



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City Council Adopts the General Plan Housing Element

POLICY DOCUMENT WILL GUIDE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN CITY OF SAN DIEGO FOR NEXT DECADE

SAN DIEGO – Today the City Council unanimously adopted an update to the General Plan’s Housing Element to set goals, objectives and policies to guide housing production over the coming decade as City leaders continue to take action to address a statewide housing crisis.

The City is required to update its [Housing Element](#) every eight years as a pathway to reach its share of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) as identified by the state with input from the San Diego Association of Governments. Under RHNA, the City must plan for over 108,000 new housing units serving all income groups by 2029.

“We know the statewide housing crisis will only worsen because of the pandemic so it’s crucial we build on the momentum we’ve made in recent years to cut red tape and get more shovels in the ground,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “We’re going to need over 100,000 new housing units over the next decade to keep pace with our growing population and this update provides a framework for how we get can get there.”

The Housing Element considers the City’s needs regarding amount, affordability, quality and access to housing. It provides a policy framework intended to guide housing production Citywide and identifies actions that other organizations are taking, in coordination with the City, to help meet housing goals. It looks to reduce constraints, such as fees and permitting processes, on housing development.

This 6th update of the Housing Element includes objectives, policies and programs to address the following goals:

- Facilitate the Construction of Quality Housing
- Improve the Existing Housing Stock
- Provide New Affordable Housing
- Enhance Quality of Life
- Exemplify Sustainable Development & Growth

- Publicize Housing Needs and Resources

This update also incorporates new City policies that weren't in effect during the last update as well as a variety of new laws and requirements adopted by state and local transportation, energy and community development officials.

“We’ve been reminded, during the COVID-19 pandemic, just how critical it is for all San Diegans to have adequate shelter and a place to live,” said Mike Hansen, the City’s Planning Director. “This document will be the catalyst for housing development and improvements in the City.”

The City held six public workshops, conducted an online survey, gathered input from stakeholders and attended other events to gather public input to help craft the Housing Element.

To monitor the progress of the Housing Element, the state requires the City to submit annual progress reports. City planners also create an annual housing inventory report for City Council and the public.

Under Mayor Faulconer, the City has worked to implement significant reforms to increase housing affordability, spur construction, lower costs and promote smart growth. In the last year, Mayor Faulconer has won City Council approval for several reforms including:

- **Parking Reform:** Eliminated parking requirements along new housing developments in transit priority areas, reducing development costs while encouraging usage of alternative forms of transportation.
- **Streamlined Regulations for Companion Units:** Resulted in a 375% spike in applications, making it easier and more affordable to permit “granny flats” and other companion units.
- **Reduced Fees:** Updated the Affordable, Sustainable, Infill Development Program to eliminate expedite fees for projects building 100% affordable housing in the city.
- **Streamlined Project Reviews:** Changed the municipal code to speed up the approval process.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing By-Right:** Updated the municipal code to allow for a streamlined process to construct housing with accompanying supportive services for homeless San Diegans.
- **Transitional Housing By-Right:** Eliminated burdensome regulations placed on developers to encourage more projects by-right to help formerly homeless individuals.
- **Affordable Housing Density Bonuses:** The added incentives go beyond what the current state law mandates to help spur the development of affordable housing for all San Diegans, including seniors, military personnel, former foster youth, disabled veterans and homeless individuals.
- **Commercial Flexibility:** Flexibility to allow for the interim use of vacant ground floor commercial space to be used for residential units.
- **Mixed-Use Zoning:** Created six new land-use zones that allow projects to include a mix of residential and employment uses. The goal is to provide flexibility for builders to meet market demands and locate more housing near jobs.

While the results of these recent initiatives are showing early success, it is important that the City continue to bring forth and adopt new housing reforms to meet the ambitious new housing targets and address all of San Diego’s housing needs.

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