

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Draft Plan Charts Course for Locating New and Protecting Existing Housing

Draft Housing Element Outlines Entire Spectrum of Housing Needs in Unincorporated San Mateo County into the Next Decade

Redwood City — As the Peninsula faces an acute housing shortage, the County of San Mateo is exploring where to plan for growth and ways to expand and protect the supply of affordable housing into the next decade.

The final plan will help shape the region's future: communities that long relied on relatively affordable housing to draw new residents who fueled job and economic growth can no longer count on that advantage.

The County has released for public review the [draft Housing Element](#) that outlines expected housing needs for the next eight years, from 2023 to 2031.

The 2023-31 draft Housing Element covers the [unincorporated areas](#) of San Mateo County, that is the half of the county not within a city or town limits. This ranges from rural (Pescadero, Montara) to suburban (Broadmoor, Emerald Lake Hills) to urban (North Fair Oaks, unincorporated Colma).

The Housing Element serves as a guide to address the comprehensive housing needs of the unincorporated areas. The primary focus of the Housing Element is to ensure decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing for current and future residents of the unincorporated areas, including those with special needs.

The draft Housing Element incorporates strategies to create up to 3,414 new housing units of various kinds in the unincorporated areas.

Key goals also include protecting existing affordable housing, supporting housing for households with extremely low to moderate-incomes and promoting housing near employment and transportation centers.

The plan and background information are available the County's [Department of Planning and Building](#).

Comments on any aspect of the draft Housing Element may be submitted through the form on [this page](#), or transmitted directly to William Gibson at wgibson@smcgov.org until Dec. 18, 2022.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors will hold a hearing on the Draft Housing Element at their regularly scheduled meeting on Dec. 6, 2022.

Why the Draft Housing Element Matters

The draft notes that “housing costs continue to be unaffordable to most county residents, and many households ... overpay for housing.”

In 2019, more than half of renter households paid more than 30 percent of income for housing, and roughly a third paid more than 50 percent. These households are disproportionately of Hispanic/Latinx heritage or other communities of color.

And these renter households are far more likely to experience overcrowding, and in some areas roughly 20 percent to 30 percent of renter households are overcrowded.

State law requires the County, like all local governments, to update the Housing Element every eight years. The state also assigns a number of housing units the County is required to plan for over that time.

That number of units is called the [Regional Housing Needs Allocation](#), which also must account for housing that would be affordable to a wide range of family incomes.

Key strategies to achieve the goal of creating up to 3,414 housing units include:

- Identifying all sites available for housing
- Rezoning industrial areas for additional housing
- Incentivizing the creation of accessory dwelling units (“in-law” or “second” units)
- Protecting mobile home parks from conversion
- Reducing barriers to housing production throughout the County

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