



Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Amy J. Bodek, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

Dennis Slavin
Chief Deputy Director,
Regional Planning

NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

January 5, 2021

TO: Office of Planning and Research, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting for the County of Los Angeles Housing Element Update**

LEAD AGENCY: County of Los Angeles

The County of Los Angeles (County) is the Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and intends to prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Housing Element of the County of Los Angeles General Plan (General Plan) for the 2021–2029 planning period (Housing Element Update). The County has prepared this Notice of Preparation to provide Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, organizations, and other interested parties with information regarding this project and its potential environmental effects, and **to solicit your input on the scope and content of the PEIR**. For more information on the project, please visit: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The County is updating the Housing Element of the General Plan for the 2021–2029 planning period. The Housing Element is one of the seven required elements of the General Plan per the California Government Code, beginning at Section 65583. Generally, state law mandates updates to the Housing Element every 8 years. The Housing Element serves as a policy guide to address the comprehensive housing needs of the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (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 County is required to ensure the availability of residential sites, at adequate densities and appropriate development standards, in the unincorporated areas to accommodate its fair share of the regional housing need, also known as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation.

The Housing Element Update will consist of the following main components:

Adequate Sites Inventory

The RHNA is mandated by state law to quantify future housing growth throughout the state. This informs the local planning process by addressing existing and future housing need resulting from estimated growth in population, employment, and households. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is responsible for oversight of the RHNA process in the SCAG region, which encompasses six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura) and 191 cities in an area covering more than 38,000 square miles. The RHNA allocation for the County for the 2021–2029 planning period is approximately 90,000 units, which is broken down by income category to accommodate the estimated growth need at various income levels. As required by state law, the Housing Element must identify the County's ability to accommodate this estimated growth through available sites and appropriate land use and zoning.

In order to demonstrate that there are enough sites within the unincorporated areas to accommodate the RHNA allocation, the Housing Element Update will include an Adequate Sites Inventory. In order to count toward the RHNA allocation, sites must meet several criteria, including residential zoning of a certain density, a minimum lot size, and that the site must be either vacant or underutilized. Underutilized means that the property is not built to its maximum capacity, so there is potential for more units on a site. If a local jurisdiction cannot demonstrate that there are enough sites to address the RHNA allocation, the local jurisdiction is required to develop a rezoning program. The rezoning ensures that there are enough sites with sufficient densities to address the housing need identified through the RHNA. As a part of the County's Housing Element Update, the County will include a rezoning program. The rezoning program aims to focus growth and density increase in the unincorporated areas with access to services and infrastructure and outside of the County's environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas.

Constraints and Barriers

Another component of the Housing Element Update is the identification and analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including housing for people with disabilities. The Housing Element Update will identify the specific standards and processes of these constraints and evaluate their impact on the supply and affordability of housing. This analysis will determine whether local regulatory standards pose an actual constraint and must also demonstrate local efforts to remove constraints that hinder a local jurisdiction from meeting its housing needs. At a minimum, the analysis will address the following: codes and enforcement and on- and off-site improvement standards, constraints for people with disabilities, fees and exactions, land use controls, non-governmental constraints, and processing and permitting procedures. New state law requirements regarding lending, labor shortage, NIMBYism, and other private and environmental constraints will also be addressed.

Goals, Policies and Implementation Programs

The Housing Element Update will also include goals, policies, and implementation programs to address housing needs.

Goals: General statements about the desired housing outcomes expressing the community's values.

Policies: Specific statements that guide decision making.

Implementation programs: Actions for carrying out the policies of the Housing Element. Each implementation program identifies lead/partner agencies and timelines. The Department of Regional Planning partners with other County agencies that oversee housing, such as the Los Angeles County Development Authority and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, for the implementation and administration of these programs.

Other Project Elements and Required Approvals

The Housing Element Update will also include the following components:

Amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element: The Land Use Legend will be amended to (1) add a minimum allowable residential density to certain land use designations; (2) establish that the allowable residential density specified by the General Commercial (CG) land use designation in the General Plan will also apply to the commercial land use designations in certain community-based plans, where such land use designations do not currently specify the allowable residential density; and (3) clarify that in designations that allow mixed uses (CR, CG, CM, MU and MU-R), the maximum Floor Area Ratio only applies to the commercial component, while the residential component is subject to the allowable density.

Amendments to Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the County Code: The Zoning Code will be amended to add development standards pertaining to floor area dedicated to residential use in mixed use projects in the Mixed Use Development Zone (MXD).

Completion of the Housing Element Update and the local adoption process will include various public engagement opportunities, such as a survey (<https://planning.lacounty.gov/housing/involved>), public workshops and meetings, and public hearings. The Housing Element Update must be completed within the timeframe established by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). State law requires adoption by October 15, 2021, or allows a grace period through February 12, 2022. The State Department of Housing and Community Development will review the Housing Element Update for compliance with applicable statutory provisions.

A PEIR will provide the environmental determination required by CEQA and will be adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

PROJECT NUMBER: 2020-000606

PROJECT NAME: County of Los Angeles Housing Element Update

PLAN NUMBERS: General Plan Amendment No. RPPL2020004333, Advance Planning Project No. RPPL2020001008, Environmental Assessment No. RPPL2020001009

PROJECT APPLICANT: County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning

PROJECT LOCATION: Unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County; see Figure 1

PROJECT APPROVALS: The County has sole approval authority over the project. No approvals are required by other public agencies.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: The County has determined that a PEIR will be required to satisfy environmental review for the proposed project. Therefore, as allowed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(d), the County has not prepared an Initial Study and will instead begin work directly on the PEIR. The PEIR will focus on the potentially significant effects of the project, discuss any effects found not to be significant, and assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, as well as growth-inducing effects. The PEIR will include an evaluation of the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and forestry resources
- Air quality
- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Energy
- Geology/soils
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Hydrology/water quality
- Land use and planning
- Mineral resources
- Noise
- Population/housing
- Public services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal cultural resources
- Utilities and service systems
- Wildfire

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The County invites interested parties to provide written comments as to your specific concerns about the project's potential environmental effects. The County requests that any Responsible or Trustee Agency responding to this notice do so in a manner consistent with Section 15082(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. **A 30-day Notice of Preparation review period starts on January 5, 2021, and ends on February 4, 2021.** Due to the time limits mandated by state law, please send your written response to the Department of Regional Planning at the address below at the earliest possible date, but **no later than February 4, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.** Please include your name and address for all written correspondence.

Please send by mail to the following address:

Tina Fung, Supervising Regional Planner
Housing Policy Section
County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012

For email submittal of your comment letter, send to: housing@planning.lacounty.gov.

Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and your reason for suggesting the study of these topics in the PEIR. ***All written comment letters/emails will be included in an appendix in the Draft PEIR and the contents considered in the preparation of the PEIR.***

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: On March 4, 2020, the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency in California as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 (superseding the Brown Act-related provisions of Executive Order N-25-20 issued on March 12, 2020), which allows a local legislative body to hold public meetings via teleconferencing and to make public meetings accessible telephonically or otherwise electronically to all members of the public seeking to observe and to address the local legislative body.

In accordance with the Safer at Home Orders by the State of California and County of Los Angeles, the County's Department of Regional Planning will conduct one virtual public scoping meeting to inform the public and interested agencies about the project and solicit oral and written comments as to the appropriate scope and content of the PEIR. All interested parties are invited to attend the virtual scoping meeting to assist in identifying issues to be addressed in the PEIR.

The virtual scoping meeting will include a brief presentation of the proposed components of the Housing Element Update to be addressed in the PEIR and a summary of the PEIR process, and will provide attendees with an opportunity to provide input on the scope and content of the PEIR. The virtual scoping meeting will be held **online via Zoom on Saturday, January 23, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** You may register for the virtual scoping meeting at <https://planning.lacounty.gov/housing/involved>.

Spanish translation and interpretation will be available. For more information please call 213-974-6427 or visit the following website: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>.

Servicios de interpretación estarán disponibles. Para más información, llame a 213-974-6427 o visite <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY AND PROJECT WEBSITE: For more information and to stay informed on the progress of the project and PEIR, please visit the project website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>. To view the Notice of Preparation online, please visit <https://planning.lacounty.gov/housing/involved>.

Attachment: Figure 1, Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County

