



County of Santa Clara Housing Element Update

2015-2023 Housing Element Strategies and Policies Summary

Strategy #1: Plan for a balanced countywide housing supply

Support every Santa Clara County jurisdiction in developing housing to meet needs of all household types, affordable housing development goals, State General Plan Housing Element requirements, and regional land use and transportation planning objectives.

Policies

HG 1: *The planning for the supply and diversity of housing in each part of the urbanized areas county shall provide for existing and expected employment and household needs and a diversity of affordability that matches the diversity of household incomes, while respecting the capacity of constructed or planned public systems and services.*

HG 2: *Housing at urban densities shall be built within the cities and their urban service areas, not in rural areas outside urban service areas.*

HG 3: *Focus the County's limited housing assistance resources on special needs populations and extremely low income households.*

Strategy #2: Promote cooperation and collaboration on residential development

The County and cities are encouraged to explore every feasible opportunity to assist home builders in getting affordable housing built. By working with neighborhood residents and community organizations to promote a diverse housing supply, and by working with each other, as well as the private sector, we can capitalize on all the ideas, the expertise, and untapped resources we have in this county.

Policies

HG 4: *The County and the cities should work cooperatively to ensure that there is a balanced housing supply sufficient to achieve countywide economic, social, and environmental objectives. Further opportunities for inter-agency, intergovernmental, interregional, and public/private cooperation should be sought out and encouraged.*

HG 5: *Intergovernmental and public and private cooperation shall be encouraged to achieve an adequate supply of affordable housing that meets changing demographic needs in Santa Clara County.*

HG 6: *County administration housing resources should be pooled, and their use coordinated.*

Strategy #3: Provide financial assistance for extremely low-income housing

Any type of housing is expensive to build in this county and not likely to become less so. If we are to ensure that the housing needs of all residents are met, we will have to work with home builders to help curtail their costs and to contribute in some fashion to making their projects financially feasible.

Policies

HG 6: *Local funds for housing shall be targeted to households earning less than 30% of the county median income and special needs populations.*

HG 7: *The provision of permanent supportive housing for extremely low income households shall be given high priority in housing assistance programs.*

Strategy #4: Remove unnecessary barriers to housing

Through speedier project review, flexible development standards, funds for low-and-below income housing programs, density bonuses, and other measures, local governments can help in cost containment.

Policies

HG 8: *The County should continually review its land use and development procedures for opportunities to remove unnecessary constraints to, and provide new opportunities to fund, the construction of affordable housing.*

HG 9: *Review and reduce, where appropriate, regulations regarding the development of Second Units.*

Strategy #5: Ensure Support for Fair Laws and Practices

Despite years of effort, discriminatory housing practices still flourish. For low-and-below income households, unwarranted and illegal discrimination further restricts access to housing. To combat this, this strategy focuses on maintaining fair housing efforts and on ensuring broad understanding of tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities through countywide dispute mediation services.

Policies

HG 10: *The County of Santa Clara shall work to enforce laws against discrimination against people of protected status under federal and state law.*

HG 11: *Fair housing services shall be available in all parts of the county.*

HG 12: *The rights of tenants and landlords shall be recognized and protected, and opportunities for mediation of disputes shall be provided.*

Strategy #6: Provide for Special Needs Households

To be successful, our efforts to create a balanced housing supply must include housing suitable for households with extraordinary needs. These would include housing for people of all ages, who may have physical or emotional challenges, or those with extremely low or no incomes. The policies pertaining to housing for special needs households encourage a closer partnership between homebuilders and the County and cities to ensure that appropriate and affordable housing is built.

Policies

HG 13: *The provision of affordable housing which is suitable for a variety of special needs households shall be given high priority in housing assistance programs.*

HG 14: *An adequate supply of affordable housing suitable for individuals at all stages of life should be available in every community.*

Strategy #7: Reduce Homelessness Consistent with Housing First Principles

The needs of the homeless shall be met through methods intended to place them in permanent housing as soon as possible. Homeless shelters shall be supported by service providers providing the full range of assistance needed by the homeless. Temporary emergency shelters shall be used only as part of a continuum of care that leads to permanent housing.

Policies

HG 15: *Maintain and strengthen ongoing programs which coordinate and consolidate the emergency housing services provided by the County, the Cities, and community organizations countywide.*

HG 16: *The provision of transitional and permanent supportive housing for the homeless shall be given high priority in housing assistance programs.*

HG 17: *The supply of short-term shelter for persons in need of emergency housing shall focus on acute instances of homelessness. The needs of the chronic homeless shall be met with transitional and permanent supportive housing.*

HG 18: *Fund and develop organizations and programs that focus on prevention of homelessness before it occurs, and on quick intervention on incidents of homelessness before it becomes chronic.*

Strategy #8: Maintain and Expand the Supply of Farm Worker Housing

Housing for farm workers is considered by the State to be one form of special needs housing. However, the shortage of farm worker housing and its relationship to a viable agricultural economy and healthy communities is so important to Santa Clara County that it is appropriate for the County to designate a strategy that specifically targets this housing need.

Policies

HG 19: *Review and identify opportunities to reduce regulatory constraints to, and expedite development of, farmworker housing.*

HG 20: *The County shall promote and support programs which maintain and expand appropriately located housing suitable for and affordable to farmworker households. Such support shall prioritize the needs of seasonal workers.*

Strategy #9: Conserve the Existing Housing Stock

Preserving and rehabilitating existing homes is an effective way to sustain the supply of affordable housing. The policies in this strategy encourage replacement of older, affordable housing when it is lost through redevelopment or conversion to market rate housing. The policies also promote timely neighborhood improvements to prevent decay. They also prompt careful planning and code enforcement to occur in ways which would ultimately be beneficial to each community.

Policies

HG 21: *The conservation and rehabilitation of the existing housing supply shall be encouraged and facilitated.*

HG 22: *Publicly assisted housing rehabilitation efforts should not have the effect of reducing the available supply of housing for extremely low-income households.*

HG 23: *The inventory of land zoned and suitable for residential development shall be maintained.*

Link to Housing Element Document (Chapter 2): <https://tinyurl.com/SCC2015-2023HE>