

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT NEGATIVE DECLARATION**

A notice, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code 21,000, et seq.), that the following project: "San Mateo County 2022-2031 Housing Element Update," when adopted and implemented, will not have a significant impact on the environment.

FILE NO.: N/A

OWNER: N/A

APPLICANT: County of San Mateo Planning and Building Department

NAME OF PERSON UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT OR RECEIVING THE PROJECT APPROVAL (IF DIFFERENT FROM APPLICANT): N/A

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.: Various; countywide

LOCATION: Unincorporated San Mateo County; countywide

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is a General Plan Amendment replacing the current Housing Element of the County's General Plan, covering the period from 2014 to 2022, with a revised Housing Element covering the state-mandated Planning Period from 2022 to 2031.

State law requires jurisdictions to periodically update the Housing Element of their General Plan; the update schedule, process and the contents of the Housing Element are also regulated by state law. The updated Housing Element covers the period from 2022 to 2031, and on adoption will replace the prior Housing Element, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2014. Consistent with state law, the revised Housing Element: (1) provides an updated assessment of the County's existing and projected housing needs; (2) identifies opportunities and constraints relevant to meeting those needs; (3) evaluates the effectiveness of current housing programs; and (4) develops new policies, programs, and quantified objectives to meet identified housing needs in unincorporated areas. The draft Housing Element is organized into an introduction and executive summary, two main sections, and multiple appendices, as described below:

- Introduction and Executive Summary. This section explains the scope and purpose of the Housing Element and its relationship to other County plans and programs, and briefly summarizes the contents of the Housing Element.
- Housing Plan. This section includes the County housing goals, policies and programs intended to address the County's identified housing needs and address barriers to the provision of housing, and the County's quantified objectives for housing development over the 2022-2031 period.

- Regional Housing Needs Allocation. This section summarizes the County’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA, discussed below), and describes the County’s ability to meet its RHNA obligations, including a summary of the analysis contained in Appendix E.
- Appendix A: Demographics, Housing Conditions and Housing Needs. This section contains detailed assessment of current and projected housing conditions and housing needs in the unincorporated County, for all areas and all segments of County population.
- Appendix B: Constraints to Housing Production. This section assesses various constraints to housing production, including governmental and non-governmental constraints, environmental factors, and others.
- Appendix C: Housing Resources. This section describes existing resources for housing production and assistance, including governmental and non-governmental resources.
- Appendix D: Review of 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element. This section summarizes the status and outcomes of the policies and programs incorporated in the 2014-2022 Housing Element.
- Appendix E: Adequate Housing Sites Inventory. Appendix E presents a full inventory of all sites available for development or redevelopment as housing over the next eight years, to meet the County’s 2022-2031 RHNA for all income levels.
- Appendix F: Public Participation and Input. This appendix summarizes the outreach, participation, and public input and comment involved in updated the Housing Element, as well as the response to input and comment incorporated in the draft Housing Element.
- Appendix G: Fair Housing Assessment. Appendix G and Appendices G-1 through G-5, listed below, constitute an assessment of fair housing conditions and needs in the unincorporated County, and summarizes policies intended to address fair housing issues.
  - Appendix G-1: AFFH Maps and Tables
  - Appendix G-2: Resident Survey
  - Appendix G-3: Disparate Access to Educational Opportunities
  - Appendix G-4: State Fair Housing Laws and Regulations
  - Appendix G-5: Fair Housing Action Plan

A core component of the Housing Element is a demonstration that the County can meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or “RHNA.” The RHNA is the County’s share of overall regional housing need, as determined by the State of California and the Association of Bay Area Governments, for the eight years of the Housing Element cycle. For the 2022-2031 cycle, the unincorporated County has been assigned a RHNA of 2,833 units, divided into four income levels: very low, low, moderate, and above moderate. The Housing Element must show that there are sufficient feasibly developable or redevelopable sites, in combination with development already in the pipeline and projected accessory dwelling unit and SB 9<sup>1</sup> development to match the County’s RHNA, in total and by income category, or must incorporate policies to address any shortfall.

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1. SB 9 is a state law adopted in 2021, allowing small-scale multifamily development and subdivisions of existing single-family zoned properties.

The Adequate Sites Inventory appendix contains the Housing Element's detailed assessment of all developable and redevelopable parcels in the unincorporated County, as well as an inventory of projects currently underway, and projections of likely development of accessory dwelling units and small-scale multifamily development pursuant to SB 9 over the next eight years. While the County has sufficient development capacity to meet its overall RHNA, there is a shortfall in capacity for lower-income categories. The Housing Element addresses this shortfall by the proposed rezoning of three County areas from commercial, industrial, and low-density residential zoning to zoning for by-right residential development at densities of over 80 and up to 120 units per acre. However, these rezonings are incorporated in the Housing Element as future programs which will be initiated at a later date, accompanied by separate environmental review.

The updated Housing Element is a policy document, and its adoption would not, in itself, produce environmental impacts. The Housing Element contains an inventory of existing and future programs intended to address the County's housing needs, but does not in itself alter any land use or development regulations, impact the developability or development intensity of any property, or directly or indirectly cause any development to occur. As noted, the Housing Element does propose that the County undertake several rezoning future rezoning programs that would alter the type and intensity of development allowed in multiple areas of the County, in order to meet a shortfall of sites for the development of higher-density housing suitable for lower-income groups. However, details of these rezoning programs are not yet known, and any future implementation would require discretionary legislative action by the Board of Supervisors, making the analysis of any potential environmental impacts of such programs speculative at this time. In addition, separate environmental review will be completed when the rezoning programs are fully developed and implemented. Adoption of the Housing Element constitutes neither approval nor adoption of the proposed future rezonings.

The full draft San Mateo County 2022-2031 Housing Element is available here: <https://www.smcgov.org/media/142367/download?attachment>

#### FINDINGS AND BASIS FOR A NEGATIVE DECLARATION

The Planning Department has reviewed the initial study for the project and, based upon substantial evidence in the record, finds that:

1. The project will not adversely affect water or air quality or increase noise levels substantially.
2. The project will not have adverse impacts on the flora or fauna of the area.
3. The project will not degrade the aesthetic quality of the area.
4. The project will not have adverse impacts on traffic or land use.

5. In addition, the project will not:
- a. Create impacts which have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment.
  - b. Create impacts which achieve short-term to the disadvantage of long-term environmental goals.
  - c. Create impacts for a project which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.
  - d. Create environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

The County of San Mateo has, therefore, determined that the environmental impact of the project is insignificant.

MITIGATION MEASURES included in the project to avoid potentially significant effects:

No mitigation measures are required.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY CONSULTATION

N/A

INITIAL STUDY

The San Mateo County Current Planning Section has reviewed the Environmental Evaluation of this project and has found that the probable environmental impacts are insignificant. A copy of the initial study is attached.

REVIEW PERIOD: May 3, 2023 to June 9, 2023

All comments regarding the correctness, completeness, or adequacy of this Negative Declaration must be received by the County Planning and Building Department, 455 County Center, Second Floor, Redwood City, no later than **5:00 p.m.**, June 9, 2023.

CONTACT PERSON

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