

2017 General Plan Annual Implementation Progress Report



Permit and Resource Management Department

February 2018

GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

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

OVERVIEW

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

The broad purpose of GP2020 is to “express policies which will guide decisions on future growth, development, and conservation of resources through 2020 in a manner consistent with the goals and quality of life desired by the County’s residents.” GP2020 provides policy direction to multiple departments and jurisdictions beyond the Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma). The attached spreadsheet (Attachment 1) summarizes the implementation efforts of all General Plan programs, including the responsible department and estimated completion date. Below is a list of notable accomplishments completed in 2017.

Overall progress continues with the implementation of General Plan programs. The 2014 Housing Element contains 57 programs, many of which are ongoing or underway. The County has initiated several new programs, but several have not been started because we are at the beginning of the 8 year implementation cycle. Changes in the percent of General Plan programs completed since 2014 are a result of the new Housing Element programs. Of the 166 General Plan programs 112 have been implemented or are ongoing programs implemented on a continuous basis. Another 26 programs are either partially complete or currently underway (see a description of major initiatives underway, below). An additional 24 programs have not been started, and a small number of programs are on hold for a variety of reasons. Attachment 1 provides a detailed description of the General Plan Implementation Programs for the following elements: Agricultural Resources, Air

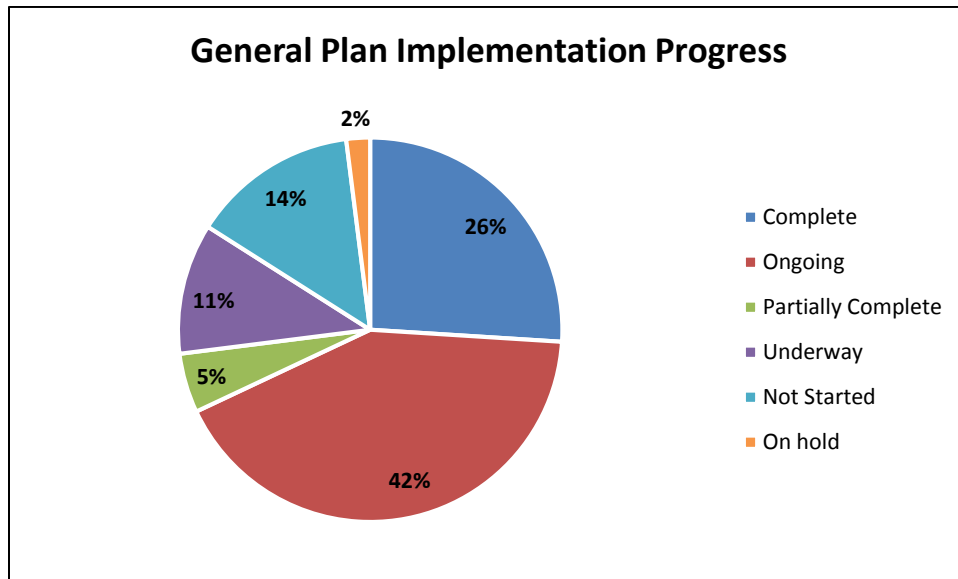
2017 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

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 2017

Program Status	Total Number	% of Total
Complete	43	26%
Ongoing	69	42%
Partially Complete	8	5%
Underway	18	11%
Not Started	24	14%
On hold	4	2%
Total	166	100%

Figure 1: General Plan Implementation Progress



CURRENT PRIORITY GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Multiple programs are in the process of being implemented by Permit Sonoma as part of the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan. Permit Sonoma also works collaboratively with other departments such as Transportation and Public Works and Regional Parks to implement General Plan policies and programs. Below is a list of major planning efforts that were completed or underway in 2017.

Local Coastal Plan Update

The Local Coastal Plan is a separate, stand-alone plan for the coastal zone, mandated by the California Coastal Act. The Local Coastal Plan Update is a focused update limited to integrating General Plan 2020 policies and addressing public access; adaption to climate change, particularly sea level rise; biological resources; public safety (geologic, flood hazards, and coastal erosion); and water quality. In 2017, Permit Sonoma staff worked on revising the Preliminary Draft to respond to comments from the public and Coastal Commission. The Draft Local Coastal Plan is planned to be published in the summer of 2018, and commence public hearings thereafter. Once adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the Local Coastal Plan must be submitted to the Coastal Commission for certification before it becomes effective.

SCTA Traffic Model

Permit Sonoma Planning Staff has been working with the Sonoma County Transit Authority (SCTA) to implement a comprehensive update to the County's traffic model. Permit Sonoma has provided SCTA with new baseline and projection land use data in order to update the model to a baseline year of 2015. Permit Sonoma Staff is currently working with SCTA in reviewing proposals for a technical update to the traffic model in preparation for the implementation of using vehicle miles traveled as a measure of project impacts as required by recent changes in state law (SB 743).

Freestone Land Use and Zoning Changes

Permit Sonoma planning staff is recommending an amendment of the General Plan land use designation and zoning of 17 properties in Freestone. The amendments are proposed to resolve land use mapping and zoning inconsistencies with General Plan Policy LU-12e. General Plan land use maps approved in 1989 created an expansion of Limited Commercial land use designations and Rural Commercial zoning in Freestone. The proposed changes will ensure that commercial land use in Freestone will remain limited, as expressed by the General Plan policies. The proposed land use changes are expected to come before the Board for their consideration in April 2018.

Springs Specific Plan

The County was awarded a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to develop an area plan for the Springs community. This plan will guide development and

2017 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

gradually shape the Springs into a more vibrant and sustainable pedestrian-oriented community. The Springs Specific Plan will implement many transit and circulation policies of the General Plan and will also include community design features to promote healthy living in the communities of Boyes Hot Springs and Agua Caliente. The County is committed to engaging the community in the development of the Specific Plan and, therefore, initiated this planning effort by forming a Community Advisory Team (CAT). The CAT serves as a liaison to area residents, businesses, and organizations and provides input on the plan.

Four community workshops have been held to provide project information and receive public input. The Community Advisory Team and Technical Advisory Committee have also met to review background reports and project alternatives, and to identify potential issues. The draft Specific Plan and draft EIR will be available for public review this fall. Public hearings before the Planning Commission are anticipated before the end of 2018.

Airport Area Specific Plan

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

Cannabis Land Use Ordinance

The Board of Supervisors provided direction in early 2016 to establish a regulatory framework for cannabis operations including cultivation, testing labs, distribution, transportation, manufacturing, and dispensaries consistent with the California Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA). The land use ordinance was adopted December 20, 2016. A health ordinance to regulate dispensaries and manufacturing was adopted December 13, 2016. A special election was held March 7, 2017 to impose taxes on cannabis businesses to fund essential services such as code enforcement and environmental protection. Permitting began in July 2017 for the full cannabis supply chain. The County has received 117 cannabis applications, 5 to 7 of which are close to approval.

Development Code Modernization

The Development Code Modernization represents the first major reorganization of the County's Zoning Ordinance since the 1960s and will include new definitions and land use types that reflect contemporary planning. The proposed new format will be consistent with most of the newer code formats used in Santa Rosa, Windsor, and Sonoma, which

2017 General Plan Implementation Progress Report

will make the code more familiar and user-friendly to the public. Proposed changes in the development include reformatting the allowable land uses listed in every zoning district into easy-to-read tables; terms and permitting levels; and addition of a new Permits and Procedures Chapter consolidating the various procedures currently listed throughout the Code. Staff intends to produce a public review draft by summer of 2018 and commence the Planning Commission's review.

Housing Element

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

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

Regional Housing Need

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

We are three years into the 2015 – 2023 Housing Element planning period. In 2017, the County issued 228 building permits for 235 new housing units, including 10 low-income units, 57 moderate-income units, and 168 above moderate-income units. The unmet RHNA need at the end of 2017 was for 29 extremely low-income units, 53 very low-income units, 50 low-income units, 4 moderate-income units and no market-rate units. See Table 2, below.

The County's RHNA is relatively low, in part because the trend is toward city-centered growth, and away from development in the rural portion of the unincorporated county.

Table 2: Sonoma County’s Progress in Meeting its Regional Housing Needs 2015-2023 Reporting Period Ending 12/31/2017

Income Group	Regional Housing Need 2015-2023	Permits Issued 2017	County Need Met through 12/31/17	Remaining Need at end of 2017	% of 2015-2023 Regional Housing Need Met
Extremely Low	110	0	81	29	74%
Very Low	110	0	57	53	51%
Low	127	10	77	50	61%
Moderate	160	57	156	4	99%
Above Moderate	429	168	401	28	93%
Total	936 units	235 units	772 units	164 units	82%

With 38 percent of the planning period having elapsed, the County had met 82 percent of its overall Regional Housing Need Allocation by the end of 2017. However, most of these units were above moderate-income.

Effect of Roseland Annexation on Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA)

The County has worked collaboratively with the City of Santa Rosa to annex and redevelop the unincorporated community of Roseland. When the annexation of the Roseland area into the City of Santa Rosa was completed on November 1, 2017, RHNA “credits” for the housing projects that lie within that area were transferred to the City. Pursuant to the Annexation Agreement, the transfer removed the credits for 421 housing units within the Crossroads, Roseland Village, and Paseo Vista projects from the County into the City. Credits that had previously been claimed by the County (credits may be claimed only when building permits are issued) have now been removed from the County’s progress in meeting its regional housing needs, and added to the City’s progress in meeting theirs.

Subsequently, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) approved a proportionate transfer of RHNA allocation from the County into the City, decreasing the County’s RHNA obligation for this period by 421 units and increasing the City’s obligation by the same amount. This transfer of obligation includes 94 very low-income units (including 47 extremely low-income units), 90 low-income units, and 237 market-rate units. The County’s revised RHNA obligation, along with its revised progress in meeting its Regional Needs, are set forth in Table 3, below.

Table 3: Revised RHNA Allocation and Progress in Meeting Regional Housing Needs, 2015 - 2023

Income Group	Regional Housing Need 2015-2023 REVISIED	County Need Met through 12/31/17	Remaining Need at end of 2017	% of 2015-2023 Regional Housing Need Met UPDATED
Very Low & Extremely Low	126	46	80	63%
Low	37	52	0	100%
Moderate	160	156	4	99%
Above Moderate	192	396	0	100%
Total	515 units	650 units	84 units	100%

According to the revised Regional Housing Need Allocation and after subtracting previously-claimed RHNA credits, the County has a remaining housing need of 84 units including 40 extremely low-income units, 40 very low-income units, and 4 moderate-income units by 2023.

It is important to note, however, that the Regional Housing Need is a calculated minimum number of housing units that a jurisdiction must zone adequate land for and does not accurately reflect actual housing needs, which are much greater. After the loss of 2,216 housing units to the Sonoma Complex fires in October 2017, the County’s housing needs are acute.

2017 Construction and Permitting Activity

The number of building permits issued for residential construction was up over last year but the number of units was down somewhat, with the County issuing 289 permits for 296 units. This total includes 3 permits for farmworker bunkhouses totaling 98 bunks, which are not counted as part of regional housing need. An additional 2 – 3 permits for agricultural employee units were also issued, but are reflected in the counts.

The County’s Housing Element and programs incentivize the construction of accessory dwelling units. 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 2017, the County issued 57 permits for accessory dwelling units, including 50 detached units, four attached units, and three manufactured homes.

Figure 2: County Building Permits Issued by Income Level of Units, 2013–2017

Income Group	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Extremely Low-Income	0	0	18	33	0
Very Low-Income	0	1	6	46	0
Low-Income	6	9	46	59	10
Moderate-Income	35	32	44	58	57
Above Moderate-Income	88	51	79	202	168
TOTAL	129	93	193	398	235

CONCLUSION

Sonoma County General Plan 2020 continues to provide a broad policy framework for city-centered growth in the County. The 2014 Housing Element programs continue to be effective at addressing housing needs for all economic segments of the community during 2017, although the County’s Regional Housing Need does not accurately reflect actual housing needs, which are considerably greater due to the significant number of housing units lost in the October 2017 Sonoma Complex fires.

In 2018, the County will focus on implementing Housing Element programs, Development Code Modernization, and completing the Local Coastal Plan update. The most notable progress includes continuing work on the Airport and Spring Specific Plans, implementation of the County’s Cannabis Ordinance, Development Code Modernization, and adoption of the Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Airport and Springs specific plans will be building blocks for the County’s General Plan update, beginning in 2018. This work will help identify additional housing sites and further address constraints to housing. Implementation of the Cannabis Ordinance was completed in early 2017, with the County accepting applications starting in 2017. The first permits will be issued in 2018. Taxes were collected in 2017 under the penalty relief program, allowing growers on permit-eligible sites to operate while permits are processed.