



**ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Members of the Eden Area Municipal Advisory Council  
**FROM:** Liz McElligott, Assistant Planning Director  
**MEETING DATE:** August 8, 2023  
**RE:** Public Review Draft of the Sixth Cycle Housing Element of the County General Plan

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Your Council was last updated on the status of preparation of the revised Housing Element of the County's General Plan on February 14, 2023. State law requires each local jurisdiction to revise its housing element every eight years. All cities and counties within a region must update their housing elements on the same eight-year cycle. The public review draft of the Sixth Cycle Housing Element is nearly complete and will be available on the Planning Department webpage on August 3<sup>rd</sup> (<http://www.acgov.org/cda/planning/housing-element/housing-element.htm>). Public comments will be accepted on the draft for at least 30 days during which time public meetings will be held to provide opportunity for input from the community and decision-makers. With the authorization of the Board of Supervisors, the draft will then be submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (State HCD) for a 90-day review, as prescribed by state law. After the draft Housing Element is revised to address comments from the state, another round of public meetings will be held and the Board of Supervisors will be asked to approve the final document.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff requests that your Council hear a presentation by staff on the Public Review Draft of the Housing Element, take public testimony, and provide comments on the draft document.

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The draft Housing Element was prepared in accordance with State HCD guidelines for the 6th Housing Element Cycle, incorporating additional considerations required under recent state housing-related legislation. Section I of the draft Housing Element provides an overview of the document and relevant regulation. Section II provides a summary of the projected housing need. Section III summarizes the adequacy of available housing sites and housing resources with reference to relevant appendices. Section IV contains goals, policies, and actions related to housing in Alameda County. The comprehensive research and analysis supporting the development of the goals, policies, and programs in Section IV are compiled in the appendices to the Housing Element.

Appendix A: Housing Needs Assessment – Appendix A is an analysis of the existing and projected housing needs of the community. It provides a profile of socio-demographic information, such as population characteristics, household information, housing stock, tenure, and housing affordability. The assessment also considers groups with special housing needs, such as seniors, farmworkers, the homeless, large households, and female-headed households.

Appendix B: Sites Inventory and Methodology – Appendix B includes an inventory listing adequate sites zoned for residential uses and available for development within the planning period to meet the County’s fair share of regional housing needs across all income levels.

Appendix C: Housing Constraints – This appendix contains an assessment of impediments to housing production across all income levels covering both governmental (e.g., zoning restrictions, fees, etc.) and nongovernmental (e.g., market, environmental, etc.) constraints.

Appendix D: Existing Programs Review – Appendix D is an evaluation of the results of the goals, policies, and programs adopted in the previous Housing Element that compares projected outcomes with actual achieved results.

Appendix E: Public Participation Summaries – This appendix includes a detailed summary of public outreach conducted during the preparation of the Housing Element. This section is not yet complete since the outreach process will continue through adoption of the Element.

Appendix F: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Assessment – To ensure that sites for housing, particularly lower-income units, provide access to amenities and opportunities, the analysis in this appendix assesses accessibility to jobs, transportation, good education, and health services relative to the housing sites identified in Appendix B to determine how the inventory affects fair housing conditions and access to opportunity.

Appendix G: Housing Resources – Appendix G provides a list of financial, administrative, and other resources at the local, regional, state, and federal levels to help the County address its housing needs.

**Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)**

The RHNA is based on estimates produced by the State Department of Finance (DOF) of the level of residential construction necessary to accommodate projected population growth during the planning period and to make up for current deficiencies in housing supply for existing residents. DOF determines the housing need for each region in the state and the Council of Governments for each region allocates a share of the regional housing need to each city and county in the region. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for determining the RHNA for each local jurisdiction in the San Francisco Bay Area. As a result of recent state legislation, the new RHNA process placed greater emphasis on social equity and the existing shortage of housing units available. State HCD’s oversight was also expanded to include approval of the allocation methodology in each region.

For Unincorporated Alameda County, the Final RHNA Plan for the 2023-2031 Housing Element cycle allocated a total of 4,711 new housing units, 2.66 times higher than the RHNA of 1,769 units for the previous 2015-2022 Housing Element cycle. The County’s RHNA by income category is provided in the table below.

<i>Unincorporated Alameda County RHNA</i>					
<i>Cycle</i>	<i>Very Low Income (&lt;50% of Area Median Income)</i>	<i>Low Income (50-80% of Area Median Income)</i>	<i>Moderate Income (80-120% of Area Median Income)</i>	<i>Above Moderate Income (&gt;120% of Area Median Income)</i>	<i>Total</i>
2015-2023	430 units	227 units	295 units	817 units	1,769 units
<b>2023-2031</b>	<b>1,251 units</b>	<b>721 units</b>	<b>763 units</b>	<b>1,976 units</b>	<b>4,711 units</b>
% Increase	191%	218%	159%	142%	166%

## Sites Inventory

The inventory of sites available for residential development provides an estimate of the number of housing units that could be constructed on each parcel, based on the zoning, general plan designation, and physical conditions on the site; to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity in the Unincorporated Area to accommodate the RHNA assigned to the County. A total of 472 sites were identified throughout the Unincorporated Area to accommodate 4,706 units. Planning staff used the following methodology to prepare the Sites Inventory:

1. Identified projects in the development pipeline
2. Identified vacant public and private parcels, using assessor's data, satellite imagery, and local knowledge
3. Identified underutilized parcels. 'Underutilized' is defined as the land itself being worth more than the existing improvements (pavement, buildings, etc.). Most of the underutilized sites included in the inventory are large parking lots, sites that are mostly vacant or parking with older (pre-1980) buildings and vacant commercial buildings.

After identifying vacant and underutilized sites, staff identified prospective sites that would be suitable for rezoning to meet the RHNA. Of the 472 total sites included in the inventory, 67 are sites proposed for rezoning either to increase the density allowed or to add housing as an allowed use, 81 were identified as underimproved, 250 are vacant, and 74 are sites on which housing projects are in the "pipeline" meaning that an application for a housing development has been submitted or a housing project has already been approved but not yet constructed.

The majority of RHNA units are in the Eden Area (approximately 47%) and Castro Valley (approximately 42%) with the remainder in Fairview and East County (see table below).

Below is a short list of major sites that account for most of these units:

- Bay Fair and Castro Valley BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit District) Station Parking Lots. State law requires that local jurisdictions ensure that zoning on BART-owned property within a half-mile of a BART station supports transit-oriented development (TOD) by complying with the standards set in BART's June 2021 *Technical Guide to Zoning for AB 2923 Conformance*. The standards address four elements of zoning: residential density, building height, floor area ratio (FAR), and parking for both motor vehicles and bicycles. The required minimum residential density is 75 units per acre. The TOD workplan BART prepared as a companion document to the technical guide identified the parking lot areas at both the Bay Fair and Castro Valley stations as developable in the mid-term future. Planning staff believe it is possible to develop both station sites within the Housing Element cycle with dedicated programming; and staff will continue discussions and coordination with BART representatives and developers pursuing TOD projects. Replacement parking would need to be included in any future development plans.
- The County Radio Communications station at Foothill Boulevard and 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Sheriff's office has informed CDA that they intend to stop using this property, and there is extensive guidance from State HCD for publicly owned vacant and underutilized sites to be listed in the Sites Inventory.
- The First Presbyterian Grove Way site, adjacent to Trader Joe's in Castro Valley. Staff have been informed by First Presbyterian of interest in developing housing at this location.
- A large site in East County inside the Urban Growth Boundary to the east of the City of Pleasanton.

State HCD generally directs jurisdictions to use unit density as a proxy for income category, with more densely zoned areas assigned to the Low- and Very Low-Income categories. Because the prospective sites listed above are all designated for higher densities development, most of their units are assigned to the Low- and Very Low-Income categories.

In addition to the sites listed in the inventory, projected development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) over the eight-year planning period can be counted toward the sixth cycle RHNA. Planning Department staff anticipate including 328 ADUs toward meeting the RHNA, based on ADU construction numbers from 2018 to 2022. Projected ADUs are assigned to income categories in accordance with ABAG guidance.

<i>Unincorporated Community</i>	<i>Units Per Area</i>	<i>% Of Total Units</i>	<i>Above Moderate Units As % Of Total Units Per Area</i>		<i>Moderate Units As % Of Total Units Per Area</i>		<i>Low And Very Low Income Units As % Of Total Units Per Area</i>	
			<i>Above Moderate Units</i>	<i>% Of Total Units Per Area</i>	<i>Moderate Units</i>	<i>% Of Total Units Per Area</i>	<i>Low And Very Low Income Units</i>	<i>% Of Total Units Per Area</i>
<b>Total</b>	4,706	100.0%	1,956	41.6%	778	16.5%	1,972	41.9%
<i>Eden Area</i>	2,211	47.0%	703	31.8%	586	26.5%	922	41.7%
<i>Ashland</i>	1,358	28.9%	231	17.0%	267	19.7%	860	63.3%
<i>Cherryland</i>	215	4.6%	72	33.5%	81	37.7%	62	28.8%
<i>Hayward Acres</i>	47	1.0%	17	36.2%	30	63.8%	-	-
<i>San Lorenzo</i>	591	12.6%	383	64.8%	208	35.2%	-	-
<i>Castro Valley</i>	1,978	42.0%	767	38.8%	187	9.5%	1,024	51.8%
<i>Fairview</i>	323	6.9%	292	90.4%	5	1.5%	26	8.0%
<i>Unincorporated Pleasanton</i>	194	4.1%	194	100.0%	-	0.0%	-	-
<i>Additional units (projected ADUs)</i>	328		32		98		198	
<b>Total Units Including ADUs</b>	5,034		1,988		876		2,170	

### **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH)**

This new requirement for the Sixth Housing Element Cycle, put in place by AB 686 (2018), requires that housing elements demonstrate that the local jurisdiction is “affirmatively furthering fair housing.”

Jurisdictions need to show compliance with the statute by:

- analyzing existing fair housing and segregation issues,
- identifying fair housing goals,
- developing strategies to implement these goals, and
- ensuring sites in the inventory are identified in such a way that promotes AFFH

AFFH needs to be considered in virtually every chapter of the element in addition to having its own chapter, the Fair Housing Assessment (Appendix F). The assessment includes a narrative of fair housing history in the Unincorporated County and a quantitative analysis of race, income, housing, and other data

at both the local and regional levels. The assessment is based in part on jurisdiction-specific analyses of relevant data provided by ABAG staff.

The AFFH analysis was used to inform fair housing goals, policies, and programs in the draft Housing Element, focusing on groups identified by the state as having special housing needs. These groups include:

- renters
- large families
- single-parent families
- agricultural workers
- seniors
- people with disabilities
- people experiencing homelessness

### **Draft Housing Plan**

The Housing Plan of the Housing Element serves as the County’s strategy for addressing its housing needs. It describes the housing goals, policies, and programs for the County. The goals indicate the County’s direction and intent on housing-related needs. Each goal encompasses several policies, which are statements that describe the County’s preferred course of action among a range of other options. Each goal also includes programs, which provide actionable steps to implement the County’s goals and to further the County’s progress towards meeting its housing allocation. Some programs contain quantified objectives, which represent measurable outcomes that can be used to benchmark the success of each program.

The Housing Element contains actions intended to significantly increase the amount and types of housing for all income levels in the Unincorporated County. These efforts are expected to be initiated throughout the planning period, through January 31, 2031. In accordance with state law, the County will also evaluate the progress and effectiveness of Housing Element programs on an annual basis. Together, these actions reflect the County’s commitment to increasing affordable housing and improving existing housing conditions. The goals, policies, and programs comprise a combination of strategies, including a continuation of existing successful policies and programs as well as new policies and programs to tackle emerging opportunities and constraints, address changes in state law, and provide innovative approaches to accommodate the larger RHNA.

### **Opportunities for Public Input**

There are many options for the public to learn about the draft Housing Element and provide comments. To ensure easy communication, a Housing Element email address was set up for the public, [housingelement@acgov.org](mailto:housingelement@acgov.org).

Planning staff is also maintaining a webpage on the department site, located here: <https://www.acgov.org/cda/planning/housing-element/housing-element.htm>. A link is available on the website to sign up for email notices for future meetings and other housing element news. By August 3<sup>rd</sup>, a link will be provided to access the draft Housing Element document.

In the near future, members of the public can also provide input on the goals, policies, and programs in the draft Housing Element on the County’s online engagement tool at <https://alamedacounty.consider.it/>.

The table below includes a list of public meetings where both decision-makers and members of the public will be asked to provide comments on the draft.

<b>Tentative Public Meeting Schedule</b>	
July 26	Board Unincorporated Services Committee
August 8	Eden Area MAC
August 10	Fairview MAC (Special Meeting)
August 14	Castro Valley MAC
August 22	Agricultural Advisory Committee
September 5	Planning Commission
September 21	Board of Supervisors Planning Meeting

**CONCLUSION**

Staff requests that your Council accept this report and provide comments on the draft Housing Element and the process to date. After revising the draft Housing Element in response to comments from the state, staff will return to your Council to present the final draft Housing Element to request your recommendation for its adoption by the Board of Supervisors.