

City of Sacramento

2014-2021 Housing Element Update

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Housing Element?

State law requires that every city and county in California adopt a Housing Element, subject to State approval, as part of its General Plan (refer to [State Government Code Section 65580 to 65589.8](#)). The Housing Element serves as the City's overall housing strategy and plans for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community through a comprehensive analysis of need, constraints, and resources as well as policies and programs to address those needs.

Why is the planning period for the Housing Element eight years now instead of five?

As a result of Senate Bill 375, which was signed by the Governor in late 2008, the planning period for the Housing Element increased from five to eight years.

How did SB 375 change the Housing Element process?

With the change to the Housing Element planning period from five to eight years, cities and counties are now required to coordinate planning for future housing development along with regional transportation and land use planning that is part of the [Metropolitan Transportation Plan \(MTP\) process](#). The goal is to promote sustainable development by placing new housing near jobs, services and transit in order to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions.

What is the RHNA?

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation or RHNA establishes an overall housing needs projection for our region, which is divided into different income levels (e.g., low-income, moderate-income). As adopted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), the total RHNA for the City is 24,101 units of which 8,411 units must be affordable to lower-income households.

Is the City required to build all the units identified in its share of the RHNA?

No, the City does not have to build these units. The City does have to ensure that it has a sufficient supply of land zoned to accommodate the units identified in its share of the RHNA. For the City's lower-income portion of the RHNA, the City must have vacant or underutilized land that is zoned residential or residential mixed-use at a density of 30 dwelling units per acre or higher (30 du/ac).

What is the Mixed-Income Ordinance?

The Mixed-Income Housing Ordinance ([Chapter 17.190](#) of the City's Zoning Code), which established an inclusionary housing program in 2000, requires 15% of all housing built in certain areas of the City to be affordable to low (80% of Area Median Income (AMI)) and very low-income (50% AMI) households. The current ordinance applies to current and former greenfield areas of the City such as Natomas and Delta Shores that are typically built out as master planned communities. However, the ordinance also applies to two large brownfield sites, the Downtown Railyards and the Curtis Park Railyards, as well as to some infill areas including the portion of North Sacramento north of Interstate 80.

What is the Housing Trust Fund Ordinance?

The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Ordinance ([Chapter 17.188](#) of the City Zoning Code) was established in 1989 that requires commercial development to pay a per-square-foot fee to address the resulting need for affordable workforce housing in the community due to the creation of low-wage jobs. The fee generated close to \$3 million for the development of affordable workforce housing development in 2006, but due to the economy it currently generates only about \$250,000 annually.

Where can I find more information about the Housing Element?

Information is available at the City's [Housing Element website](#) as well as from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) including the following links:

[HCD Presentation on updating Housing Elements](#)

[HCD Website: Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements](#)

How can I get involved?

Meetings, hearings and workshops will be held from fall 2012 until the end of 2013. Information about these events will be posted in advance on the City's [Housing Element website](#).