

Housing Element Overview



What is the City's Housing Element?

The City's housing plan is contained in a "Housing Element" which is included in the City's General Plan. The City's General Plan is a comprehensive long-range planning document that directs the physical development of the City. The General Plan represents the community's view of its future and becomes a blueprint for creating the view envisioned by the community. The City last completed a comprehensive update of the Laguna Hills General Plan in 2009, which sought to preserve and enhance the community's existing strengths such as its beautiful natural setting of rolling hills, miles of trails and connected open spaces, attractive and safe neighborhoods, and sound local economy given the work and shopping destinations located in the city at the time.

What must the City's Housing Element Address?

The core purpose of a housing element is to plan for the existing and projected housing needs of all segments of the community such as seniors, families, workers, and the disabled. A central component of the City's Housing Element is the identification of policies, programs and locations that ensure the City will meet its RHNA allocation of 1,985 units. It is important to note that the City must plan for, but is not obligated to build, the housing required by the RHNA allocation. Once the City identifies properties where it intends to accommodate its RHNA, the City will need to evaluate any zone changes or changes to development standards required to facilitate housing development. The state expects cities to remove barriers to housing development. To ensure barriers to housing construction are eliminated, recent changes to state housing law, such as the Housing Accountability Act, have made it more difficult for cities to deny housing projects.

The topics required to be addressed by the City's Housing Element are identified below.

■ Existing Housing

- » Assisted Housing Developments at Risk of Conversion
- » Extremely Low-Income Housing Needs
- » Housing Stock Characteristics
- » Overpayment and Overcrowding
- » Population, Employment, and Household Characteristics

■ Projected Housing Needs

■ Special Housing

- » Farmworkers
- » Large Families and Female-Headed Households
- » People Experiencing Homelessness
- » People with Disabilities, Including Developmental Disabilities
- » Seniors

- **Site Inventory and Analysis:** Government Code Section 65583(a)(3) requires local governments to prepare an inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having the potential for redevelopment, and an analysis of the relationship of zoning and public facilities and services to these sites.
 - » Adequate Sites Alternative
 - » Analysis of Sites and Zoning
 - » Inventory of Suitable Land
 - » Accessory Dwelling Units
 - » Opportunities for Energy Conservation
 - » Zoning for a Variety of Housing Types

- **Constraints:** The housing element must identify and analyze potential and actual governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including housing for people with disabilities. The analysis should determine whether local, regulatory standards pose an actual constraint and must also demonstrate local efforts to remove constraints that hinder a jurisdiction from meeting its housing needs.
 - » Codes and Enforcement and Onsite Offsite Improvement Standards
 - » Constraints for People with Disabilities
 - » Fees and Exactions
 - » Land-Use Controls
 - » Non-Governmental Constraints
 - » Processing and Permitting Procedures

- **Program Requirements:** Each jurisdiction must identify specific programs in its housing element that will allow it to implement the stated policies and achieve the stated goals and objectives. Programs must include specific action steps and timeframes for implementation, identify the agencies or officials responsible for implementation, describe the jurisdiction’s specific role in implementation, and (whenever possible) identify specific, measurable outcomes.
 - » Program Overview and Quantified Objectives
 - » Address and Remove (or Mitigate) Constraints
 - » Assist in the Development of Housing
 - » Identify Adequate Sites
 - » Improve and Conserve the Existing Housing Stock
 - » Preserve Units at-risk of Conversion to Market Rates
 - » Provide Equal Housing Opportunities and Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

- **Other Requirements**
 - » Analysis of Consistency with General Plan
 - » Housing Element Annual Progress
 - » Priority for Water and Sewer
 - » Assessment of Fair Housing

