

CASE NUMBER: PHG 11-0028

APPLICANT: City of Escondido

LOCATION: Citywide

TYPE OF PROJECT: General Plan Housing Element

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

General Plan Housing Element adoption setting forth the City's housing goals and policies for the years 2013-2020. The document is online at:

www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/PDFs/Planning/GPUpdate/GeneralPlanChapterIV.pdf

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend adoption for City Council consideration.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Citywide for land use categories allowing residential.

ZONING: Citywide for all residential and mixed use land use zones.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF ISSUES:

The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory "elements" of California General Plans. The document assesses the housing needs of all economic segments of the community and defines the goals and policies that will guide the approach to resolving housing needs through a number of recommended programs. State law describes in detail the necessary contents of housing elements, which are reviewed and certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The document incorporates the most up-to-date data and information readily available at the time of writing, which includes information from the 2000 and 2010 Census. The element also includes an evaluation of the current Housing Element (online at: www.escondido.org/Data/Sites/1/media/pdfs/Housing/HousingElement.pdf) by assessing the existing policies, and resources of the public and private sector to accommodate housing needs of the community.

Staff feels that the issues are as follow:

1. Whether the Housing Element is in compliance state law.
2. Whether the Housing Element policies/programs will address community-wide housing needs.

REASONS FOR STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. The Housing Element has undergone separate California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) review and has been found in compliance with state law.
2. The state's review of the Housing Element's policies and programs has determined that Escondido's housing needs can be adequately addressed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Petrek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Petrek
Principal Planner

Role of the Housing Element

This Housing Element covers the planning period of January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2020. The housing goals and policies have been integrated with the updated General Plan. The element focuses on strategies and programs that conserve and improve housing options for all income levels; provide adequate housing sites; assist in the development of affordable housing; remove constraints to housing development; and promote equal housing opportunities for all members of the community. Specific housing programs have been incorporated that will allow the city to support a wide-range of housing densities and intensities that are well-integrated in the community and convenient to facilities and services (refer to the Housing Element Implementation Matrix).

Public Participation

Public participation was critical to the preparation of the Housing Element. Outreach efforts were intended to reach all segments of the community, including lower and moderate income households and persons with special housing needs. Because the Housing Element has a distinct approval process, separate workshops were scheduled with the Planning Commission and City Council in July and August 2011. Over the 3.5-year General Plan Update adoption process other public outreach efforts were conducted including community-wide workshops, questionnaires, surveys, and City Council appointed citizen's committee meetings.

General Plan Consistency

State planning law requires that Housing Elements be consistent with all General Plan elements. While each element is independent, the elements are also interrelated. Certain goals and policies of each element may also address issues that are primary subjects of other elements. This integration throughout the General Plan creates a strong basis for the implementation of plans and programs and achievement of community goals.

Although the Housing Element was prepared in conjunction with the General Plan update, the land use assumptions for calculating available sites to meet proposed housing needs for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households were based on the *prior* General Plan land use map. This approach assured that final certification of the Housing Element by HCD was not contingent on voters approving certain land use amendments at the 2012 election. Consequently, the results of the public vote did not jeopardize Housing Element compliance with State requirements, which requires adoption no later than April 27, 2013.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)

The Housing Element includes consideration of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), which identifies each jurisdiction's share of future housing units based on household income levels that have been allocated to the San Diego region by HCD during an 11-year planning cycle (2010-2020) for all socio-economic groups. SANDAG collaborates with all jurisdictions in the region to establish an allocation of housing units for each city and the county in the region.

Escondido actively participated in the RHNA allocation process when SANDAG received the allocation from HCD in 2009. In allocating the region’s future housing needs to jurisdictions, SANDAG was required to take the following factors into consideration pursuant to Section 65584 of the State Government Code:

- Market demand for housing;
- Employment opportunities;
- Availability of suitable sites and public facilities;
- Commuting patterns;
- Type and tenure of housing;
- Loss of units in assisted housing developments;
- Over-concentration of lower income households; and
- Geological and topographical constraints.

The RHNA allocates a “fair share” of the region’s projected housing needs by household income group to each city and county. The major goal of the RHNA is to assure a fair distribution of housing among cities and counties within the San Diego region, so that every community provides an opportunity for a mix of housing for all economic segments. The housing allocation targets are not building requirements, but are goals for each community to accommodate through appropriate planning policies and land use regulations.

Allocation targets are intended to assure that adequate sites and zoning are made available to accommodate anticipated housing demand during the planning period. Escondido’s RHNA that identifies the number of very low-, low-, moderate-, and above moderate-income households was adopted in October 2011. The City’s share of regional future housing needs is a total of 4,175 new units for the January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2020 period, including 1,833 units for extremely low- to low-income households (see Table 1). As discussed, the city’s prior General Plan could accommodate this anticipated growth. The recently approved General Plan Update voted on at the 2012 election further increases housing capacity.

Table 1: Housing Needs for 2010-2020

Income Category	Number of Units	Percent
Extremely Low (30% or less)	460	11.0%
Very Low (31 to 50%)	582	13.9%
Low (51 to 80%)	791	19.0%
Moderate (81% to 120%)	733	17.6%
Above Moderate (Over 120%)	1,609	38.5%
Total	4,175	100.0%

Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Review

After the City Council approved of the Draft Housing Element in the fall of 2012 staff was authorized to submit the document to HCD staff who reviewed the document for conformance with state law. Two rounds of comments were undertaken during which time HCD requested a more thorough inventory of properties anticipated for development (refer to Appendix pages B1 – B63), locations for future homeless shelters (refer to Appendix pages C1 – C4), and additional analysis regarding Proposition ‘S’ (Housing Element pages IV-72, IV-73). The Housing Element revisions have been reviewed by HCD whose staff has approved the document. If Planning Commission and/or City Council require substantive changes to the Housing Element it would necessitate additional review by HCD for compliance. Upon City Council adoption, HCD will certify the Housing Element.

Housing Element Enforcement

The State Department of Housing and Community Development has consecutively certified Escondido’s Housing Elements since 1981. Enforcement of Housing Elements for non-compliant jurisdictions has been a long-standing issue for the state legislature. Penalties for noncompliance include invalidating a General Plan in its entirety and restricting an agency’s land use decision making abilities. If the Housing Element is challenged in court, the court can curtail the local government’s ability to approve subdivisions, make zoning changes or issue permits. As an incentive for awarding certain grants, SANDAG has tied Housing Element compliance to the funding of some programs that have benefitted Escondido and other communities in the region.