procedure pursuant to Government Code Section 65863 within six months of adoption of the Housing Element. The evaluation procedure will track the number of extremely low, very low, low, moderate, and above moderate-income units constructed to calculate the remaining unmet RHNA. The evaluation procedure will also track the number of units built on the identified sites to determine the remaining site capacity, by income category, and will be updated as developments are approved. The Sites Inventory may be updated every year as the Annual Progress Report (APR) is completed, and the APR with the updated inventory will be available on the County's website.
Timeline: Develop procedure within 6 months of Housing Element adoption
- 9b** No project approval or other action that reduces the density or development capacity of a site shall be undertaken unless sufficient remaining sites are available or additional adequate sites are identified to meet the County's RHNA obligation prior to approval of the development and made available within 180 days of approval of the development, as required by SB 166 (Gov. Code § 65863, as amended). Identification of the replacement sites, and the necessary actions to make the site(s) available will be adopted prior to or concurrent with the approval of the development.
Timeline: Ongoing, as projects are proposed on sites within inventory
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 10: Administrative List of Additional Sites

Program Description: The County shall create and maintain a list of additional sites with appropriate zoning that could be added to the County’s Sites Inventory if and when an analysis provided through the Annual Progress Report indicates that sufficient sites may not exist to accommodate the County’s remaining RHNA, by income level, for the planning period.

Timeline: Create list by December 2023
Consider adding sites from list to inventory on an annual basis

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 11: Housing Sites and Development Opportunities

Program Description: The County will provide current information about housing sites, development opportunities, and programs for the development of affordable housing.

11a. The County will continue to publish a summary of available housing sites, including sites for mixed-use projects, and will continue to provide and maintain informational materials about its affordable housing programs for developers. This information will be made available both in printed form and on the County’s website and will be reviewed and updated annually if necessary.

Timeline: Updated by end of 2023, then ongoing

11b. The County will also provide information about its inventory sites through a GIS-based mapping system on its website. This information will be updated annually as needed to reflect the current housing site inventory and parcel information, including site-specific development requirements and constraints to reduce up-front housing development costs for potential developers.

Timeline: Updated by end of 2023, then ongoing

11c. The County will coordinate and provide mapping data and layers for the regional or subregional housing sites mapping program.

Timeline: Updated by end of 2023, then ongoing

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 12: Permitting Procedures and Priority Processing

Program Description: The County will continue ongoing practices for priority processing and increase opportunities for streamlining the development process, including no cost preapplication meetings with all relevant departments, and fast-tracked priority processing for ADUs and affordable housing developments. In addition, take the following actions:

12a Develop a written SB 35 application process (Gov. Code § 65913.4, as amended) including the pre-application and the procedure that will be used. This process will provide a streamlined ministerial approval process to qualified residential and mixed-use

development projects. The written procedures and checklists will be developed and made available on the County's website.

Timeline: End of 2024

12b Develop Objective Design and Development Standards for multi-family and mixed-use projects.

Timeline: End of 2025

12c Provide funding for adequate staffing needed to implement the programs outlined in this Housing Element, and to provide fast-tracking of affordable projects across divisions, from initial application for entitlements through engineering, plan check review, building inspections, and issuance of the final certificate of occupancy.

Timeline: Ongoing

12d Continue training provided through Permit Sonoma's multidivisional monthly training module. Include relevant staff from Engineering and Public Works when training relates to fast-tracking of housing projects.

Timeline: Monthly, as relevant

Agency: Permit Sonoma; other County permitting agencies

Funding: Departmental Budget, LEAP Funding

Housing Element Program 13: Continued Mitigation Opportunities for Housing Sites

Program Description: The County will continue to participate in regional sensitive habitat and endangered species conservation efforts to ensure that mitigation opportunities are available to maintain adequate sites at appropriate densities to accommodate the County's remaining share of the regional housing need.

Timeline: Ongoing

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 14: Utility Providers Responsibility to Prioritize Service

Program Description: The County will notify all public sewer and water providers of their responsibility under State law to give affordable housing projects priority for existing service capacity. The General Plan Housing Element, and any amendments thereto, shall be distributed to providers within 60 days of its adoption. Providers will be encouraged to retain adequate water and/or sewer service capacities to serve developments which provide affordable units.

Timeline: Within 60 days of adoption

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 15: Review and Update Zoning Code

Program Description: To ensure compliance with State law and reduce constraints to the

- development of housing, especially for residents with special housing needs, review and update the County's Zoning Code. Permit Sonoma will draft and bring forward an ordinance or ordinances to the Board of Supervisors to do accomplish the following:
- 15a** Eliminate references to the Growth Management Program areas in the County Code
 - 15b** Ensure compliance with State laws related to transitional housing, supportive housing, group homes, and Low Barrier Navigation Centers.
Timeline: End of 2023 (for 15a through 15b)
 - 15c** Modify Dwelling Unit Equivalent program to count four bedroom units as a single density equivalent unit.
 - 15d** Modify permitting levels for cottage housing development projects (CHD) cap to allow four cottages by right.
 - 15e** Remove the Planned Development rezoning requirement for Planned Unit Development that include at least 20% of units as affordable.
 - 15f** Modify Ownership Housing Opportunity Area Program to change required affordability levels based on input from nonprofit and mixed-income developers.
 - 15g** Modify Zoning Code to decrease acreage/ agricultural activity requirements to qualify for the provision of ag employee units and incorporate leaseholds into the allowances.
 - 15h** Utilize the new provisions in SB10 to allow multifamily housing developments of 6 or more units by-right on urban residential properties.
 - 15i** Adopt Universal Design requirements for new single family subdivisions.
 - 15j** Modify Zoning Code to specify allowances for tiny homes within the existing Cottage Housing Development provisions.
Timeline: End of 2024 (for actions 15c through 15j)
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 16: Expand AH Combining District

Program Description: Continue utilizing and expanding the Affordable Housing Combining District as a tool to incentivize the development of multifamily affordable housing in areas with resources and amenities and promote infill development.

- 16a** Continue to consider adding the Affordable Housing (AH) Combining District to additional sites in light industrial, commercial, or other appropriate zones as requested where the following conditions are met:
 - Site must be located within or adjacent to a designated Urban Service Area, and adequate public facilities must be provided, including sewer and water.
 - Sites must be located near transit; a neighborhood-serving commercial use, such as a market; and an elementary or secondary school.
 - Site must be located a safe distance from major roadways as determined by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Highway Screening Analysis tool.
 - Development must be multifamily rental units with a density of 16 to 24 units per acre and must provide 100% of units as affordable to lower-income households, including at least 30% of units as affordable to extremely-low income households.**Timeline:** Ongoing
- 16b** Provide an "Enhanced Affordability" option within the AH Combining district that allows a higher density of up to 30 units per acre and offer 2 additional concessions or incentives

for developments within the AH Combining district that meet the base requirements for the AH and also provide one of more of the following:

- 15% of units available to individuals and families existing homelessness;
- 30% of units to special needs households; and
- Not less than 20% of units available to acutely (15% of AMI) low income individuals or households

Timeline: End of 2025
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 17: Development Fees and Transparency Requirements

Program Description: County will meet the new transparency and development fees requirements of AB 602 (Gov. Code § 65940.1 and § 66016.5, as amended) and SB 319 (Gov. Code § 66023 as amended) through the following actions

17a Post all required information about development standards and fees to an easily accessed location on the County’s website.

Timeline: End of 2023

17b Ensure that new development impact fee studies and resulting fees comply with the new requirements for fee studies prior to initiation of the next fee study.

Timeline: Upon next fee study
Agency: Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 18: Community Land Trust Model

Program Description: The County will continue and expand its use of Community Land Trust (CLT) programs to acquire, develop, and maintain affordable housing.

18a The County will amend its Affordable Ownership Housing Policies to allow for the use of Community Land Trusts. Affordability for lower and moderate income households would be maintained in perpetuity.

Timeline: FY 23/24

18b Collaborate with local community land trust organizations to expand opportunities to use the CLT model. Explore the feasibility of a senior community land trust model, where senior homeowners choose to enter into a retained life estate agreement, to allow aging in place. The homeowner receives a financial benefit, can stay in their home throughout their life, and the land trust acquires a property that can be provided as deed-restricted affordable ownership housing in the future.

Timeline: FY 24/25
Agencies: Permit Sonoma, Community Development Commission
Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 19: Funding Sources for Affordable Housing

Program Description: The County will continue to seek and apply affordable housing funding through the following actions:

19a The County will annually allocate funds to and from its County Fund for Housing (CFH), which shall include but not be limited to funding from Measure L (hotel bed tax in the unincorporated area), and similar discretionary sources. CFH funds will be distributed to projects under an annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to assist in the production of housing affordable to lower income households, including development of new permanent affordable units, and the rehabilitation of existing units to be added to the permanent affordable stock through affordability restrictions. The County's Community Development Committee shall review and recommend funding in response to the NOFA. CFH funds, as well as the Construction Services programs in the Community Development Commission, may also be used to provide rehabilitation assistance to single-family and mobile homes that are owned and occupied by low- and moderate-income households to enable them to retain safe and affordable housing.

Timeline: Ongoing

19b In the County's experience, nonprofit owners usually extend their affordability contracts whereas for-profit owners convert to market rate at the end of their subsidy period. In order to promote unit affordability in perpetuity, the County will continue to give discretionary funding preference to nonprofit developers when it is practicable to do so.

Timeline: Ongoing

19c The County will continue to use Community Development Block Grant and CFH funds for financing predevelopment activities for affordable and special needs housing projects.

Timeline: Ongoing

Agency: Board of Supervisors; Community Development Commission

Funding: County Fund for Housing, CDBG Funds, Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 20: Prohousing Designation

Program Description: Through addressing constraints to development and fair housing opportunity, the County will strive to receive the Prohousing Designation from the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Receiving this designation will provide the County an advantage in applications for competitive funding sources, including the Infill Infrastructure Grant and funding from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program.

In collaboration with the Napa Sonoma Collaborative and local nonprofit organizations, the County will analyze policies and programs needed to meet the threshold for the Prohousing Designation program. The County will complete a study by July 2024 to determine which policies and programs may be required for the program and will present their findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors by the end of 2024

Timeline: End of 2024

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 21: Essential Housing Bond Financing Program

Program Description: In partnership with a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and nonprofit asset manager, utilize tax exempt bonds to fund: (1) the acquisition of existing market-rate apartment complexes and restricts future rents to be affordable to households that earn very low to moderate incomes, and (2) the construction of new deed-restricted affordable housing. In order for asset managers to access these types of bonds, the County must join a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and authorize the JPA to issue these bonds on behalf of the County. The asset manager then purchases the apartment complex, using only money from the bond financing, and sets the rents to be affordable to low to moderate income households.

Timeline: Establish JPA structure or join existing JPA by Summer 2023
Implement construction or acquisition projects through 2031

Agency: Permit Sonoma, Community Development Commission

Funding: Departmental Budget, Bond Financing

Housing Element Program 22: Housing for Homebuyers

▲ **Program Description:** The County will seek to provide opportunities for homebuyers through the following actions:

22a The Mortgage Credit Certification (MCC) Program offers first-time low- and moderate-income homebuyers a federal income tax credit. This credit reduces the amount of federal taxes the holder of the certificate would pay. It can also help first-time homebuyers qualify for a loan by allowing a lender to reduce the housing expense ratio by the amount of tax savings. The qualified homebuyer who is awarded an MCC may take an annual credit against the federal income taxes paid on the homebuyer's mortgage. The credit is subtracted dollar-for-dollar from the federal income taxes. The qualified buyer is awarded a tax credit of up to 15%, and the remaining 85% is deducted normally.

During part of the previous planning period, the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) was the lead agency for a Cooperative Agreement group that includes the unincorporated county and all nine incorporated jurisdictions within the county. The CDC was temporarily unable to administer this program as staff experienced suddenly expanded workloads responding to local emergencies while experiencing turnovers in leadership and departures of key staff. As staffing levels and capacity continue to rebound, the CDC will research the potential to restart participation in the MCC program by the end of 2023, and the program will be implemented through private lenders so that homebuyers in Sonoma County can continue to benefit from the federal Program.

Timeline: End of 2024

22b Consider establishing a homebuyer program for farmworkers. Joe Serna or other applicable funding sources should be explored.

Timeline: End of 2025

22c Continue and expand the use of the Community Land Trust model for homebuyers (See Program 18)

Agency: Community Development Commission

Funding: Departmental Budget, Joe Serna, MCCs, other grants as appropriate

Housing Element Program 23: Accommodation of Alternative Housing Types, including Tiny Homes

Program Description: Evaluate potential changes that could be made to county regulations to accommodate long-term occupancy of Park Model homes, Tiny Homes on Wheels, and similar recreational vehicles, where adequate sewer or septic services are provided as well as safety services.

Timeline: End of 2024

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 24: County Employee Housing Assistance

Program Description: The County currently offers its SEIU-represented employees loans for mortgage or rent payments; loans for first time homebuyers; and loans for housing rehabilitation. These programs are funded by a two-penny-per-hour employee contribution and matched by county general funds, to help reduce the cost of housing for County employees and serve as a significant benefit to attract and retain employees. The County will continue to offer these programs and increase them as opportunities permit.

Timeline: Ongoing

Agency: Community Development Commission

Funding: General Funds

▲ Housing Element Program 25: Incentivize and Promote ADU and JADU Development

Program Description: Incentivize and promote the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) by providing technical assistance and resources for their development and rental through the following actions:

25a Maintain ADU webpage with accessible information, simple application, and contact information for questions about and assistance with accessory dwelling units.

Timeline: Review annually and update if needed

25b Partner with and/or fund regional organizations that provide technical assistance, including site evaluations, for the development of ADUs and JADUs, and landlord/tenant support, such as the Napa Sonoma ADU Center and Homes for Sonoma. Share resources provided by these organizations, including webinars and technical assistance programs, through the County webpage, newsletter, and social media. Share resources

as they are available, at least twice annually. Publicize new ADU allowances to the public along with this outreach.

Timeline: Contact at least one regional organization by the end of 2023

- 25c** In partnership with regional organizations, promote and publicize new allowances for ADUs and JADUs to the public, including place-based promotion for locations with higher income eligibility limits for the CalHFA ADU grant program.

Timeline: End of 2024

- 25d** Reduce penalties for existing unpermitted units. Promote and publicize program through County website and social media to encourage people with unpermitted units to bring up to code.

Timeline: End of 2024

- 25e** Create or source pre-approved plans for ADUs, including plans that integrate universal design principles.

Timeline: December 2024

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

▲ Housing Element Program 26: Aging in Place

Program Description: The County will seek to provide development incentives and allowances for housing suitable for seniors and increase the housing stock that will allow Sonoma County residents to remain in their homes throughout their entire lives.

- 26a** Consider adoption of a Senior Housing (SH) Combining district that allows for increased densities, reduced parking requirements, incentives, and reduced fees for affordable senior housing development.

Timeline: End of 2025

- 26b** Promote development principles of Universal Design through brochures and easily accessible information on the Permit Sonoma website. Include training on Universal Design in monthly training module .

Timeline: Ongoing

- 26c** As implemented through Program 18, explore the use of the Community Land Trust model to support current senior homeowners while supporting the needs of future first-time homebuyers

Agency: Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental Budget

Housing Element Program 27: Interjurisdictional Housing Committee

Program Description: The County will continue to support an interjurisdictional housing coordinating committee to facilitate affordable and special needs housing projects, including homeless shelters, which serve both the County and cities and that receive coordinated supportive services from other agencies.

Timeline: Ongoing

Agency: County Administrator's Office; Community Development Commission; Permit Sonoma
Funding: Departmental budgets

Housing Element Program 28: Reasonable Accommodations and Code Enforcement

Program Description: The County has adopted a Reasonable Accommodations Ordinance ("Article 93") and will continue implementation of this ordinance and ensure staff from multiple departments are aware of the allowances provided under this ordinance.

28a The County will continue to provide Reasonable Accommodations training to County staff on an annual basis, including staff from Permit Sonoma, Code Enforcement, and Building Departments.

Timeline: Annually

28b The County will continue to focus residential code enforcement activities on situations that pose an immediate threat to public health and safety. Such activities do not include minor alterations made to residences without benefit of permit when such alterations are made to accommodate a special need or disability of the resident(s), or for interior alterations made to allow or honor the residents' cultural needs or practices, unless those alterations pose an immediate threat to the safety of the residents or neighborhood. In conjunction with Reasonable Accommodations training, County will provide staff training on culturally sensitive implementation of Code Enforcement.

Timeline: Annually

Agency: Permit Sonoma, Code Enforcement, Building

Funding: Departmental budget

Housing Element Program 29: Fair Housing Program and Information

Program Description: The County will continue to fund the operation of a Fair Housing program, provide referrals to nonprofit Fair Housing programs, and to make information available to customers at a wide range of public locations throughout the County. The County will provide all informational documents, web-postings, and related services in English and Spanish and conduct all outreach multilingually, with reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. Additional resources are needed to implement this program.

Timeline: Ongoing

Agency: Community Development Commission, Permit Sonoma

Funding: Departmental budgets

Housing Element Program 30: Conservation and Sustainability in Housing

Program Description: Energy and water conservation can be encouraged in existing and new residential development through weatherization and rehabilitation programs and through

- the prioritization of funding.
- 30a** The County will continue successful programs including County-sponsored workshops, individual energy consultations provided free of charge, and providing loans, grants, and matching funds for rehabilitation and retrofitting, which can include energy efficient improvements, weatherization, and rehabilitation loan programs that provide low interest financing for making improvements. In particular, these programs target renter-occupied units.
Timeline: Ongoing
- 30b** The County will continue its current practice of providing a variety of materials related to energy and water conservation, energy efficiency, green building, and recycling. The County will expand this practice as new programs and new educational and informational materials become available.
Timeline: Ongoing
- 30c** The County will continue to prioritize the award of CFH funds to include affordable housing projects which provide cost-effective energy efficiency measures that exceed State standards. Other criteria that reduce GHG, such as the use of recycled and green building materials, are also considered in establishing funding priorities.
Timeline: Ongoing
Agency: Permit Sonoma, Community Development Commission
Funding: Departmental Budget, CFH

▲ Housing Element Program 31: Address Contributing Factors to Fair Housing Issues

Program Description: Under the AB 686, the County must analyze and prioritize contributing factors for a variety of fair housing issues and connect fair meaningful actions to these contributing factors. This program is presented as a table of actions to address local fair housing issues, which will be identified based on County input.

Fair Housing Issue	Potential Contributing Factors	Priority	Meaningful Action
Outreach			
Low rates of community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of language access • Lack of access to meeting locations • Lack of awareness of community meetings • Lack of affected populations on boards and committees • Lack of accessible forums (e.g., webcast, hybrid meetings, reasonable 	Moderate	Remove barriers and increase opportunities for community engagement and participation through the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand access to community meetings, including addressing language barriers, meeting times, hybrid meetings. • Engage and outreach to residents from lower-resource areas or areas of linguistic isolation to serve on boards, committees,

	accommodation procedures		task forces, and other local government decision-making bodies.
Fair Housing Enforcement and Outreach Capacity			
Lack of awareness about fair housing resources and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding for local fair housing outreach and enforcement • Lack of resources for fair housing agencies and organizations • 	Moderate/High	<p>Increase access to and awareness of fair housing resources through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with a fair housing resource provider that utilizes non-traditional forms of outreach via social media and place-based campaigns in lower-resource areas and/or areas with linguistic isolation. • Provide budget for County staff to provide local outreach in connection with County initiatives, to include tabling at community events, multi-lingual access and outreach including telephone support. • Utilize multilingual digital flyers sent through school district emails to reach parents about fair housing services, housing services, and tenant information. • Reinstate dedicated housing program implementation positions at CDC and Permit Sonoma.
Segregation and Integration			
Census tracts in lower resource areas have higher rates of segregation of protected classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community opposition • Displacement of residents due to economic pressures • Lack of community revitalization strategies • Lack of private investments in specific neighborhoods 	High	<p>Remove barriers to housing in areas of opportunity by strategically enhancing access through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tenant education and counseling around housing voucher mobility opportunities and educate voucher holders and educate voucher holders around their right to request and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public investments in specific neighborhoods • Location and type of affordable housing • Private discrimination by landlords • Source of income discrimination 		<p>receive extensions of search times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to landlords to expand the location of participating voucher properties and to educate landlords on source of income discrimination. • Increase regional cooperation in assisting residents who wish to participate in voucher programs • Develop additional multifamily housing in unincorporated area. • Encourage the development of four or more units in a building. • Encourage the use of land trusts as a mechanism to develop affordable ownership housing.
<p>Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty</p>			
<p>Concentrations of lower and moderate-income, Hispanic households in lower resource areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community opposition • Displacement of residents due to economic pressures • Lack of community revitalization strategies • Lack of private investments in specific neighborhoods • Lack of public investments in specific neighborhoods, including services or amenities • Lack of regional cooperation • Location and type of affordable housing • Private discrimination 	<p>High</p>	<p>Increase new housing choices and affordability in areas of opportunity through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide permit streamlining, incentives, fees deferrals, and other approaches to increase housing choices (including size) and affordability (e.g., duplex, triplex, multifamily, accessory dwelling units) in moderate and high opportunity areas. • Utilize and encourage mixed-income strategies including inclusionary, land trust, JPA and density bonus programs. • Encourage developers to increase the number of accessible and/or adaptable or visitable units above state requirements through incentives, policies, funding, and other similar measures. • Contract with the Napa-Sonoma ADU Center or other local non-profit to provide a full range of services to owners wishing to construct accessible, adaptable, or universally designed ADUs and JADUs. • Consider increasing the number of ADUs allowed per site.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with a qualified non-profit organization to develop and provide funding for a campaign to combat local opposition to affordable housing. • Increase opportunities for housing land trusts.
Disparities in Access to Opportunity			
<p>Segregated communities are in lower resource census tracts</p> <p>Environmental Health Hazards, in lower resource census tracts</p> <p>Disparities in access to opportunity for people with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability, type, frequency, and reliability of public transportation • Lack of private investments in specific neighborhoods • Lack of public investments in specific neighborhoods, including services or amenities • Lack of regional cooperation • Location of employers • Location of environmental health hazards • Location and type of affordable housing • Private discrimination • Access to proficient schools for persons with disabilities • Access to publicly supported housing for persons with disabilities • Access to transportation for persons with disabilities • Lack of affordable, accessible housing in range of unit sizes • Lack of assistance for housing accessibility modifications • Lack of assistance for transitioning from institutional settings to integrated housing • Location of accessible housing • Policing and criminalization (especially people with mental 	Moderate	<p>Increase new housing choices and affordability in areas of opportunity through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide permit streamlining, incentives, fees deferrals, and other approaches to increase housing choices (including size) and affordability (e.g., duplex, triplex, multifamily, accessory dwelling units) in moderate and high opportunity areas. • Encourage developers to increase the number of accessible and/or adaptable or visitable units above state requirements through incentives, policies, funding, and other similar measures. • Maintain a list of available ADUs and JADUs built through the Napa-Sonoma ADU Center for use by regional coordination centers providing developmental services to assist in placing potential renters. • Access waiting lists for persons with disabilities through coordination with regional centers providing developmental services, and make those lists available to property owners or homeowners building ADUs or JADUs through the Napa-Sonoma ADU Center. • Partner with a qualified non-profit organization to develop and provide funding for a campaign to combat local opposition to affordable housing. • Consider increasing the number of ADUs allowed per site. • Increase opportunities for housing land trusts.

	disabilities or neurodivergent individuals)		
Disproportionate Housing Needs, Including Displacement Risks			
<p>Higher rates of overcrowding and overpayment in lower resource census tracts</p> <p>Substandard housing concentrated in lower resource areas</p> <p>Communities sensitive to displacement in lower resource areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of affordable units in a range of sizes • Displacement of residents due to economic pressures • Lack of private investments in specific neighborhoods • Lack of public investments in specific neighborhoods, including services or amenities • Lack of renter protections • Lack of rental relief programs for people at risk of homelessness 	Moderate	<p>Utilize place-based strategies to encourage community conservation and revitalization through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Specific Plans and master planning to target investment into areas of most need focused on improving community assets such as schools, recreational facilities and programs, social service programs, parks, streets, active transportation and infrastructure. • Where necessary, seek funding for basic infrastructure improvements (e.g., water, sewer) in disadvantaged communities where needed. • Consider negative environmental and health impacts when siting housing projects near industrial and agricultural operations, waste storage, freeways and similar potentially unhealthy land uses. • Ensure that rehabilitation and environmental mitigation programs (ie, flood elevation) are available in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. • Seek new funding for one or more positions to oversee housing & infrastructure needs between jurisdictions and districts. • Recruit residents from areas of concentrated poverty to serve on housing and planning boards, committees, task forces and other local government decision-making bodies addressing areas that touch housing. • Utilize Specific Plans and master planning for future housing development including zoning, objective design standards, and

		<p>programmatic environmental review.</p> <p>Increase intergovernmental coordination and cooperation on housing matters by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in and annual funding for the Napa-Sonoma Housing Collaborative. • Participation in bimonthly meetings of the Sonoma County Planning Advisory Committee. • Formation of a subregion for the 7th RHNA cycle to more equitably distribute the County's regional housing need and funding for affordable housing. • Increase intra-governmental coordination on areas of high need through re-establishment of the Housing Element Implementation Group (HEIG) including CAO. <p>Protect existing residents from displacement by new development through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First right of return to existing residents and policies that include moving expenses in targeted growth/Specific Plan/PDA areas • Multi-lingual tenant legal counseling • Utilize affirmative marketing strategies in marketing plans for subsidized housing projects, to be administered by the CDC. • Require replacement housing in targeted growth/Specific Plan/PDA areas on sites identified to accommodate the housing needs of lower income households. • Rent stabilization programs beyond what is required by California Civil Code 1946.2 • Just cause eviction or other efforts improving tenant stability beyond what is required by California Civil Code 1946.2
--	--	--

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent programs for mediation, foreclosure assistance, or multilingual tenant legal counseling services. • Continue to implement the County’s density bonus ordinance that expands on state requirements. • Carry the replacement housing provisions found in the state density bonus law to all growth areas/PDAs/Specific Plan areas.
--	--	---

2.3 QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES

State law requires Housing Elements to contain quantified objectives for the construction, preservation, and rehabilitation of housing. preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The quantified objectives set a goal for unincorporated Sonoma County to achieve based on identified housing needs, resources, and constraints (Table 1). In addition to setting the required quantified objectives, the County has also set quantified objectives for special housing needs (Table 2) and for non-unit housing needs (Table 3).

Quantification in the following tables is consistent with the following objectives:

- Continue existing housing policies and programs with the objective of producing at least 1,809 new affordable units [415 extremely low; 415 very low; 477 low; and 502 moderate income units] between 2023 and 2031. (Existing; modified to update objectives)
- Strive to maintain the affordable status of 5 existing subsidized housing units in the unincorporated area that are at risk of losing their affordable status between 2023 and 2031. (Existing; modified to update objectives)
- Strive to ensure that at least 15 percent of the affordable housing units produced are available to persons with special housing needs. (Existing)
- Increase the supply of housing for farmworkers and other migrant workers. (Existing)

2.3.1 QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES CONSISTENT WITH RHNA

The quantified objectives for the production of housing were prepared consistent with an assessment of the County's identified housing needs, an inventory of its available sites, and a review of its existing and new housing policies and programs. Within the Housing Element planning period (January 31, 2023 – January 31, 2031), a total of 2,683 units affordable to extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income households are expected to be produced. An additional 2,133 units priced for above moderate income households are anticipated, based on available sites, resources, and development trends in the unincorporated County. This

anticipated production is consistent with the ABAG RHNA for this planning period.

Table 1, Quantified Objectives

Quantified Objectives	Extremely Low Income	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	Total
New Construction	415	415	477	502	1622	3,431
Conversion to Affordability	103	103	119	125		450
Preservation of Affordability for At-Risk Units		1	4			5
Preservation of Affordability for Mobilehomes		2131	2132			4,263
Rehabilitation and Retrofit*	170	170	165			505
*Rehabilitation and Retrofit programs managed by the County CDC serve the Urban County as well as Unincorporated Sonoma County. Quantified Objectives refer to total households served within the jurisdiction of the CDC						

2.3.2 QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES FOR SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

In addition to examining projected affordable housing needs, Government Code § 65583 et al requires that jurisdictions conduct an analysis of any existing special housing needs such as those of the elderly, disabled (including individuals with HIV/AIDS and developmental disabilities), large families, single parent households, and farmworkers. The quantitative analysis of these groups' current housing needs is in Section 4. The County also recognizes the housing needs of several subpopulations not specifically mentioned in State law such as the mentally ill, veterans returning from conflict overseas, and youth transitioning from foster care. Efforts have been made to highlight and address these special needs where appropriate.

Some of the special needs populations mentioned above do not require housing that is operationally different from that required by the general low-income population. Single parent households, large families, and able-bodied elderly households, for example, do not require significant operational intervention. While such households may benefit from housing that is proximate to schools, workplaces, or services (e.g., day care, after school activities, senior centers, etc.), they typically do not need to be located in different types of developments than the general population. The use and promotion of Universal Design programs can be especially helpful in accommodating these households.

Supportive housing units can supply many of the County's identified housing needs. Supportive housing is safe, affordable long term rental housing linked with flexible support services that are available when they are needed. By definition, "supportive housing" means housing with no limit on length of stay, that is linked to onsite or offsite services that assist the tenant to retain the housing, improve his or her health status, maximize their ability to live and, when possible, to work in the community. Supportive housing may include apartments, single room occupancy residences, or single-family homes. Residents may include families with children, elderly persons, young adults aging out of the foster care system, individuals exiting from institutional settings, veterans, or homeless people.

Like other affordable housing, supportive housing is designed to look like existing housing in the surrounding neighborhood. The difference between supportive housing and other affordable housing is the linkage to a services component. Integrating services with affordable housing also can help to provide formerly homeless individuals and families with the ongoing support they need to remain housed and live independently. The County will strive to include this services component in 30% of new and converted rental housing units for extremely low income (ELI) and very low income (VLI) individuals and households, including SRO units.

Table 2, Quantified Objectives for Special Housing Needs

Quantified Objectives	Extremely Low Income	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income
Total New Construction	415	415	477	502
Units for Special Housing Needs	63	63	72	76
Supportive Housing	125	125		
Total Conversion to Affordability	103	103	119	125
Supportive Housing	31	31		

In addition to the "units" anticipated above, the County will strive to produce sufficient shared or community housing types to address the identified needs of extremely low income households, the elderly, the disabled, farmworkers, non-farm migrant workers, the homeless, and those making the transition from homelessness. These shared housing types are expected to include homeless shelters beds, transitional housing beds, beds within group homes and community care facilities, farmworker housing bunks, and SRO units with shared kitchen facilities.

These tables present the quantified objective for housing units and non-unit housing beds or bunks in Sonoma County, by housing unit prototype and affordability category.

Table 3, Quantified Objectives for Non-unit Housing Needs

Quantified Objectives	Acutely Low Income	Extremely Low Income	Very Low Income
Interim Housing/Shelter Beds	60	30	
Congregate/Community Care Beds			
Farmworker Bunks			
SRO Beds			
SRO Units: Supportive Housing	30%	30%	30%
Safe Parking Spaces			