



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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Meeting Date: February 27, 2019

To: McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee

From: Planning and Building Department

Subject: Background Information on the 2019 Housing Element Update

The following report provides a brief overview and background information for the public workshop on the County's 2019 Housing Element update.

State law requires cities and counties to have housing elements as part of their general plans, and that jurisdictions regularly update their housing elements. The housing element identifies existing and projected housing needs and establishes goals, policies, standards and implementation measures for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing in the unincorporated areas of the county. The housing element must consider the needs of all residents of the unincorporated area. Humboldt County's housing element was last updated in 2014. The planning horizon for the 2019 housing element will extend to 2027.

The 2019 housing element must be updated by August 2019 per state law requirements. Some of the updates are needed due to changes in State housing law, and others relate to unmet housing needs or underperforming programs. The housing element is the only general plan element that is reviewed by the State for compliance with State law. Also, jurisdictions must report annually to the State on the progress made to implement their housing element. The State does incentivize compliance by linking funding opportunities to housing element law compliance.

An adequate supply of housing affordable to county residents is fundamental to community well-being and economic prosperity. Housing elements are required to have the following four components:

1. **Housing needs:** local governments must adequately plan to meet their existing and projected housing needs, and the needs of specific populations. The housing needs must factor in the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing needs allocation. This analysis needs to include the specific needs and resources available to address these needs.
2. **Site inventory and analysis:** housing element law requires local governments to prepare an inventory of land suitable for residential development. This analysis needs to consider the relationship of zoning and existing and available public facilities and services. The inventory is used to identify sites that can be developed for housing within the planning period.
3. **Constraints analysis:** what actual and potential governmental and non-governmental constraints are hindering the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including housing for people with disabilities.
4. **Program requirements:** the housing element must identify specific programs that will allow it to implement the stated policies and achieve the stated goals and objectives. Programs must include specific action steps the locality will take to implement its policies and achieve its goals and objectives. Programs must also include a specific timeframe for implementation, identify

the agencies or officials responsible for implementation, describe the jurisdiction's specific role in implementation, and (whenever possible) identify specific, measurable outcomes.

The jurisdiction's update process must include a diligent effort to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community.

Housing element updates start with the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. The State completes the Regional Housing Needs Determination. The below table presents the State's housing need determination for this new 8.7 year planning cycle for the County as a whole:

Income Category	Percent	Housing Unit Need
Very Low*	24.4%	829
Low	15.7%	532
Moderate	18.1%	613
Above Moderate	41.8%	1,416
Total	100.0%	3,390
*Extremely-Low	12.3%	Included in Very-Low Category

Each income category is defined by the Health and Safety Code (Section 50093, et seq.): Extremely-Low income: 30% less than Humboldt's median family income (MFI) of \$42,685, Very-Low income: less than 50% of MFI, Low income: 50% to 80% of MFI, Moderate income: 80% to 120% percent of MFI, and Above Moderate income: above 120% MFI.

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is the governing body for determine how the housing needs will be allocated to the jurisdictions. On December 20, 2018, the HCAOG adopted the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Methodology (link for more information and the adopted RHNA: <http://www.hcaog.net/announcements/regional-housing-needs-assessment-rhna-cycle-6>) that uses a 50/50 jobs/population split of the RHNA allocations. The outcome of the allocation methodology is presented in the table below. The highlighted values represent the target number of dwellings units to be constructed over the 8.7 planning period for the unincorporated area.

Jurisdiction	Very Low Income Allocation	Low Income Allocation	Moderate Income Allocation	Above Moderate Allocation	Proposed Total RHNA Allocation
Arcata	142	95	111	262	610
Blue Lake	7	4	5	7	23
Eureka	231	147	172	402	952
Ferndale	9	5	6	13	33
Fortuna	73	46	51	120	290
Rio Dell	12	8	9	22	51
Trinidad	4	4	3	7	18
Unincorporated Area	351	223	256	583	1413
RHNA TARGETS	829	532	613	1416	3390

As the RHNA process has concluded, the County is now reviewing and updating the residential land inventory. The inventory assesses the amount of land available for residential development while considering physical constraints that may impede development. The inventory also accounts for land that has been subdivided and/or developed for residential purposes since the 2014 inventory.

The Department of Finance (DOF) provides demographic and housing data that must be considered as part of the update process, specifically for the assessment of the housing needs mentioned above. Highlights of the DOF data is available on the County's website: <https://humboldt.gov.org/2448/2019->

[Housing-Element](#). The DOF data is supplemented by the County's own housing construction data sourced from planning and building permit data.

Parallel to the data collection and evaluation phase, the County is gathering public input on what housing policies and programs are working and those that are not working, and input on how underperforming programs could be improved. Also the County is seeking public input on the existing and projected housing needs, and input on whether there any unmet housing needs that have not been captured. Gathering public input and feedback is the critical focus of the public workshop being hosted by the McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee, and others being held around the County.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How much housing has been built since the 2014 HE update?

A: The below table displays how many permits for the construction of dwelling units have been issued since the 2014 Housing Element:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Percent
Outside of McKinleyville	61	44	66	57	228	57%
In McKinleyville	43	43	51	35	172	43%
Total In County	104	87	117	92	400	100%

The 2014 Housing Element multifamily implementation measure (H-IM9) has resulted in the construction of 78 multifamily units, 66 of the units being located in the Myrtle town area.

As for the overall development potential, under the current Housing Element cycle (also referred to as the 5th cycle), 16 percent of the overall development potential is in McKinleyville:

Total countywide development potential in the RHNA 5th Cycle: 5,463 units

McKinleyville development potential in the RHNA 5th Cycle: 900 units

Q: What's is mid-point density? What does this mean?

A: One of the Housing Element standards is for parcels to be developed to meet or exceed the mid-point density. This requirement has been in place since at least the 2004 Housing Element. Discretionary land use permits, e.g., Use and Special permits, and subdivisions must demonstrate conformance with this standard. A building permit, for say a storage shed, does not trigger this standard, however.

Determining the mid-point of the density range for a parcel is a two-step analysis. First, the mathematical mid-point value of a density range specified for a land use designation is found. The second step is to account for physical and environmental limitations that may be present and hinder development, referred to as the net developable area. The net developable area is the total parcel area minus areas that cannot be physically developed due to mapped hazards or physical constraints. The net developable area is determined during application processing. Examples of physical or environmental constraints can include wetlands or surface water, or mapped earthquake faults.

For example, a two acre parcel with a density range of 1 to 7 dwelling units per acre, has a mapped wetland. The wetland and its associated buffer altogether comprise 0.50 acres of the parcel, yielding a net developable area of 1.5 acres. The mid-point density for this parcel would be 6 dwelling units.

Q: When does mid-point density apply?

A: It applies to all discretionary permits and subdivisions; it does not apply, however, to developments that are principally permitted, e.g., only a building permit is needed.

For discretionary land use permits, e.g., Use and Special permits, subdivisions, a finding that the project will not reduce the residential density below the mid-point density must be in order to approve a discretionary permit and subdivision. This is because the mid-point density is utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining the County's compliance with housing element law.

Q: What is multi-family housing?

A: The definition of different types of dwellings from the Inland Zoning Regulations are (the Coastal Zone definition is very similar):

Dwelling, One Family. A building containing exclusively one (1) dwelling unit.

Dwelling, Two Family or Duplex. A detached building under one roof, designed for or occupied exclusively by two (2) families living independently of each other.

Dwelling, Multiple. A building or portion thereof containing three (3) or more dwelling units, including apartments and flats but excluding rooming and boarding houses, lodging houses, motels, manufactured home parks, hotels, fraternity or sorority houses and private residence clubs.

Q: Are there new housing laws?

A: Since the last update the most significant housing law changes are the new allowances for accessory dwelling units (ADU), also known as secondary dwelling units, mother-in-law units, or granny flats.

The objective of the new allowances is to reduce regulatory and financial barriers that hinder the development of ADUs. Some of the highlights of the new allowances are:

- Principally permitted in zones that allow single-family or multi-family use.
- The ADU does not need to be subordinate to principal dwelling.
- An ADU can be created through the conversion of a garage, carport or covered parking structure.
- An ADU to be developed by converting an existing garage does not need to meet setbacks.
- Requires special districts and water corporations to charge proportional fee based on ADUs size or number of plumbing fixtures.
- Reduces required parking spaces for an ADU to one space; or if located within a half mile of public transit, no additional parking can be required for the ADU.
- If sprinklers are not required for the primary unit, then sprinklers cannot be not required for the ADU.
- While jurisdictions may adopt their own ADU regulations, the scope of regulations a jurisdiction may adopt are specified and narrowed.
- A Coastal Development Permit is still required to develop ADUs in the Coastal Zone permit permitted. Also, affirms that the new ADU allowances do not supersede the Coastal Act.

Q: What are some housing topics being considered?

A: Housing areas of interest being considered are:

- (1) New allowances for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in accordance with state law;
- (2) New allowances for tiny houses;
- (3) Facilitate and fund development of Emergency Shelters on parcels previously zoned for them;
- (4) Facilitate and fund transitional and supportive housing; and
- (5) Allowances for more Farm Employee Housing.

These topics have been identified because they would implement existing state law and County land use regulations. Others, would address unmet needs. However, this list is not exhaustive or final, and Planning staff is looking for public input and feedback. Should these housing topics, or others, advance and be developed into policies and goals, implementation may result in amendments to the General Plan and/or Zoning Regulations.

Q: What's next in the process? Will there be more opportunities to participate?

A: Following the public workshops series, public input will be collated and posted to the county's website. The County is also developing online public engage tools, e.g., a survey, that will be made available. Comments can also be emailed to LongRangePlanning@co.humboldt.ca.us.

Following the workshops staff will be preparing the draft 2019 Housing Element. The draft will be published on the County's website and will be available for download. Planning staff anticipates the first public hearing before the Planning Commission will be in early May 2019.

If you're interested in receiving notification for upcoming meetings, hearings, or when online public participation tools are released, please subscribe to the "General Plan Implementation" list on the County's Notify Me, <https://humboldt.gov.org/list.aspx> service:

 Notify Me		
METHOD	LIST NAME	DESCRIPTION
 	Auction Updates	Receive instant notification whenever new items are added to the County Auction Bill.
 	County Newsletter	
 	Eureka Main Library Thursday Afternoon Book Group	Anyone is welcome to drop in at this book group for adults. The group meets on one Thursday afternoon each month for a lively discussion of the latest book. It's at lunch hour so feel free to bring a sack lunch.
 	General Plan Implementation	Meeting Notifications, Draft Documents, and Public Comments for the 2019 Housing Element Update, and the Zoning Text Amendments and Zone Reclassifications.
