



Santa Barbara County
2003-08 Housing Element Action Phase

Housing Element Status Report

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2003-2008 Housing Element Action Phase

Program Goals

The Housing Element is one of seven mandated components of a local jurisdiction's general plan, and the only element that is required to be certified by the State. State housing law (Government Code § 65580 et seq.) requires an update of each housing element every five years. The law further specifies that local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. Every updated housing element must be submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review. State HCD determines whether a jurisdiction's housing element is in compliance with the State's requirements, and has the authority to direct a jurisdiction to amend its housing element.

A major requirement of each jurisdiction's housing element is an analysis of how it will accommodate its State-prescribed Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). State HCD provides each region in California with its projected increase in housing need over a specified period of time. For Santa Barbara County, the current needs period runs from January 2001 to July 2008. Santa Barbara County received a RHNA allocation of 17,532 units for this period. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments divided the RHNA allocation among the incorporated cities and the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, and identified the number of housing units that each jurisdiction must plan for. The RHNA allocation also specifies the required affordability level of the units. The unincorporated County's RHNA allocation totals 6,064 units, divided as follows: 1,455 units targeted to very low income households, 1,031 units targeted to low income households, 1,013 units targeted to moderate income households, and 2,565 units targeted to above moderate income households. Under State law, the County is the government agency tasked with addressing housing problems and ensuring that sufficient housing exists for all economic segments of the community.

Program Highlights

- Santa Barbara County 2003-2008 Housing Element Milestones
 - The process of updating the Housing Element began in 2002.
 - On March 29, 2004, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County's draft 2003-2008 Housing Element.
 - Based on two rounds of State review and staff revisions required by State HCD, the Revised Housing Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 9, 2006 and submitted to State HCD.
 - State HCD conditionally certified the Revised Housing Element on August 2, 2006. Certification is conditioned on completing all of the Action Items described in the Housing Element.
 - These Action Items are the subject of the Housing Element Action Phase EIR, which commenced in November 2006, and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2007.



- The conclusions of the EIR will inform the Board of Supervisors as it considers policy options for adopting the Housing Element Action Items. The Board is expected to adopt the ordinances required to implement the Housing Element in the winter of 2007.

- Required Components of a Housing Element
 - Review the previous Housing Element's effectiveness.
 - Identify and analyze the County's existing and projected housing needs.
 - Identify both the constraints to providing housing and opportunities for mitigating those constraints.
 - List goals, policies, resources, and programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing.
 - Inventory all lands currently available and zoned appropriately to meet housing needs.
 - If insufficient lands exist to meet housing needs, identify methods for meeting needs (i.e. rezones).
 - Quantify the objectives of the Housing Element programs.

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