

**X. HOUSING ELEMENT**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

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**Purpose**

The purpose of the Housing Element is to ensure the County establishes policies, procedures and incentives in its land use planning and development activities that will result in the maintenance and expansion of the housing supply to adequately accommodate households current and future population living and expected to live in the unincorporated County. It institutes policies that will guide County decision-making, and establishes an action program to implement housing goals through 202.

Each jurisdiction within the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region is required to adopt their ir 2021-2029 Housing Element by October 15, 2021. Although some County housing programs operate within cities, the County's Housing Element primarily addresses housing issues in the

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unincorporated areas. Foremost among these issues is the provision of a mix of housing types to meet the needs of all economic segments of the unincorporated area. In response, the Housing Element makes provisions for affordable and accessible housing for special needs groups in the community, and is designed to provide guidance in the maintenance of existing affordable housing. These commitments are an expression of the statewide housing goal of “decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family.”

### **Citizen Participation**

*California Government Code* requires that local government make a diligent effort to achieve public participation from all economic segments of the community in the development of the Housing Element. In the preparation of the Housing Element Update, a number of organizations and agencies that provide housing, or housing related services, were contacted. Responses from these groups helped guide the Housing Needs Assessment portion of the Housing Element, as well as the Action Plan.

Citizen involvement was accomplished in a number of different ways. Meetings were held with the County Housing Element Resource Team comprised of recognized leaders from business, housing advocacy, social service providers, non-profit organizations, the Building Industry Association, major landowners and developers, and non-profit builders. The Draft Housing Element was posted on the County’s website to facilitate public access and comments. (<https://ocds.ocpublicworks.com/service-areas/oc-development-services/planning-development/current-projects/all-districts-2>). Community workshops were hosted by OC Development Services, and public hearings were held by the Orange County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. This proactive outreach effort ensured broad involvement throughout the analytical and policy development phases of the project.

Appendix C provides additional detail regarding opportunities for public involvement along with a summary of public comments and how those comments have been addressed in the Housing Element.

### **Consistency with State Planning Law**

The Housing Element is one of the seven General Plan elements mandated by the State of California. Sections 65580 to 65590 of the *California Government Code* contain the legislative mandate for the housing element. State law requires that the County’s Housing Element consist of “*an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies,*

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*quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing” (§65583). In addition, the housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.*

There is no single approved format for a Housing Element. Instead, State law defines components of issues that must be addressed. A Housing Element should clearly identify and address, at a minimum, each component listed below:

The **E**lement shall contain all of the following.

1. Review of existing Housing Element.
2. An assessment of existing and projected housing and employment trends to assess a locality’s housing needs for all income levels.
3. An inventory of resources relevant to meeting housing needs.
4. An inventory of constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs.
5. A statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement and development of housing.

A program that sets forth an eight-year schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the **H**ousing **E**lement.

### **General Plan Consistency**

The Housing Element is one of nine elements of the Orange County General Plan. The goals, policies, standards and proposals within this **E**lement relate directly to, and are consistent with all other **E**lements. The County’s Housing Element identifies programs and resources required for the preservation, improvement and development of housing to meet the existing and projected needs of its population.

The Housing Element is affected by development policies contained in the Land Use Element, which establishes the location, type, intensity and distribution of land uses throughout the County, and defines the land use build-out potential. In designating the location and density of residential development, the Land Use Element places an upper limit on the number and types of housing units constructed in the unincorporated County. The acreage designated for a range of

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commercial and office uses creates employment opportunities for various income groups. The presence and potential for jobs affects the current and future demand for housing at various income levels in the County.

The Public Services and Facilities Element, Resources Element, Safety Element, and Noise Element of the General Plan also affect the implementation of the Housing Element. Together, these Elements establish policies for providing essential infrastructure to all housing units, regulate the amount and variety of open space and recreation areas, delineate acceptable noise levels in residential areas, and establish programs to provide for the safety of the residents. In sum, policies contained in General Plan Elements directly affect the quality of life for all unincorporated County citizens.

The Eight-Year Action Plan contained in Section [5 \(Housing Action Plan\)](#) includes the County’s commitments for implementation actions through October 2029.

### **Housing Element Organization**

The Housing Element is comprised of the following major components:

- The Community Profile and Needs Assessment (Section 2) contains an overview of the county’s population, housing and employment characteristics in the context of regional trends, as well as a discussion of existing and future housing needs, including special needs such as the elderly and large families, and the unincorporated area’s fair share of regional growth needs.
- Section [3](#) contains a review of housing constraints and resources, including governmental and market constraints to the maintenance, improvement and development of housing.
- Section [4](#) presents a review of the previous Housing Element, including a discussion of the appropriateness of goals and policies, the effectiveness of programs, and the progress in achieving quantified objectives.
- The goals, policies and programs that will guide the County’s actions through 2029 are presented in Section [5](#).