

Executive Summary

The Housing Element is the guiding document for the development of housing in the unincorporated area of Placer County. It serves as an opportunity to address identified needs and outline strategies to improve the quality of living in Placer County through the development of high-quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of its current and future residents. The Housing Element describes housing needs and conditions in Placer County and establishes goals, policies, and programs to improve future housing opportunities. The Housing Element must be regularly updated according to a legally mandated schedule set by the State. The planning period for this Housing Element is May 15, 2021 to May 15, 2029.

This update of the Housing Element brings together the two pieces of the Housing Element, the background report, and the policy document. The background report (Chapters 2 through 4 of this document) provides the current housing conditions (Chapter 2), an analysis of constraints to housing development (Chapter 3), and an identification of resources that can be leveraged to create housing in Placer County (Chapter 4). This background report is used by staff to inform policy and programs. Chapter 5 contains the Policy Documents. This is the list of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and housing programs for the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing.

As part of this update, the County conducted 4 hearings and community meetings and 2 stakeholder meetings, reaching approximately 250 residents. Workshop participants and survey respondents expressed a desire to prioritize the needs of and provide housing for special-needs and homeless residents as well as lower-income households and those who work in the County. Respondents were open to a variety of types of housing but were also cautious about health and safety implications in light of pandemics and wildfires. Their feedback was greatly appreciated in making this Housing Element reflect the needs and desires of County residents. A

detailed review of public participation is contained in Chapter 1.

This summary provides a brief overview of the key findings and new programs.

Housing Needs and Current Conditions

- Placer County has seen tremendous growth during the last decade which is expected to continue. By 2040, it is projected the county will have over 500,000 residents, pushing a demand for new housing. The County is older and wealthier compared to the state and is less diverse.
- The County's housing stock is primarily single-family, detached housing, with only 10 percent of the units in unincorporated Placer County are multifamily units. Furthermore, there is a clear need for affordable housing in the County. Nearly 40 percent of all households pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing, and nearly 70 percent of households making less than 80% of the median income.
- In addition to housing affordability, the County must continue to work to provide housing that meets the needs of special populations. More than a third of the residents in unincorporated Placer County have some disability with over half of those being over the age of 65. It is important that the County encourage universal design principles in the development of new housing.
- Vacation homes and rental homes in East Placer continue to limit workforce housing near Lake Tahoe. There is a need to develop or secure housing for year-round residents who work in the area.



Constraints to Housing Production

- Sewer capacity is a key constraint on future housing growth in some areas of the County. The County will need to address its sewer capacity as part of allowing new housing development within the unincorporated areas of the County.
- High construction costs coupled with high land costs make it difficult for private-sector developers to provide housing for lower-income residents. Subsidies, incentives, and other types of financial assistance are necessary to private-sector developers to bridge the gap between actual costs of development and the sale price of affordable housing.

Housing Resources

- The County has ample housing sites to meet its moderate and above-moderate housing allocation, however, the County will have to rezone and estimate 55.3 acres of sites for higher density in order to meet its low-income allocation.
- The County has several programs designed to help residents find affordable housing. These include the County's Housing Choice Voucher Program, First Time Homebuyer Program, and Tenant Based Rental

Assistance Program. There are also 7 emergency shelters, 11 transitional homes, and 15 supportive housing developments that the County supports.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and Site Inventory

State law requires the Housing Element to "identify sites that can be developed for housing within the planning period and that are sufficient to provide for the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need for all income levels" (Government Code Section 65583.2(a)). Placer County's share of the 2021 – 2029 RHNA is 7,854 units.

Housing Element Overview

The Housing Element is divided into five chapters, and supporting appendices:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** - provides the community context, legal requirements of State housing element law and a summary of the public outreach and community engagement methods used to achieve the community's participation in the development of this update of the Housing Element.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation – Housing Units Allocated

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
Unincorporated County	2,017	1,215	1,242	2,945	7,419
Unincorporated Tahoe Basin	110	67	77	181	435
Total	2,127	1,282	1,319	3,126	7,854

- **Chapter 2: Housing Needs Assessment** - lays out the demographic, housing, and employment characteristics of Placer County and discusses the housing needs of the County going forward.
- **Chapter 3: Potential Housing Constraints** - examines possible barriers to housing development and affordability in the County by evaluating building, land use, and other government regulation as well as nongovernmental constraints such as financing.
- **Chapter 4: Housing Resources Inventory** - lays out what housing assets the County currently has, including an inventory of sites that have potential to be developed into housing.
- **Chapter 5: Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs** - lays out the goals, policies, and programs the County will pursue over the next eight years to create quality, affordable housing in Placer County. There are eight overarching objectives and seven goals that contain policies that will guide the County’s actions on housing policy through the next eight years. There are a total of 49 programs, of which 27 are new programs. Several new programs are in response to changes in State law and feedback from County residents. These programs are designed to encourage infill development and affordable housing, improve the provision of infrastructure to support housing, streamline the development and rehabilitation of housing, address a shortage of construction workers, and provide protections to tenants and renters in the County.

This Housing Element Update represents the best practices of today to bring high quality, affordable housing development to the County. It provides a clear roadmap to achieve the objective and goals described in it and meet the housing needs of its current and future residents.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The housing element is one of seven State-mandated elements that every general plan must contain. Although the housing element must follow all the requirements of the general plan, the housing element has several State-mandated requirements that distinguish it from other general plan elements. Whereas the State allows local government the ability to decide when to update their general plan, State law sets the schedule for periodic updates (an eight-year time frame) of the housing element. Local governments are also required to submit draft and adopted housing elements to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for State law compliance review. This review ensures that the housing element meets the various State mandates. When the County satisfies these requirements, the State will “certify” that the element is legally adequate. Failing to comply with State law could result in potentially serious consequences, such as reduced access to infrastructure, transportation, and housing funding and vulnerability to lawsuits for non-compliance.

The purpose of the housing element is to identify the community’s housing needs, to state the community’s goals and objectives with regard to housing production, rehabilitation, and conservation to meet those needs, and to define the policies and programs that the community will implement to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Community Context

Placer County is located in northern California approximately 100 miles northeast of San Francisco and 20 miles west of Reno, Nevada. The County encompasses 1,506 square miles and has a population of about 397,000 (2019). The median household income for a household of four (2020) was about \$86,300 and the median home sales price in 2020 was about \$569,000. There are five incorporated cities (Auburn, Colfax, Lin-

coln, Roseville, Rocklin) and the incorporated Town of Loomis within the County. In addition to the incorporated cities and town, the County has about 21 unincorporated small communities, five in the eastern part of the County (Lake Tahoe area) and 16 in the western part of the County.

Legal Requirements

State housing element law (Government Code Section 65580 et seq.) mandates that local governments must adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. State law recognizes the vital role local governments play in the supply and affordability of housing. Each local government in California is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of their city or county. The housing element is one of the seven mandated elements of the general plan. The law acknowledges that in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, affordable housing development. As a result, housing policy in the state rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans, local housing elements in particular.

State law requires cities and counties to address the needs of all income groups in their housing elements. The official definition of these needs is provided by HCD for each city and county within its geographic jurisdiction. Beyond these income-based housing needs, the housing element must also address special needs groups such as persons with disabilities and homeless persons. State housing element law (Government Code Section 65583(a)) requires that the assessment and inventory for this Element includes the following:

- Analysis of population and employment trends and projections, and a quantification of the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. This analysis of existing and projected needs includes Placer County's share of the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA).
- Analysis and documentation of household characteristics, including level of payment compared to ability to pay; housing characteristics, including overcrowding; and housing stock condition.
- Inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having potential for redevelopment; and analysis of the relationship of zoning, public facilities, and services to these sites.
- Identification of a zone or zones where emergency shelters are allowed as a permitted use without a conditional use or other discretionary permit.
- Analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels and for persons with disabilities, including land use controls, building codes and their enforcement, site improvements, fees and other exactions required of developers, and local processing and permit procedures; and analysis of local efforts to remove governmental constraints.
- Analysis of potential and actual non-governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including the availability of financing, the price of land, and the cost of construction.
- Analysis of any special housing needs for the elderly, persons with disabilities, large families, farmworkers, families with female heads of households, and families and persons in need of emergency shelter.
- Analysis of opportunities for residential energy conservation.
- Analysis of "at-risk" assisted housing developments that are eligible to change from low-income housing uses during the next 10 years.

Chapters 2 through 5 satisfy the State requirements and provide the foundation for the goals, policies, implementation programs, and quantified objectives laid out in Chapter 6. The 2021-2029 Housing Element serves an eight-year planning period of May 15, 2021 to May 15, 2029.

General Plan Consistency

According to State law, a jurisdiction's general plan and its elements must be integrated, internally consistent, and a compatible statement of policies. The purpose of the Housing Element is to support and identify an adequate supply of housing affordable to lower-income households by providing guidance in the development of future plans, procedures and programs, and by removing governmental constraints to housing production. The Housing Element has detailed goals, policies, and specific measures. Under State law, the entire General Plan is required to be "internally consistent" meaning that all elements of the General Plan have equal legal status and no policy within the General Plan can directly conflict with another.

The Housing Element has been reviewed for consistency with the County's other General Plan Elements, which were last updated in May 2013. The policies and programs in this Housing Element reflect the policy direction contained in other parts of the General Plan. The County will continue to review and revise the Housing Element, as necessary for consistency, when amendments are made to the General Plan.

Per Assembly Bill (AB) 162 (Government Code Section 65302.g.3), upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of fire for land classified as state responsibility areas, as defined in Section 4102 of the Public Resources Code, and land classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, as defined in Section 51177. Senate Bill (SB) 379 (Government Code 65302.g.4) requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated as necessary to address climate change adaptation and applicable resiliency strategies. SB 1035 (Government

Code 65302.g.6) requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated as needed upon each revision of the housing element or local hazard mitigation plan, but not less than once every eight years. SB 99 (Government Code 65302.g.5) requires that on or after January 1, 2020, the safety element includes information to identify residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two evacuation routes. The County is currently (2021) working to review and update the County’s current Health and Safety Element incorporating all State law changes, including applicable laws and any additional requirements and general plan guidelines from the State of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

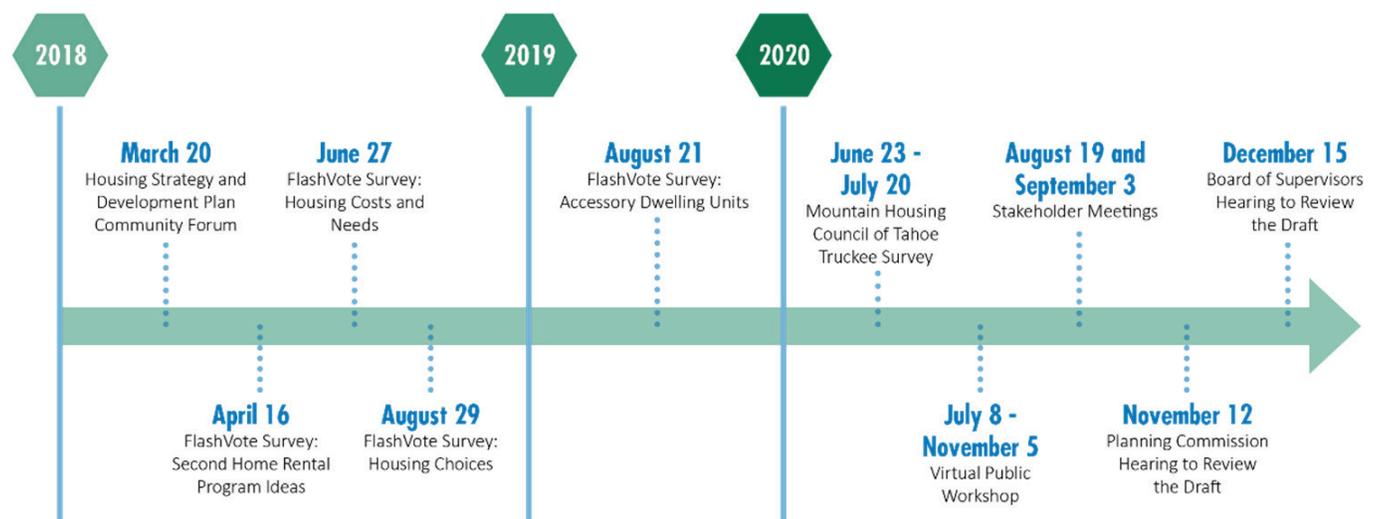
Public Outreach

As part of the Housing Element update process, the County implemented the State’s public participation requirements in housing element law, from Government Code Section 65583(c)(7), that jurisdictions “...shall make a diligent effort to achieve participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element.”

The graphic below has been provided as a visual outline of public outreach milestones during the Housing Element update process.

Public outreach and community engagement methods utilized were public workshops, stakeholder meetings, and surveys. Initially planned in-person public workshops were changed to virtual online workshops due to the Governor’s stay-at-home directives as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Two virtual public workshops were held in July and November 2020. A press release was distributed by the County Public Affairs Office ahead of these public workshops. On October 30, 2020, a notice about the availability of the Public Review Draft was provided to a housing interest list of 5,890 subscribers. A letter with a Fact Sheet was emailed to all of the County’s Municipal Advisory Councils (14 total) and an email was also sent to a Housing Interest List, Housing Stakeholders Group, and a general contact list for the Tahoe area. Approximately 140 people registered to participate in the July workshop and 108 people registered for the workshop in November. Translation services were available upon request but were not requested.

Two stakeholder meetings were also held virtually in July and September 2020; 11 stakeholders participated in the July meeting, and 7 participated in the September meeting. The Mountain Housing Council of Tahoe Truckee (MHC) was also surveyed. (The MHC is a project of the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation and brings together 27 diverse partners to accelerate solutions to achievable local housing.) The survey was made available to all the MHC partners between June 23 and July 20, 2020 and the County received responses from



12 members (44 percent). (A summary of the public outreach efforts is included in Appendix C in the draft 2021-2029 Housing Element).

Common themes within comments provided by participants in the public workshop included concerns about the feasibility of building dense housing at affordable rates, consideration of public safety in light of recent wildfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns about permitting costs and other development costs, and an interest in building a wider range of housing options, including smaller single-family homes, tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units. Respondents to the MHC survey expressed that the housing needs of special needs and homeless populations as well as those of large families should be prioritized in the County’s planning efforts. Affordable housing and housing for those who work in the County were also identified as priority housing types by survey respondents. High land and construction costs as well as community opposition to development were the primary barriers to providing housing that survey respondents identified. The housing types that survey respondents felt the County should focus on were duplexes and triplexes, accessory dwelling units, apartments, and mixed-use projects with a residential component.

Additional public outreach conducted as part of the preparation of the Housing Strategy and Development Plan also informed some changes incorporated into the 2021-2029 Housing Element policies and programs and is summarized below. Initial public outreach for the preparation of the Housing Strategy and Development Plan, kicked off at a community forum on March 20, 2018, sponsored in partnership with the Placer County

Community Foundation. Approximately 75 individuals attended the forum and were encouraged to provide their personal insight into the housing crisis and ideas on what the County could do to reduce constraints on housing development. The housing forum was publicized through several communication channels including a new dedicated housing website at:

www.placer.ca.gov/housing

Staff followed the forum with two housing industry focus groups that included architects, builders, designers, real estate, legal and social service professionals to gain an understanding of possible impediments to the development of housing. Staff also presented information on housing needs and limitations on housing development within the unincorporated area of the County to 11 of the 13 municipal advisory councils (MACs) in April and May of 2018. Social media notices of the MAC meetings were posted on Facebook and Nextdoor before each meeting, encouraging participation. Additionally, a fact sheet on the Housing Strategy and Development Plan was distributed to all MAC members. The County’s Communications and Public Affairs Office also established a housing newsletter to keep interested stakeholders informed of the County’s housing efforts (which currently has about 5,000 subscribers).

Another public outreach method utilized for the Housing Strategy and Development Plan was a countywide survey using the FlashVote survey tool. (FlashVote is an electronic survey tool that allows users to participate anonymously and to provide input by email, text or voice options). Five FlashVote surveys were released related to five housing issues and received great participation as shown in the table below.

Date	Housing Issue	Total Participants	# (%) County Residents
April 16, 2018	Second Home Rental Program Ideas	555	100%
August 29, 2018	Housing Choices	2,311	1,727 (74.7%)
June 27, 2018	Housing Costs and Needs	3,238	1,806 (55.8%)
August 21, 2019	Accessory Dwelling Units	1,988	1,820 (91.5%)
June 29, 2020	County Housing Policy (and impacts from the pandemic)	2,860	2,545 (89%)

Outreach to notify individuals of the FlashVote surveys was made across the County's outreach platforms, including social media and the County newsletter. (A Nextdoor post sharing the opportunity alone reached 24,655 residents.) A summary of the findings from each survey can be found in Appendix C.

The outreach for the Housing Strategy and Development Plan and more specifically, issues related to housing development, has been extensive and widespread. Thousands of Placer County citizens have provided their input on housing needs and ideas that will assist in reducing constraints to housing development within the County. Most respondents recognize a housing shortfall within the County, particularly housing affordable to the moderate- and lower-income earning individuals and have shown an interest in providing housing for all income ranges.

Community attitude toward housing can play a crucial role in determining the type and cost of housing that will be built. During the Housing Element public workshop and hearings, some residents voiced concerns about the high cost of building in the face of fire hazards. Other community members asked for more information about the potential to develop smaller housing, such as tiny homes or accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Some community members perceive the concentration of affordable, high-density housing as a potential for the development of slums and expressed concern about design incompatibility of dense housing. Applying local design guidelines and standards can help lessen the public's negative perceptions of affordable housing. Despite some concerns, there is a general recognition of the need for more affordable housing in Placer County's communities.

Developers of potentially controversial housing complexes can deal with opposition by addressing legitimate community concerns regarding the type of housing, noise, traffic, and the impact that the proposed development will have on County services. A key to successfully obtaining development approvals is to obtain the support of local community groups and organizations. Involving the community in the early phases of the project is essential for creating the basis for cooperation and constructive participation in the planning process.

Public Workshops

On July 8, 2020, County staff and the Housing Element consultants conducted a virtual public workshop. County staff distributed announcements of the workshop to a mailing list of various stakeholders including local residents, housing developers, social service providers, neighborhood associations, and the business community, and publicized the workshop on the County website. Approximately 140 people registered to participate in the workshop. Workshop participants included several representatives of special needs groups, including seniors, persons with disabilities, the homeless, and foster children; affordable housing developers; realtors; homeless individuals; low-income individuals; and several members of the public. A brief overview of the Housing Element, Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), and the Safety Element were presented, followed by a discussion. The discussion focused heavily on identifying the needs of extremely low-income residents and special needs groups. Questions and comments received during the presentation touched on a range of issues, including:

- How different housing contexts throughout the County might be considered, such as higher vacancy rates in the Lake Tahoe Region due to the large number of second homes in that region and where higher-density projects may be located.
- Concerns about how the Housing Element and related housing programs would be informed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identifying single individuals as a group with differing housing affordability needs.
- Encouraging infill projects and programs that support this type of development.

A complete list of the questions that were asked during the July 8, 2020 public workshop and responses can be found in Appendix C.

A summary from the November 5, 2020 workshop will be included.

Stakeholder Meetings

A virtual meeting of stakeholders was held online on July 30, 2020, along with a brief follow-up meeting on September 3. Eleven stakeholders participated in the July meeting and seven stakeholders participated in the September meeting. Stakeholder participants included representatives of local social service providers, public agencies, and philanthropic grantmaking organizations. County staff presented a brief overview of the Housing Element Update and then facilitated an interactive discussion to solicit ideas from participants about the most critical housing issues facing Placer County residents and to identify policy measures that the County might use to address these issues. The following topics that were suggested by the stakeholders were addressed as part of the update to the Housing Element policy document.

- Engage with the construction community to attract workers beyond the traditional labor force
- Adopt a tiered residential development fee program
- Consider advocating for affordable housing issues through its legislative platform on an annual basis
- Work with housing developers to expand opportunities for affordable lower-income and workforce housing by creating partnerships, providing incentives, and pursuing funding opportunities
- Analyze the feasibility of establishing permanent sources of funding for affordable housing
- Collaborate with private property owners to identify existing buildings appropriate for adaptive reuse and conversion to affordable housing
- Analyze and consider adopting a rent stabilization policy or ordinance, particularly for mobile home parks or other areas where residents are subject to rent burden or at risk of displacement from rent increases
- Consider adopting a policy or ordinance to protect residents from eviction unless it is based on good cause

Mountain Housing Council Survey

A survey was made available to the 27 partner agencies of the MHC between the dates of June 23, 2020, and July 20, 2020. During that time, 12 members responded to the survey. Below is a summary of the responses.

- All of the respondents felt that there is not enough housing options for all residents in the County.
- The majority of the respondents (92%) felt that the County's top priority should be to plan for more affordable housing and to focus on providing housing for those who work in the County.
- Cost of construction and community opposition to new housing developments (75%) were noted as the top two barriers to providing housing in the County; followed by cost and availability of land (50%).
- The majority of respondents to the survey (92%) felt that the County should plan for more duplexes and triplexes over the next eight years; followed by ADUs (83%); and apartments and mixed-used development (75%).
- The majority of respondents (67%) felt that housing for the County's special needs and homeless populations should be the County's top priority.

(A list of all the survey questions and detailed responses can be found in Appendix C.)

Public Hearings

The public draft of the 2021-2029 Housing Element was released for public review and comment on October 30, 2020, prior to the Planning Commission meeting on November 12, 2020. The draft document was also presented to the Board of Supervisors on December 15, 2020 to receive comments from the Board and the public prior to submitting it to HCD for review. The final draft document was presented to the Planning Commission in April 2021, and then to the Board, for consideration of Planning Commission Recommendations and adoption, in May 2021. Based on comments received from the Planning Commission, Board, and the public, revisions may be made, and the revised draft Housing Element document submitted to HCD by May 15, 2021 for the 90-day certification review. The public hearings will provide additional opportunities for public comment.

Public Comment

Public Comments received during the Housing Element update process are in Appendix C.