

# **2015 General Plan Annual Implementation Progress Report**



Permit and Resource Management Department

March 2016

## **GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT**

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

### **OVERVIEW**

Government Code Section 65300 requires every city and county to prepare and adopt a "comprehensive, long term general plan for the physical development" of the community. On September 23, 2008 the Board adopted the current General Plan (commonly referred to as GP2020) and adopted the current Housing Element on December 2, 2015. The Government Code also requires that these plans include seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Noise, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, and Housing. GP 2020 includes these mandatory seven elements and three additional, optional elements: Water Resources, Air Transportation, and Public Facilities and Services. Notably, Sonoma County was the first jurisdiction in California to adopt a Water Resources Element. Each of these elements contains a set of goals, objectives, policies, and programs.

The broad purpose of GP2020 is to "express policies which will guide decisions on future growth, development, and conservation of resources through 2020 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the County's residents." GP2020 provides policy direction to multiple departments and jurisdictions beyond the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD). The attached spreadsheet (Attachment 1) summarizes the implementation efforts of all General Plan programs, including the responsible department and estimated completion date. Below is a list of notable accomplishments completed in 2015.

Overall progress continues with the implementation of General Plan programs. The 2014 Housing Element contains 57 programs, many of which are ongoing or underway. However, a fair number have not yet been started because we are at the beginning of the 8 year implementation cycle. Changes in the percent of General Plan programs completed since 2014 are a result of the new Housing Element programs. Of the 166 General Plan programs 101 have been completed or are ongoing programs implemented on a continuous basis. Another 36 programs are either partially complete or currently underway (see a description of major initiatives underway, below). An additional 25 programs have not been started, and a small number of programs are on hold pending availability of funding and staffing resources. Attachment 1 provides a detailed description of the General Plan Implementation Programs for the following elements:

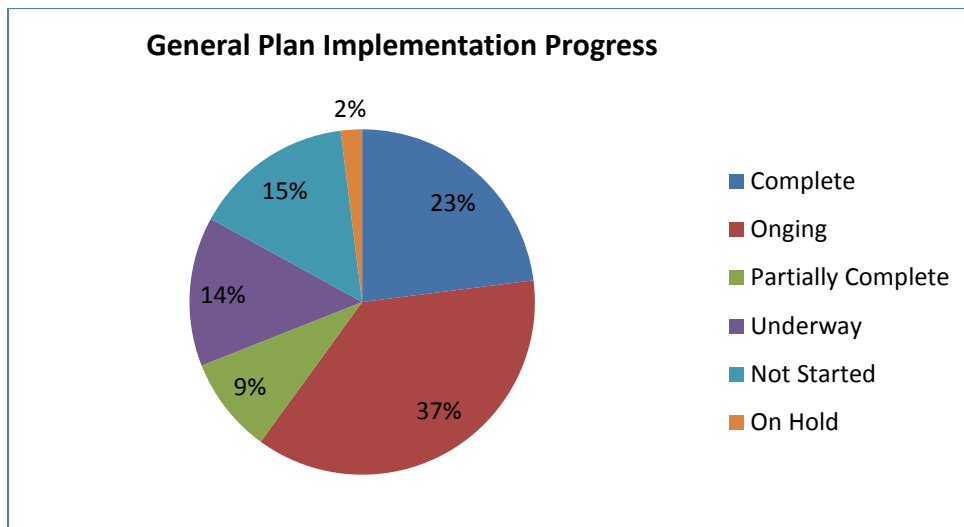
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Agricultural Resources, Air Transportation, Circulation and Transit, Land Use, Noise, Open Space and Resource Conservation, Public Facilities and Services, Public Safety, Water Resources, and Housing. Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a summary of implementation progress.

**Table 1: General Plan Implementation Progress 2015**

<b>Program Status</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Complete	39	23%
Ongoing	62	37%
Partially Complete	13	9%
Underway	23	14%
Not Started	25	15%
On hold	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 1: General Plan Implementation Progress**



### **CURRENT PRIORITY GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS**

Multiple programs are in the process of being implemented by PRMD as part of the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan. PRMD also works collaboratively with other departments such as Transportation and Public Works and Regional Parks to implement General Plan policies and programs. Below is a list of major planning efforts that were completed or underway in 2015.

#### **Development Code Update**

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

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that reflect contemporary planning. The proposed new format will be consistent with most of the newer code formats used in Santa Rosa, Windsor, and Sonoma, which will make the code more familiar and user-friendly to the public. The new Development Code will also integrate better with other chapters of the County Code by using consistent language and terminology. The proposed table format will clarify permit thresholds for planners and the public. The Public Review Draft of the Development Code is expected to be available later in 2016 and informational workshops will be scheduled prior to public hearings before the Planning Commission.

### **Local Coastal Plan Update**

The Local Coastal Plan in Sonoma County is a separate, stand-alone plan for the coastal zone, mandated by the California Coastal Act. A Preliminary Draft Local Coastal Plan Update was released to the public in June 2015. The Local Coastal Plan Update is a focused update limited to integrating General Plan 2020 policies and addressing public access; adaptation to climate change, particularly sea level rise; biological resources; public safety (geologic, flood hazards, and coastal erosion); and water quality. Preparation of a revised Public Review Draft of the Local Coastal Plan Update is underway and is expected to be available to the public this summer. Staff held public workshops at The Sea Ranch, Bodega Bay, Monte Rio, Timber Cove and Santa Rosa in summer 2015 to obtain comments on the Preliminary Draft Local Coastal Plan and maps. PRMD was awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Ocean Protection Council to develop sea level rise adaptation plans. The Draft Local Coastal Plan includes sea level rise maps and bluff erosion hazard maps for the entire coast as well as maps of habitat vulnerability to the effects of sea level rise. Once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the Local Coastal Plan must be submitted to the Coastal Commission for certification that the Plan meets Coastal Act requirements before it becomes effective.

### **Hazard Mitigation Plan Update**

In 2015 the County Emergency Management Agency and PRMD initiated an update of the 2011 Hazard Mitigation Plan. The update will report on progress made implementing mitigating actions identified in the current plan. The update will also address impacts of climate change to emergency management strategies in the County. The implementation actions of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, as updated, are incorporated into the General Plan as policy through Program PS-11.

### **Unreinforced Masonry Building Ordinance**

The County has initiated a multi-phase seismic hazard reduction project. The program builds on lessons learned from the Napa earthquake, and focuses on retrofit of high occupancy unsafe buildings. In 2015 the building division notified building owners of the state requirement for signage of hazardous buildings and confirmed that appropriate signs were posted on all URMs. Staff is preparing a draft ordinance that would require

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retrofit of all unreinforced masonry building in commercial uses. The proposed ordinance will implement General Plan Program PS-6. In Phase II of the project, the County will begin inventorying a wider range of hazardous buildings including soft story and under reinforced concrete structures.

### **Climate Action Plan 2020**

In 2013-14 the County was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the Strategic Growth Council for climate action planning in collaboration with the nine cities, the Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA), and non-profit groups. The Project team has developed a draft Climate Action Plan. The Plan and a Draft Program EIR are expected to be made available for public review and input in spring 2016. Adoption of individualized plans for the cities and county is expected to follow certification of the EIR and adoption of the Climate Action Plan by the RCPA later in 2016. This program will enable the County and all nine cities to implement a coordinated program that reduces the County's overall GHG emissions. Once adopted, development projects that conform to the Climate Action Plan will receive streamlined review of greenhouse gas impacts of individual projects under CEQA.

### **Well Construction Standards**

In 2015 the Board of Supervisors adopted updated well construction standards to modernize well installation regulations, protect water quality, and to facilitate water conservation. The updated well construction standards partially implement General Plan Program WR-6.

### **Sustainable Groundwater Management Act**

The County has formed a working group to address provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The Sonoma County Water Agency received a grant from Department of Water Resources for facilitation services that has allowed for a collaborative planning for formation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies. A stakeholder assessment has been prepared that identified initial issues and concerns. The County has jurisdiction in three medium priority basins: Sonoma Creek, Petaluma River, and the Santa Rosa Plain. The new law requires coordination between Groundwater Sustainability Plans and the General Plan. Moving forward the County is required to consider amendments to the Water Resources Element of the General Plan for consistency with future Groundwater Sustainability Plans by 2022.

The General Plan Water Resources Element includes a program to monitor groundwater, identify special study areas (high priority areas), and evaluate impacts to groundwater from existing pumping and future growth.

The County and the Water Agency are currently collaborating to address provisions of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (2014) that calls for formation of one or

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more Groundwater Sustainability Agencies, Development of a Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans, and managing medium and high priority groundwater basins in a sustainable manner by 2022. In Sonoma County medium priority basins are Sonoma Creek, Petaluma River, and the Santa Rosa Plain. The new law requires coordination between Groundwater Sustainability Plans and the General Plan. Moving forward the County is required to consider amendments to the Water Resources Element of the General Plan for consistency.

### **Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance**

In December 2015 the Board of Supervisors adopted an update to the Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance to meet new state requirements. The ordinance requires a soil analysis reports and imposes water efficient landscape standards for plans, soil, water features, and irrigation. Standards apply to developer installed new and rehabilitated landscapes requiring design review, or building or grading permits. The new regulations also include an option for homeowners to conform to new prescriptive compliance standards. The new compliance option reduces time and cost barriers for small residential projects.

### **Springs Area Specific Plan**

The County has been awarded a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to develop an area plan for the Springs community. Once adopted, the area plan will guide development and gradually shape the Springs area into a more vibrant and sustainable pedestrian-oriented community. The Springs Area Plan will implement many transit and circulation policies of the General Plan and will also include community design features to promote healthy living in the communities of Boyes Hot Springs and Agua Caliente. The County initiated this two-year planning effort by forming Community Advisory Team (CAT) to serve as a liaison to area residents, businesses and organizations and provide input during the development of the area plan is committed to engaging the community in the development of the Springs Area Plan.

### **Airport Area Specific Plan**

The County has been awarded a grant from the Sonoma County Transportation Authority to develop an area plan for updates to the Airport Area Specific Plan to prepare an update of the existing 1984 Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan including a Station Area Plan for the new Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station. The goal of this effort is to transform the car-centric land use model into a transit oriented employment center with the new SMART station as the central component. The project will include a robust community process to develop the area with a mix of land uses and enhanced multimodal connectivity to promote healthy living and greenhouse gas reduction by encouraging active forms of transportation and increased use of transit.

## **Housing Element**

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

### Current Housing Element Efforts

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

Work on the 2014 Housing Element Update began in July 2013 with a multi-agency public workshop, and ended with the adoption of the 2014 Housing Element on December 2, 2014. The State Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) has certified the 2014 Housing Element as meeting all requirements of State law. The planning period covered by the 2014 Housing Element is 2015 to 2023.

### Regional Housing Need

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

We are at the beginning of the 2015 – 2023 Housing Element planning period. In 2015, the County issued permits for 193 new housing units, including 18 extremely low income units, 6 very low income units, 46 low income units, 44 moderate-income units, and 79 above-moderate income units. An additional 170 affordable units from four approved projects are in the building permit plan check phase.

The unmet RHNA need at the end of 2015 was 92 extremely low income units, 104 very-low income units, 81 low-income units, 116 moderate-income units, and 350 above moderate income units. See Table 2, below.

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

<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Regional Housing Need 2015-2023</b>	<b>Permits Issued 2015</b>	<b>County Need Met through 12/31/15</b>	<b>Remaining Need - end 2015</b>	<b>% of 2015-2023 Regional Housing Need Met</b>
<b>Extremely</b>	110	18	18	92	16%
<b>Very-Low</b>	110	6	6	104	5%
<b>Low</b>	127	46	46	81	36%
<b>Moderate</b>	160	44	44	116	28%
<b>Above Moderate</b>	429	79	79	350	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>936 units</b>	<b>193 units</b>	<b>193 units</b>	<b>743 units</b>	<b>21%</b>

With 11% of the planning period having elapsed, the County has met 21% of its overall Regional Housing Need Allocation. Of the housing unit permits issued, an impressive 57% were affordable to low, very low, and extremely low income households. This is due to recently granted entitlements for several affordable housing projects. An additional 28% of the units were available to moderate income households, while the remaining 18% were available at the above moderate level.

We are only one year into the planning period, so a large unmet need remains for units in all income categories.

2015 Construction and Permitting Activity

The number of permits issued for residential construction was more than double for 2015 compared to 2014. During 2015, building permits were issued for 193 residential units, of which 114 (59 percent) were for affordable units, including 18 for extremely low income households, six for very low income disabled households, 46 for low-income households, and 44 for moderate-income households.

The County’s Affordable Housing Program requires all new development to contribute to affordable housing, and incentivizes the construction of second dwelling units to meet the affordable housing contribution requirement for individual single family dwellings. Because of their limited size, second dwelling units are considered affordable; a survey conducted during 2006 and updated during 2013 established the average level of affordability at “moderate” for newer detached units and at “lower” for older units and attached units. In 2015 the County issued 52 permits for second dwelling units, including 44 detached units, six attached units, and two manufactured homes.



## **Homeless Strategy**

The newly adopted Housing Element calls for a diverse housing stock that provides housing for all income levels. The County has undertaken planning to end homelessness that includes evaluation of alternative housing types, such as community supportive housing, small mobile units, and temporary housing. These initiatives, called the Building HOMES Toolbox, implement several policies of the 2014 Housing Element.

## **Second Units**

In September 2015 the County revised its process for permitting second dwelling units to continue to encourage construction of second dwelling units to be available for rent. Notable changes include:

- New design standards for detached second units to create more functionally separated and private units
- Option to decrease the minimum lot size to 1.5 acres with a use permit
- Option to exceed maximum second unit size up to 1,000 square feet with a minor use permit

Builders of new market-rate housing units of more than 1000 square feet are required to participate in the County's Affordable Housing Program in one of several ways, including the payment of affordable housing in-lieu fees. Property owners may defer payment of this fee with an agreement to provide and rent a second dwelling unit to a low-income household for a 30 year period. Code changes adopted during 2015 provide more flexibility for property owners and allow them to be released from the 30 year obligation upon payment of the remaining outstanding Affordable Housing Fee. The code still contains the option to opt out by paying an affordable housing fee that is used by the County to fund affordable housing projects.

## **Vacation Rentals**

The County initiated revisions to the vacation rental ordinance to address this growing industry. Numerous public workshops and meetings were held in 2015 to address various issues including the impact to the County's housing stock. No action was taken in 2015.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sonoma County General Plan 2020 continues to provide a broad policy framework for city-centered growth in the County. In 2016 the County will begin work on Open Space and Resource Conservation Program 6 that calls for expansion of community separator lands as local voter-approved community separator ordinances expire in 2016 and 2018.

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Identified community separators include Petaluma/Novato, Petaluma/Rohnert Park, Rohnert Park/Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa/Sebastopol, Windsor/Larkfield/Santa Rosa, Windsor/Healdsburg, and Northeast Santa Rosa Community.

Substantial progress was made during 2015 to implement many important general Plan 2020 programs. The 2014 Housing Element and housing programs have been effective in addressing the needs of all economic segment of the community during 2015.