Housing Element Update
Revised and Restated Resolution No. 145-23

Presented By: Beth Thompson, De Novo Planning Group
Michael P. Cass, Planning Manager

City Council Meeting | April 3, 2024

Housing Element Update

Background

On December 20, 2023, the City Council held a public hearing to consider adoption of the 2023–2031 Housing Element (Housing Element), an element of the General Plan, and adopted Resolution No. 145-23 directing staff to submit the Housing Element to HCD.

Housing Element Update

The December 20, 2023 public hearing included the City Council's consideration of:

1) approving an Addendum to the General Plan 2035 Environmental Impact Report;
2) adoption of the Housing Element and submittal to HCD for review;
3) approving minor amendments to the General Plan 2035;
4) approving Zoning Text and Zoning Map Amendments establishing a) the Community Services Overlay District and b) the Alhambra Avenue Overlay District; and
5) approving a Zoning Map Amendment for 32 parcels in the downtown for consistency with the General Plan 2035.

Housing Element Update

The City submitted the Housing Element to HCD for review in December 2023. HCD reviewed the Housing Element and issued a findings letter on February 16, 2024. The letter included findings in 10 different areas, including:

- **Suitability of Nonvacant Sites:** *The City must find as part of an adoption resolution, based on substantial evidence, existing uses are not an impediment to additional residential development and will likely discontinue in the planning period pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2.*
- The remaining comments resulted in minor modifications to the Housing Element to address HCD's interpretation of State law and do not require any action from the City Council.

Housing Element Update

Revised and Restated Resolution No. 145-23
Based on the December 20, 2023 hearing materials and administrative record, the Resolution is proposed to be revised as follows:

- Clarify that the action taken by the City Council included adoption of the 2023-2031 Housing Element, an amendment to the General Plan, and consideration of the Addendum to the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.
- Find, based on substantial evidence in the Housing Element, that existing uses on the sites identified to accommodate the City's RHNA do not impede additional residential development, will likely discontinue during the planning period, and the sites are anticipated to be available for development during the Housing Element period.

Housing Element Update

- Find, based on substantial evidence in the Housing Element, that residential development of sites identified to accommodate the RHNA that are zoned to allow nonresidential uses and on sites identified for rezoning with an overlay designation is extremely likely during the planning period and these sites are considered realistic to accommodate development and the RHNA.
- Identify that the Housing Element includes programs to remove constraints to the development of nonvacant sites and to sites zoned to allow nonresidential development.

Housing Element Update

Minor Revisions to the Housing Element
The revisions to the 2023-2031 Housing Element to address HCD's comments are provided as an **informational item only**.

The revisions are **minor edits and can be made at the staff level** pursuant to Resolution No. 145-23; re-adoption of the element is not necessary.

The revisions are based on the information provided in the adopted Housing Element and either clarify information or strengthen the City's approach to addressing housing needs.

Housing Element Update

The minor revisions address:

- **Residential Development on Sites Zoned to Allow Nonresidential Uses:** *The Housing Element is revised to include an enhanced description of trends of reuse of nonresidential sites with residential uses, reduced demand for commercial and office development, and likelihood of residential uses occurring in zones that allow 100 percent nonresidential uses.*
- **Adequate Water and Sewer Infrastructure:** *The Housing Element is revised to provide additional analysis of water supplies, to clarify that adequate water supply and wastewater capacity is anticipated, and to clarify the intent of Program 30.*

Housing Element Update

- **Known Environmental or Other Conditions:** *The Housing Element is revised to identify that potential easement, contamination, and other conditions have been considered and that there are no known constraints that would impact development of the sites and no changes to the inventory or capacity of sites is needed.*
- **Emergency Shelters:** *The Housing Element identifies that homeless shelters are a permitted use in the Service Commercial and Light Industrial zone. The analysis of the suitability of the SC zone to accommodate emergency shelters has been expanded.*

Housing Element Update

- **Land Use Controls:** *The Housing Element has been revised to include additional discussion of the effects of the City's development standards, including heights, lot coverage, open space, and minimum units, on zones identified to accommodate housing, including those that permit up to 43 units/acre. Program 11 is revised to ensure that the City's land use controls do not constrain development at maximum densities and to increase height limits for properties that permit up to 43 units/acre.*

Housing Element Update

- **Remove Constraints:** *Program 11 ensures General Plan and zoning standards accommodate maximum densities and encourage a variety of housing types.*
- **Affirmatively Further Fair Housing:**
  - *Reflect the City's incentives for accessory dwelling units (Ordinance No. 1447) and facilitate SB 9 and Missing Middle housing to increase housing choice and mobility in racially-concentrated areas of affluence, higher resource, and higher income areas.*
  - *Improve place-based conditions in lower resource and concentrated areas of poverty and segregation through investment in community conditions and addressing environmental and health impacts.*
  - *Increase access to assistance programs.*

Housing Element Update

Recommendation

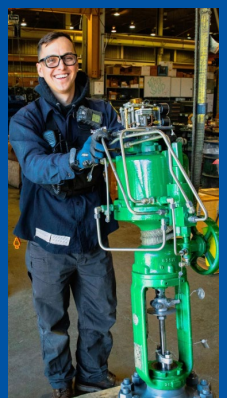
Adopt the Revised and Restated Resolution No. 145-23 to clarify the City's previous action taken on December 20, 2023 to adopt the 2023–2031 Housing Element and make specific findings that address nonvacant sites and sites zoned to allow nonresidential uses.

Questions?

Martinez Refining Company

Martinez Refining Company Update

April 3, 2024



Safe Harbor Statements

Martinez Refining Company

This presentation contains forward-looking statements made by PBF Energy Inc. and PBF Logistics LP (together, the "Companies", or "PBF" or "PBFX") and their management teams. Such statements are based on current expectations, forecasts and projections, including, but not limited to, anticipated financial and operating results, plans, objectives, expectations and intentions that are not historical in nature. Forward-looking statements should not be read as a guarantee of future performance or results, and may not necessarily be accurate indications of the times at, or by which, such performance or results will be achieved. Forward-looking statements are based on information available at the time, and are subject to various risks and uncertainties that could cause the Companies' actual performance or results to differ materially from those expressed in such statements.

Factors that could impact such differences include, but are not limited to, changes in general economic conditions; volatility of crude oil and other feedstock prices; fluctuations in the prices of refined products; the impact of disruptions to crude or feedstock supply to any of our refineries, including disruptions due to problems with third party logistics infrastructure; effects of litigation and government investigations; the timing and announcement of any potential acquisitions and subsequent impact of any future acquisitions on our capital structure, financial condition or results of operations; changes or proposed changes in laws or regulations or differing interpretations or enforcement thereof affecting our business or industry, including any lifting by the federal government of the restrictions on exporting U.S. crude oil; actions taken or non-performance by third parties, including suppliers, contractors, operators, transporters and customers; adequacy, availability and cost of capital; work stoppages or other labor interruptions; operating hazards, natural disasters, weather-related delays, casualty losses and other matters beyond our control; inability to complete capital expenditures, or construction projects that exceed anticipated or budgeted amounts; inability to successfully integrate acquired refineries or other acquired businesses or operations; effects of existing and future laws and governmental regulations, including environmental, health and safety regulations; and, various other factors.

Forward-looking statements reflect information, facts and circumstances only as of the date they are made. The Companies assume no responsibility or obligation to update forward-looking statements to reflect actual results, changes in assumptions or changes in other factors affecting forward-looking information after such date.

First Quarter 2024 Refinery Update

Martinez Refining Company

- **Flexicoker maintenance work**
- **Began implementing our Training and Reliability Plan to improve our performance**
- **Agreed to fully comply with Rule 6-5 and drop our lawsuit**
- **Positive results for the unannounced inspection**
  - Continuing to cooperate with all agency investigations and inspections
- **Investing in our refinery**
  - Finalized preparations for upcoming planned maintenance

Training and Reliability Plan

Martinez Refining Company

- **Enhancing Training & Development for all MRC employees**
  - Approximately half of our workforce has been hired since 2020
  - We have been actively qualifying new team members
  - Our focus is on providing advanced training and experience-building
- **Increasing training resources**
  - Refinery department leaders are overseeing training plans for their teams
  - Trainers: Internal and external subject matter experts, including retirees
- **Enhancing leadership with new positions**
  - MRC "Operations Excellence Manager"
  - MRC "Goal Zero Supervisor"
  - "Western Region Senior Director of Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE)" position
  - Re-structured and increased Health, Safety, and Environmental staffing levels
- **Making significant investments in critical refinery utility systems: Steam, air, electricity, etc.**
  - Goal: To improve operational reliability
  - Since 2020, MRC will have invested more than $530,000,000 directly into the refinery, including projected 2024 capital spend

Rule 6-5 Settlement

Martinez Refining Company

- **Bay Area Quality Management District (BAAQMD) approved an Alternative Emission Monitoring System (AEMS)**
- **We worked with technical experts in process engineering and air quality to develop a plan to further reduce particulate emissions from our Fluid Catalytic Cracking Unit (FCCU)**
  - Basis for BAAQMD approving the AEMS
- **We agreed to comply with Rule 6-5 and withdrew our lawsuit**
- **Expecting to achieve ~80% FCCU emissions reductions**

Results: Unannounced Inspection

Martinez Refining Company

- **In December 2023, Contra Costa Health (CCH) and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) initiated an unannounced inspection of the refinery**
  - They chose to evaluate MRC's compliance with five select process safety programs
- **Following a very thorough, professional, multi-week inspection by the two agencies, their inspectors did not identify any areas needing immediate or short-term action**
  - We are pleased with the results
  - We continue to fully cooperate with all agency inspections and investigations

Upcoming Investment in Our Refinery

Martinez Refining Company

- **We will be investing more than $70 Million in maintenance projects**
  - Work will be done in May
  - 600-plus Building Trades members
- **Related activities**
  - Potential for increased economic activity within the City
  - More vehicles during morning and evening rush
    - Marina Vista between I-680 and Shell Avenue
    - Pacheco Blvd between I-680 and Howe Road
  - Periodic noise
  - Minimal flaring

MRC employees in the refinery

- **We have carefully planned this work to minimize impact to our neighbors**
  - Informational letters about the work will be mailed to our neighbors before we begin the projects

City of Martinez

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4th of July Fireworks Show
Youth Scholarship Program
Cultural Event Grants

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City of Martinez

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- Listing in Activity Guide

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- Event Space at a City-sponsored event of your choosing
- a Banner at a City-sponsored event of your choosing

Platinum Level ($1,500 to $2,499)
- Event Space and a Banner at a City-sponsored event of your choosing
- Your logo on City webpage with hyperlink to your business
- a Feature in City Newsletter which reaches over 16,000 local readers
- Parks, Recreation, Marina, and Cultural Commission Recognition

Platinum Tier ($2,500+)
- Event Space and a Banner at a City-sponsored event of your choosing
- Your logo on City webpage with hyperlink to your business
- a Feature in City Newsletter which reaches over 16,000 readers
- Parks, Recreation, Marina, and Cultural Commission Recognition
- Coffee with the Mayor
- Grand Marshall opportunity at our Holiday Frolic parade
- VIP Seating for July 4th Firework Display

Thank you for your support! Together, we can make a difference.

925-372-3510 | recreation@cityofmartinez.org | 525 Henrietta Street

CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: DAVID DYCHE

PRINT CLEARLY

Instructions: *Select option 1 or 2 below and fill in the corresponding fields.*

I wish to speak on a/an:

[ ] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13

- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

QUESTIONS

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Turn in completed card to Clerk located at front dias. Thank you!

CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Jesse Peralez

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SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Linda Overeq

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- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Jillian Blish

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- Item # 13

- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: CHUCK LEONARD

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- Item # 13

- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: ROBERT DOWNS

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- Item # 13

- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

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- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: TOM HANSEN

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[X] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13

- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

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SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: BILL WHITNEY

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[ ] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13

- I am... [X] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Stevie Riedmiller

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[X] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13
- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Kris Kegler

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I wish to speak on a/an:

[X] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13
- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: JESSICA SCHEIBER

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- Item # 13
- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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CITY OF MARTINEZ

SPEAKER CARD

First & Last Name: Heidi Taylor

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[X] Option 1: Agenda Item

- Item # 13
- I am... [ ] In Favor [ ] Neutral [ ] Oppose ... this item.

[ ] Option 2: Non-Agenda Item/Topic

- Item/Topic: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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Kat Galileo

From: Michael Cass
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 4:45 PM
To: Kat Galileo
Cc: Michael Chandler; Jill Bergman; Teresa Highsmith; Beth Thompson
Subject: FW: Comment for City Council Meeting April 3rd

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Kat,

We received the public comment below regarding the Housing Element, although the content is more about the universal design regulations.

Thank you.

***Michael P. Cass**, he/him*
Planning Manager
City of Martinez
525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553
Direct (925) 372-3524 | Main (925) 372-3515
mcass@cityofmartinez.org | cityofmartinez.org

From: Jennifer Camp <jennifercamp1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 3:20 PM
To: dutyplanner <dutyplanner@cityofmartinez.org>
Subject: Comment for City Council Meeting April 3rd

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I'm submitting a comment for record in response to the agenda item below.

At the previous meeting in February there was discussion about limiting the number of ADA units that would be included on NEW builds. I implore the city to meet the same standards as other cities in the Bay Area are already following. I am a wheelchair user, Alhambra graduate and resident of Martinez, and have always struggled to find accessible housing. We have an aging baby-boomer population and the need for accessible housing is only going to become greater. Unless of course, you would prefer to lose residents currently paying tax dollars to live here?

I also wish to respond to previous comments made by Councilmember, Jay Howard. Among other things he said that were not accurate and in poor taste, one of them mentioned that ADA

units need "oversized doors"...I myself use a power wheelchair and can tell you that it fits just fine through a standard door. "Oversized" is not actually a qualifying factor of door width to meet ADA requirements. It is very obvious that Councilmember Howard has never interacted with anybody with a disability. The fact that he rushed to complain and protest this also shows a lack of empathy, which brings up other concerns about his leadership skills for an entire city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Camp

My comment above is for this agenda item:
11. Consider adopting a Revised and Restated Resolution No. 145-23 to clarify the City's previous action taken on December 20, 2023 to adopt the 2023 – 2031 Housing Element and make specific findings that address nonvacant sites and sites zoned to allow nonresidential uses.

Kat Galileo

From: Michael Cass
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 2:38 PM
To: Kat Galileo
Subject: FW: CalHDF public comment for 3 Apr 2024 Martinez City Council meeting
Attachments: CalHDF v LCF compressed.pdf; Californians for Homeownership v. City of Beverly Hills.pdf; sites_inventory_memo_final06102020(6).pdf; Martinez - Housing Element Comment - 3 Apr 2024(2).pdf

Hi Kat,

Attached please find public comments regarding the Revised and Restated Resolution.

Thank you.

***Michael P. Cass**, he/him*
Planning Manager
City of Martinez
525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, CA 94553
Direct (925) 372-3524 | Main (925) 372-3515
mcass@cityofmartinez.org | cityofmartinez.org

From: James Lloyd <james@calhdf.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 2:25 PM
To: Brianne Zorn <bzorn@cityofmartinez.org>; Jay Howard <jhoward@cityofmartinez.org>; Mark Ross <mross@cityofmartinez.org>; Satinder S. Malhi <ssmalhi@cityofmartinez.org>; Debbie McKillop <dmckillop@cityofmartinez.org>
Cc: Michael Chandler <mchandler@cityofmartinez.org>; dutyplanner <dutyplanner@cityofmartinez.org>; Michael Cass <mcass@cityofmartinez.org>; CBrock@chwlaw.us; thighsmith@chwlaw.us; talves@chwlaw.us; paul.mcdougall@hcd.ca.gov; Helen.Eldred@hcd.ca.gov
Subject: CalHDF public comment for 3 Apr 2024 Martinez City Council meeting

Dear Martinez City Council,

Please see attached CalHDF's public comment regarding agenda item 11 for the 3 April 2024 Martinez City Council meeting, the City's revised Housing Element. Additionally, for reference, attached are two legal cases cited in our comment as well as HCD's sites inventory guidebook.

Sincerely,

James M. Lloyd

Director of Planning and Investigations
California Housing Defense Fund
james@calhdf.org

[redacted]

CALIFORNIA HOUSING DEFENSE FUND v. CITY OF LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE
Case Number: 23STCP02614 [Related to Case No. 23STPC02575]

Hearing Date: March 1, 2024

ORDER ON PETITIONS FOR WRIT OF MANDATE AND COMPLAINTS FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF

Under the Housing Accountability Act (HAA), Government Code[1] section 65589.5, a municipality may not "disapprove" a qualifying affordable housing project on the grounds it does not comply with the municipality's zoning and general plan if the developer submitted either a statutorily defined "preliminary application" or a "complete development application" while the city's housing element was not in substantial compliance with state law. (See § 65589.5, subds. (d)(5), (h)(5), (o)(1).) This statutory provision, colloquially known as the "Builder's Remedy," incentivizes compliance with the Housing Element Law by temporarily suspending the power of non-compliant municipalities to enforce their zoning rules against qualifying affordable housing projects.

Respondents, the City of La Cañada Flintridge, the City of La Cañada Flintridge Community Development Department, and the City of La Cañada Flintridge City Council (collectively, Respondents or the City) determined Petitioner 600 Foothill Owner, L.P.'s (600 Foothill) proposed mixed-use development did not qualify for the Builder's Remedy. Petitioner 600 Foothill, Petitioner California Housing Defense Fund (CHDF), and Petitioners-Intervenors the People of the State of California, Ex. Rel. Rob Bonta and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)(collectively, Intervenors), challenge Respondents' decision.

The petitions are granted. The court orders a writ shall issue directing Respondents to set aside their May 1, 2023 decision finding 600 Foothill's application does not qualify as a Builder's Remedy project and to process the application in accordance with the HAA.

JUDICIAL NOTICE

600 Foothill's Request for Judicial Notice (RJN) filed November 8, 2023 is denied as to Exhibit A and granted as to Exhibits B through F. Respondents' objections to Exhibits B through F are overruled. Respondents' objections 1 and 4 are sustained to the extent they pertain to Exhibit A.

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[1] All further undesignated statutory references are to this code.

Respondents' RJN in support of its opposition to the 600 Foothill petition is granted as to all referenced exhibits except as to Exhibits D-3, V and BB.[2]

600 Foothill's Reply RJN of Exhibit AA is granted.

CHDF's RJN of Exhibits A through D is granted.

Respondents' RJN in support of its opposition to the CHDF petition is granted as to all referenced exhibits except as to Exhibit D-3 and V. Except as to Exhibits D-3 and V, the objections of Intervenors and CHDF are overruled.

For all RJNs, the court does not judicially notice any particular interpretation of the records. Nor does the court judicially notice the truth of hearsay statements within the judicially noticed records.

EVIDENTIARY OBJECTIONS, MOTION *IN LIMINE* AND CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE SECTION 1094.5, SUBDIVISION (E)

Preliminarily, the court finds none of the parties' evidentiary objections are material to the disposition of any cause of action or issue. The court nonetheless rules on the objections for completeness. The court notes it is not required to parse through long narratives with generalized objections. The court may overrule an objection if the material objected to contains unobjectionable material. The parties make many objections to multiple sentences where much or some of the material is not objectionable. (See Fibreboard Paper Products Corp. v. East Bay Union of Machinists, Local 1304, United Steelworkers . . . (1964) 227 Cal.App.2d 675, 712.)

600 Foothill's Objections

Declaration of Lynda-Jo Hernandez: All objections are overruled.
Declaration of Kim Bowan: All objections are overruled except 3, 12 and 17.
Declaration of Peter Sheridan: All objections are overruled.
Declaration of Keith Eich: All objections are overruled.
Declaration of Susan Koleda: All objections are overruled.
Declaration of Teresa Walker: All objections are overruled except 3, 11, 17, 26 and 29.
Declaration of Richard Gunter III: All objections are overruled except 5-8 and 14-20.

///

[2] Contrary to 600 Foothill's assertion, Respondents did not request judicial notice of Exhibit A to the Koleda declaration. 600 Foothill and Intervenors appear correct—Respondents did not submit Exhibits D-3 or V with the Koleda declaration. Accordingly, the court cannot judicially notice Exhibits D-3 or V.

Respondents' Objections to 600 Foothill's Evidence

Declaration of Melinda Coy: All objections are overruled.
Reply Declaration of Garret Weyand: All objections are overruled except 3, 4, 7 and 8.[3]

Intervenors' Objections

Declaration of Susan Koleda: All objections are overruled.

CHDF's Objections

Declaration of Teresa Walker: All objections are overruled except 2, 4 and 6.
Declaration of Susan Koleda: All objections are overruled.
Declarations of Eich, Bowman, Gunter III and Hernandez are all overruled as discussed *infra*.

Motion *In Limine*

Respondents' Motion *In Limine* to Exclude Issues or Evidence (filed February 5, 2024) is denied. Respondents do not demonstrate 600 Foothill has submitted any evidence concerning "infeasibility" of the project that is *outside* of the administrative record. Respondents do not require discovery to respond to 600 Foothill's infeasibility arguments given such arguments are based entirely on the administrative record. (See § 65589.5, subd. (m)(1); Code Civ. Proc., § 1094.5, subd. (e).)

Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, Subdivision (e)

Section 65589.5, subdivision (m)(1) in the HAA specifies "[a]ny action brought to enforce the provisions of this section shall be brought pursuant to Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure. . . ." Accordingly, the HAA causes of action are subject to the limitations on extra-record evidence in Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subd. (e). Nonetheless, the HAA causes of action involve questions of substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law, governed, at least in part, by Code of Civil Procedure section 1085. (See e.g., § 65587, subd. (d)(2).) Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subdivision (e) does not apply to a cause of action governed by Code of Civil Procedure section 1085.

The parties have neglected to suggest which parts of their declarations are subject to Code of Civil Procedure sections 1094.5, 1085 or both. The parties also have not moved to augment the administrative record pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subdivision (e). Under the circumstances, the court will admit and consider the parties' declarations despite the court

[3] The declaration is properly submitted to respond to the defense of unclean hands and allegations of "manipulation of the HCD approval process" discussed in Respondents' opposition brief.

having made no order to augment the record.[4] The court notes, however, even if the court excluded all the extra-record evidence submitted, including the lengthy Koleda declarations, the result here would not change.

BACKGROUND

The Housing Element Law[5]

"In 1980, the Legislature enacted the Housing Element Law, 'a separate, comprehensive statutory scheme that substantially strengthened the requirements of the housing element component of local general plans.' " (*Martinez v. City of Clovis* (2023) 90 Cal.App.5th 193, 221-222 [*Martinez*].)

A housing element within a general plan must include certain components, including, but not limited to: an assessment of housing needs and the resources available and constraints to meeting those needs; an inventory of sites available to meet the locality's housing needs at different income levels, including the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA); a statement of goals, quantified objectives, and policies to affirmatively further fair housing; and a schedule of actions to address the housing element's goals and objectives. (§ 65583, subds. (a), (b), (c).)

"A municipality must review its housing element for the appropriateness of its housing goals, objectives, and policies and must revise the housing element in accordance with a statutory schedule. (§ 65588, subds. (a), (b).) The interval between the due dates for the revised housing element is referred to as a planning period or cycle, which usually is eight years." (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 221-222.)

"Before revising its housing element, a local government must make a draft available for public comment and, after comments are received, submit the draft, as revised to address the comments, to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). (§ 65585, subd. (b)(1); see § 65588 [review and revision of housing element by local government].) After a draft is submitted, the HCD must review it, consider any written comments from any public agency, group, or person, and make written findings as to whether the draft substantially complies with the Housing Element Law. (§ 65585, subds. (b)(3), (c), (d); . . . .) [¶] If the HCD finds the draft does not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law, the local government must either (1) change the draft to substantially comply or (2) adopt the draft without changes along with a resolution containing findings that explain its belief that the draft substantially complies with the law. (§ 65585, subd. (f).)" (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 221-222.)

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[4] At the conclusion of the hearing, the parties agreed the court could consider all of the evidence before it without regard to Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subdivision (e).

[5] See section 65580, *et seq.*

The City's October 2021 and October 2022 Draft Housing Elements, and HCD's Findings the City Had Not Attained Substantial Compliance with the Housing Element Law

Under the Housing Element Law, the City had a statutory deadl ne of October 15, 2021 to adopt a substantially compliant 6th cycle housing element. (AR 443.) The City submitted its draft housing element to HCD on that day. (AR 443.)

On December 3, 2021, HCD informed the City while the draft "addresses many statutory requirements," to comply with the Housing Element Law, signif cant revisions were required. (AR 443, 445-453.) HCD identified fourteen areas within the first version of the City's draft housing element that required specific programmatic revisions, organized into three broad categories—housing needs, resources, and constraints; housing programs; and public participation. (AR 445-453.) As examples, HCD found the draft housing element lacked a sufficient site inventory analysis identifying potential sites for housing development distributed in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing, or an inadequate site inventory of the City's vacant and underutilized sites to meet the City's RHNA determination. (AR 445-447.)

Ten months later, on October 4, 2022, the City adopted its 2021-2029 housing element (October 2022 Housing Element). (AR 4504-4508, 4509 [Housing Element].) The City thereafter submitted its adopted Housing Element to HCD for review. (AR 5263.)

On December 6, 2022, HCD informed the City "[t]he adopted housing element addresses most statutory requirements described in HCD's [prior] review; however, additional revisions are necessary to fully comply with State Housing Element Law." (AR 5263 [referencing a May 26, 2021 review].) HCD's findings of non-compliance for the October 2022 Housing Element are discussed further in the Analysis section *infra*.

600 Foothill's Preliminary Application

On November 10, 2022—after the City's adoption of the October 2022 Housing Element but before HCD's December 6, 2022 review—600 Foothill submitted the Preliminary Application seeking the City's approval to construct a mixed-used project on a site located at 600 Foothill Boulevard, which is currently occupied by two vacant church buildings and a surface parking lot. (AR 5241.) 600 Foothill proposed to build 80 apartments on the site, 16 of which (or 20 percent) would be reserved for persons earning less than sixty percent of the area median income (the Project). (AR 5243.) 600 Foothill's Preliminary Application explained "given that the City continues to have a Housing Element that is out of compliance with state law," 600 Foothill proposed the Project as a Builder's Remedy project pursuant to section 65589.5, subdivision (d)(5) meaning the Project was not required to account for the City's zoning ordinance or general plan land use designation. (AR 5235.)

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The City Staff Acknowledge Changes to the October 2022 Housing Element Are Necessary to Comply with HCD's Findings

The City's Director of Community Development, Susan Koleda, acknowledged on January 11, 2023 in an email communication that "[a]ll additional changes to the Housing Element have yet to be determined but will likely require additional [Planning Commission/City Council] approval." (AR 12894.) At the City's January 12, 2023 Planning Commission meeting, City staff acknowledged revisions were required for "the Housing Element to be in conformance" with applicable law. (AR 5274-5275.) Director Koleda also stated in a February 9, 2023 email communication that "additional clarifications were required" to the October 2022 Housing Element, and "[t]he additional information will be incorporated into a revised Housing Element, scheduled to be adopted by the City Council on February 21, 2023. It will then be submitted to HCD for review as a third submittal." (AR 13011.)

The City Adopts a February 2023 Housing Element, Fails to Rezone, and "Certifies" Its Substantial Compliance with the Housing Element Law

On February 21, 2023, the City adopted its third revised housing element which addressed the deficiencies to the October 2022 Housing Element identified by HCD. (AR 6274-6279.) In its resolution adopting the revised housing element, the City Council stated it "certifies that the City's Housing Element was in substantial compliance with State Housing Element law as of the October 4, 2022 Housing Element adopted by the City Council. . . ." (AR 6274.) Despite use of the word "certifies" in the City's resolution, Director Koleda opined at the February 21, 2023 council meeting that the "consensus" from the City Attorney, the City's consultants, and HCD was that "self-certification" of the City's housing element "is not an option." (AR 6207-6208; see also Opposition to Intervenors 19:18-21:7 ["wrongly accuse . . . of 'back-dating' and 'self-certifying' "].)

At the time the City adopted its third revised housing element on February 21, 2023, it had not completed the rezoning required by the Housing Element Law. Accordingly, on April 24, 2023, HCD found, although the February 2023 housing element addressed the previously identified deficiencies in the October 2022 Housing Element, and met "most of the statutory requirements of State Housing Law," the City was not in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law because the City adopted the February 2023 housing element more than one year past the statutory due date of October 15, 2021 and the City had not completed its statutorily required rezoning. (AR 6297-6300; see also AR 7170-7171.) As a result, HCD found the City could not be deemed in substantial compliance with state law *until* it completed all required rezones. (AR 6297-6300; see § 65588, subd. (e)(4)(C)(iii). ["A jurisdiction that adopts a housing element more than one year after the statutory deadline . . . shall not be found in substantial compliance with this article until it has completed the rezoning required by" the Housing Element Law].)

In its April 24, 2023 letter, HCD also opined that "a local jurisdiction cannot 'backdate' compliance to the date of adoption of a housing element," and the City was not in substantial

compliance with the Housing Element Law as of October 4, 2022, notwithstanding its "certification" in the City's February 21, 2023 resolution. (AR 6297-6298.)

The City Determines 600 Foothill's Preliminary Application Could Not Rely on the Builder's Remedy and the City Council Affirms the Decision

On February 10, 2023, in response to 600 Foothill's Preliminary Application, the City issued an incompleteness determination (the First Incompleteness Determination) requesting additional detail on several issues. The First Incompleteness Determination did not allege any inconsistencies between the Project and the City's zoning ordinance and general plan. (AR 5276-5279.) Petitioner supplemented its application materials in response to the First Incompleteness Determination on April 28, 2023. (See AR 6305, 7095-7096, 7152-7153, 7169, 7166, 8050-8060.)

On March 1, 2023, the City issued a second incompleteness determination (the Second Incompleteness Determination). The Second Incompleteness Determination advised 600 Foothill the Builder's Remedy did not apply to the Project making the Preliminary Application incomplete for its failure to comply with the City's general plan zoning laws and residential density limitations. (AR 6280-6281; see AR 7176.)

On March 9, 2023, 600 Foothill appealed the Second Incompleteness Determination. (See § 65943, subd. (c); AR 6282-6287, AR 12926.) In support of its appeal, 600 Foothill provided a letter from its attorney explaining 600 Foothill's position the City Council's failure to grant the appeal would constitute a violation of the HAA. (AR 6304-6462, 6317 ["flouts the law"].)

The City Council heard 600 Foothill's appeal on May 1, 2023. The City Council voted unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 23-14, denying the appeal and upholding the Second Incompleteness Determination (the May 1, 2023 Decision). (AR 7151-7160, AR 7161-7168.)

On June 8, 2023, HCD sent the City a Notice of Violation advising the City it violated the HAA and Housing Element Law by denying 600 Foothill's appeal. (AR 7170-7175.) HCD summarized the alleged violations:

> The City cannot 'backdate' its housing element compliance date to an earlier date so as to avoid approving a Builder's Remedy application. In short, the October 4, 2022 Adopted Housing Element did not substantially comply with State Housing Element Law, regardless of any declaration by the City. Therefore, the Builder's Remedy applies, and the City's denial of the Project application based on inconsistency with zoning and land use designation is a violation of the HAA. (AR 7170.)

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The City Determines the Application is Complete and the Project is Inconsistent with City's Zoning Code and General Plan

On May 26, 2023, the City informed 600 Foothill that its Project application was complete. (AR 7169.) On June 24, 2023, the City advised 600 Foothill:

> [I]t remains the City's position (as affirmed by City Council on May 1, 2023) that the 2021-2029 Housing Element was in substantial compliance with state law as of October 4, 2022. Based on that, staff reviewed the project for consistency with the General Plan, applicable provisions of the Downtown Village Specific Plan (DVSP), the Zoning Code, and the density proposed within the 2021-2029 Housing Element. In accordance with [] § 65589.5(j)(2)(A), this letter serves as an explanation of the reasons that the City considers the proposed project to be inconsistent, not in compliance, or not in conformity with these aforementioned guiding documents. (AR 7176.)

The City Completes Rezoning and HCD Certifies the City's Substantial Compliance with the Housing Element Law

On September 12, 2023, the City adopted a resolution completing its rezoning commitments set forth in its housing element. HCD reviewed the materials and, on November 17, 2023, sent a letter to the City finding the City had "completed actions to address requirements described in HCD's April 24, 2023 review letter." (Coy Decl. ¶ 12, Exh. D.)

Writ Proceedings

On July 21, 2023, 600 Foothill filed its verified petition for writ of mandate and complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief against Respondents. On July 25, 2023, CHDF filed its verified petition for writ of mandate and complaint for declaratory relief. The court has related the two actions and coordinated them for trial and legal briefing. The court denied Respondents' motion to consolidate the two actions.

On December 20, 2023, pursuant to a stipulation, Intervenors filed their petition for writ of mandate and complaint for declaratory relief in the CHDF proceeding.

For this proceeding, the court has considered 600 Foothill's Opening Brief, CHDF's Opening Brief, Intervenors' Opening Brief, Respondents' three opposition briefs, 600 Foothill's Reply Brief, CHDF's Reply Brief, Intervenors' Reply Brief, the administrative record, the joint appendix, all requests for judicial notice, and all declarations (including exhibits).[6]

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[6] The court accounted for its evidentiary rulings as to the evidence.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

Pursuant to the Los Angeles County Court Rules (Local Rules), "[t]he opening and opposition briefs must state the parties' respective positions on whether the petitioner is seeking traditional or administrative mandamus, or both." (Local Rules, Rule 3.231, subd. (i)(1).) The parties must also provide their position on the standard of review in their briefing. (See Local Rule, Rule 3.231, subd. (i)(3).)

600 Foothill, CHDF and Respondents do not suggest the standard of review that applies to the causes of action. Intervenors argue Code of Civil Procedure section 1085, not Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, applies to their petition.

Under Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subdivision (b), the relevant issues are whether (1) the respondent has proceeded without jurisdiction, (2) there was a fair trial, and (3) there was a prejudicial abuse of discretion. An abuse of discretion is established if the agency has not proceeded in the manner required by law, the decision is not supported by the findings, or the findings are not supported by the evidence. (Code Civ. Proc., § 1094.5, subd. (b).)

In administrative mandate proceedings not affecting a fundamental vested right, the trial court reviews administrative findings for substantial evidence. Substantial evidence is relevant evidence that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion (*California Youth Authority v. State Personnel Board* (2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 575, 584-85), or evidence of ponderable legal significance which is reasonable in nature, credible and of solid value. (*Mohilef v. Janovici* (1996) 51 Cal.App.4th 267, 305 n. 28.) Under the substantial evidence test, "[c]ourts may reverse an [administrative] decision only if, based on the evidence . . ., a reasonable person could not reach the conclusion reached by the agency." (*Sierra Club v. California Coastal Com.* (1993) 12 Cal.App.4th 602, 610.) The court does "not weigh the evidence, consider the credibility of witnesses, or resolve conflicts in the evidence or in the reasonable inferences that may be drawn from it." (*Doe v. Regents of University of California* (2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 1055, 1073.)

To obtain a traditional writ of mandate under Code of Civil Procedure section 1085, there are two essential findings. First, there must be a clear, present, and ministerial duty on the part of the respondent. Second, a petitioner must have a clear, present, and beneficial right to the performance of that duty. (*California Ass'n for Health Services at Home v. Department of Health Services* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 696, 704.) "Generally, mandamus is available to compel a public agency's performance or to correct an agency's abuse of discretion when the action being compelled or corrected is ministerial." (*AIDS Healthcare Foundation v. Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health* (2011) 197 Cal.App.4th 693, 700.)

An agency is presumed to have regularly performed its official duties. (Evid. Code, § 664.) Under Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, the "trial court must afford a strong presumption of correctness concerning the administrative findings." (*Fukuda v. City of Angels* (1999) 20 Cal.4th 805, 817.) A petitioner seeking administrative mandamus has the burden of proof and must cite

the administrative record to support its contentions. (See *Alford v. Pierno* (1972) 27 Cal.App.3d 682, 691.) Similarly, a petitioner "bears the burden of proof in a mandate proceeding brought under Code of Civil Procedure section 1085." (*California Correctional Peace Officers Assn. v. State Personnel Bd.* (1995) 10 Cal.4th 1133, 1154.) A reviewing court "will not act as counsel for either party to a [challenge to an administrative decision] and will not assume the task of initiating and prosecuting a search of the record for any purpose of discovering errors not pointed out in the briefs." (*Fox v. Erickson* (1950) 99 Cal.App.2d 740, 742 [context of civil appeal.)

" 'On questions of law arising in mandate proceedings, [the court] exercise[s] independent judgment.' . . . . Interpretation of a statute or regulation is a question of law subject to independent review." (*Christensen v. Lightbourne* (2017) 15 Cal.App.5th 1239, 1251.)

ANALYSIS

Petition for Writ of Mandate – Violations of the HAA

600 Foothill, CHDF, and Intervenors seek a writ of mandate to enforce the requirements of the HAA against the City. Among other relief, they seek a writ directing Respondents to set aside the City Council's "decision, on May 1, 2023, to disapprove an application for a housing development project at 600 Foothill Boulevard, and compelling Respondent to approve the application or, in the alternative, to process it in accordance with the law." (CHDF Pet. Prayer ¶ 1; see also 600 Foothill Pet. Prayer ¶¶ 3-5 and Intervenors Pet. Prayer ¶¶ 1-3.)[7]

Standard of Review

As noted, the HAA at section 65589.5, subdivision (m)(1) specifies "[a]ny action brought to enforce the provisions of this section shall be brought pursuant to Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure. . . ." Nonetheless, Intervenors argue Code of Civil Procedure section 1085, not Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, applies because Respondents have a "ministerial duty under the HAA to process the Foothill Owner's Builder's Remedy application." (Intervenors' Opening Brief 10:27; see *Sunset Drive Corp. v. City of Redlands* (1999) 73 Cal.App.4th 215, 221-222. ["A writ of mandate may be issued by a court to compel the performance of a duty imposed by law."])

While there is a colorable argument Code of Civil Procedure section 1085 applies to parts of the HAA claims involving the Housing Element Law, given the Legislature's clear instructions in section 65589.5, subdivision (m)(1), the court concludes Petitioners' writ petitions to enforce the HAA are all governed by Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5.

[7] 600 Foothill's writ claims under the HAA are alleged in its third through fifth causes of action while CHDF's and Intervenors' are alleged in their first causes of action.

The court's task "is therefore to determine whether the City 'proceeded in the manner required by law,' with a decision supported by the findings, and findings supported by the evidence; if not, the City abused its discretion." (*California Renters Legal Advocacy and Education Fund v. City of San Mateo* (2021) 68 Cal.App.5th 820, 837.) The City "bear[s] the burden of proof that its decision has conformed to all of the conditions specified in Section 65589.5." (§ 65589.6.)

As noted, based on the circumstances, the court reaches the same result in its analysis even if the petitions, or parts thereof, are governed by Code of Civil Procedure section 1085. (See e.g., § 65587, subd. (d)(2) [action to compel compliance with Housing Element Law "shall" be brought pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1085].) The HAA claims raise legal questions of statutory construction and concerns about Respondents' substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law. The court decides such issues independently, regardless of whether Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5 or 1085 governs. (See e.g. *Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 237.)

The City "Disapproved" the Builder's Remedy Project

600 Foothill contends the City "disapproved" the Project, as the term is defined in the HAA, because the City "determined that the Project could not proceed because it believed the Builder's Remedy was inapplicable." (600 Foothill Opening Brief 7:11-12.) CHDF and Intervenors make the same argument. (CHDF Opening Brief 21:25-28; Intervenors' Opening Brief 15:27-16:3.)

The Builder's Remedy, at section 65589.5, subdivision (d)(5) provides in pertinent part:

> (d) A local agency **shall not disapprove** a housing development project . . . for very low, low-, or moderate-income households . . . unless it makes written findings, based upon a preponderance of the evidence in the record, as to one of the following:
>
> . . . .
>
> (5) The housing development project . . . is inconsistent with both the jurisdiction's zoning ordinance and general plan land use designation as specified in any element of the general plan as it existed on the date the application was deemed complete, **and** the jurisdiction has adopted a revised housing element in accordance with Section 65588 that is in substantial compliance with this article. (Emphasis added.)

Thus, to prove their claim under the HAA and to proceed with the Project as a Builder's Remedy, Petitioners must show the City "disapprove[d] a housing development project."

(§ 65589.5, subd. (d).)[8] Section 65589.5, subdivision (h)(6) provides to " 'disapprove the housing development project' **includes** any instance in which a local agency does any of the following: (A) Votes on a proposed housing development project application and the application is disapproved, **including any required land use approvals or entitlements necessary for the issuance of a building permit** . . . ." (Emphasis added.)

Here, on May 1, 2023, the City Council denied Petitioner's appeal of the Second Incompleteness Determination stating:

> [T]he City Council of the City of La Cañada Flintridge hereby denies the appeal and upholds the Planning Division's March 1, 2023, incompleteness determination for the mixed use project at 600 Foothill Boulevard, on the basis that the 'builder's remedy' under the Housing Accountability Act does not apply and is not available for the project, and that the project did not 'vest' as a 'builder's remedy' project as alleged in the project's SB 330 Preliminary Application submission dated November 14, 2022, because the City's Housing Element was, as of October 4, 2022, in substantial compliance with the Housing Element law. (AR 7167.)

Notably, Director Koleda informed the City Council, prior to its vote on the appeal, that "if the appeal is denied, the project will be processed accordingly as a standard, nonbuilder's remedy project." (AR 7103.) Thus, the City Council "voted" on a proposed housing development project application and determined the Project could not proceed as a Builder's Remedy project—that is, the Project would be subject to the City's discretionary approvals.

The Legislature has expressed its intent that the HAA "be interpreted and implemented in a manner to afford the fullest possible weight to the interest of, and the approval and provision of, housing." (§ 65589.5, subd. (a)(2)(L); *California Renters Legal Advocacy & Education Fund. v. City of San Mateo*, *supra*, 68 Cal.App.5th at 854.) In addition, "[a]s a basic principle of statutory construction, 'include' is generally used as a word of enlargement and not of limitation. . . . Thus, where the word 'include' is used to refer to specified items, it may be expanded to cover other items." (*Rea v. Blue Shield of California* (2014) 226 Cal.App.4th 1209, 1227.) Applying these canons of statutory construction, the court finds section 65589.5, subdivision (h)(6) should be given a broad construction. Because the City Council made clear any required land use approvals or entitlements would not be issued for the Project, **as a Builder's Remedy project**, the City Council's May 1, 2023 decision falls within the HAA's broad definition of "disapprove."

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[8] It is undisputed the Project constitutes a "housing development project . . . for very low, low-, or moderate-income households" within the meaning of the HAA. HCD advised the City on June 8, 2023: "The Project is proposed as an 80-unit mixed-use project where 20 percent of the units (16 units) will be affordable to lower-income households. The residential portion equates to approximately 89 percent of the Project; therefore, the Project qualifies as a 'housing development project' under the HAA (Gov. Code, § 65589.5, subd. (h)(2)(B))." (AR 7171.) Respondents develop no argument to the contrary.

Respondents contend:

> 600 Foothill defined the "approvals" and "entitlements" it sought in its application – namely, a Conditional Use Permit (USE-2023-0016), Tentative Tract Map 83375 (LAND-2023-0001), and Tree Removal Permit (DEV-2023-0003). (AR 5285.) There was no vote on May 1, 2023, on any of these "required land use approvals" or "entitlements" and, thus, . . . the "vote" needed under the HAA has not occurred. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 19:22-26 [emphasis in original].)

Respondents' narrow interpretation of the statute is unpersuasive. (See § 65589.5, subd. (a)(2)(L).) While the City Council may not have voted to deny the conditional use permit, tentative tract map, and tree removal permit, the City Council voted on May 1, 2023 and determined the Project could not proceed as the project proposed—a Builder's Remedy project. Because the Project was proposed as a Builder's Remedy, the City Council's May 1, 2023 vote on the project application was a "disapproval" within the meaning of the HAA.

Respondents also contend "[t]he City cannot as a matter of law approve or disapprove a development project, including a project under the Builder's Remedy, prior to conducting environmental review under CEQA . . . ."[9] (Opposition to 600 Foothill 16:15-16.) Respondents argue the HAA does not authorize the court "to order the City to accommodate CEQA review after a possible finding by the Court of a violation of the HAA." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 16:25-26 [emphasis in original].)

Again, Respondents' arguments are unpersuasive—a city can disapprove a project without having undertaken CEQA review. Nothing requires a city to undertake CEQA review *before deciding to disapprove a project*. CEQA does not apply to "[p]rojects which a public agency rejects or disapproves." (Pub. Res. Code, § 21080, subd. (b)(5).) "[I]f an agency at any time decides not to proceed with a project, CEQA is inapplicable from that time forward." (*Las Lomas Land Co., LLC v. City of Los Angeles* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 837, 850.) Respondents do not cite any language from the HAA that supports their position.[10]

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[9] CEQA refers to the California Environmental Quality Act at Public Resources Code section 21000, *et seq.*

[10] During argument, the City emphasized its reliance on section 65589.5, subdivision (m)(1) its language concerning finality—an action cannot be brought to enforce the HAA's provisions until there is a "final action on a housing development project" and the City did not take final action on the Project—it merely determined the Project could not be built as a Builder's Remedy project and would be subject to discretionary approvals. As noted by 600 Foothill, an action to enforce the HAA may be initiated after a municipality imposes conditions upon, disapproves **or** takes final action on a housing project. The City made clear in its May 1, 2023 Decision that the Project could not proceed as proposed as a Builder's Remedy project.

While CEQA review is preserved by the HAA[11] nothing suggests a disapproval under the HAA can occur only after CEQA review or that a court lacks authority to issue a writ to *compel compliance with the HAA*, even if a Builder's Remedy project is subject to CEQA compliance. Notably, a suit to enforce the HAA must be filed "no later than 90 days from" project disapproval. (§ 65589.5, subd. (m)(1).) Further, the HAA must "be interpreted and implemented in a manner to afford the fullest possible weight to the interest of, and the approval and provision of, housing." (§ 65589.5, subd. (a)(2)(L).) Respondents' interpretation of the HAA, under which a disapproval cannot occur prior to CEQA review, would hinder the approval and provision of housing. Accordingly, an agency may "disapprove" a project under the HAA before conducting any environmental review under CEQA, and a petitioner's claim to enforce the HAA may be ripe for consideration even if CEQA review has not been performed or completed.

Respondents' reliance on *Schellinger Brothers v. City of Sebastopol* (2009) 179 Cal.App.4th 1245, 1262 [*Schellinger*] is misplaced. *Schellenger* involved a request **to compel** the certification of an environmental impact report. *Schellinger* did not hold that all claims under the HAA or other housing laws are unripe or cannot be filed until CEQA review is completed. The case did not address CEQA in the context of a claim to enforce the Builder's Remedy provision in the HAA. The case also did not suggest a trial court lacks discretion to structure a writ issued pursuant to the HAA in a manner that allows for CEQA review to be completed. "An opinion is not authority for propositions not considered." (*People v. Knoller* (2007) 41 Cal.4th 139, 154-55.)

The court acknowledges *Schellinger* advised the HAA "specifically pegs its applicability to the approval, denial or conditional approval of a 'housing development project' . . . which, as previously noted, can occur *only after the EIR is certified.* (CEQA Guidelines, § 15090(a).)" (*Schellinger, supra,* 179 Cal.App.4th at 1262.) Nonetheless, the court's statement must be interpreted in the context of the issues before that Court. Because the agency there had not disapproved the project at issue, the Court's reference to the "denial" of a housing development project was a dictum. In any event, as discussed, *Schellinger* did not decide the legal question presented here—whether the City "disapproved" a Project when it determined, through a vote of its City Council, the Builder's Remedy Project did not qualify for the Builder's Remedy under the HAA.[12]

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[11] See section 65589.5, subdivisions (e) and (o)(6).

[12] Respondents indicate the City took action to pay for CEQA review of the Project starting in September 2023. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 18:11-14 [citing Sheridan Decl. Exh. JJ].) By that time, however, the City Council had already determined the Project could not proceed as proposed pursuant to the Builder's Remedy. (AR 7167; see also AR 7176.) Respondents do not explain the purpose of CEQA review for a project the City Council has determined could not be approved consistent with the law. This evidence does not support Respondents' position the City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision did not constitute a "disapproval" under the HAA.

Based on the foregoing, Petitioners have demonstrated the City Council "disapproved" the Project with its May 1, 2023 Decision within the meaning of the HAA. Respondents do not show the petitions are "unripe" because CEQA review has not been completed, or that CEQA review is a prerequisite to the "disapproval" of a Project under the HAA. In light of the court's conclusion, the court need not reach the parties' contentions regarding *California Renters v. City San Mateo* (2021) 60 Cal.App.5th 820 and appellate briefing from that case. (See Opposition to 600 Foothill 17:10-28 [citing Sheridan Decl. Exh. EE and FF].)

"Vesting" of the Builder's Remedy and the Date the Pro ect Application was Deemed Complete

Respondents assert the filing of a SB 330 preliminary applicatio⁊ does not "vest" the Builder's Remedy because "when a city is determining whether it can make the finding in subsection (d)(5), it considers the status of its Housing Element *as of the date the finding is made*." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 23:11-13 [emphasis in original].)

The HAA defines "deemed complete" to mean that "the applicant has submitted a *preliminary application* pursuant to Section 65941.1." (§ 65589.5, subd. (h)(5) [emphasis added].) Section 65589.5, subdivision (o)(1) states "a housing development project shall be subject only to the ordinances, policies, and standards adopted and in effect when a preliminary application including all of the information required by subdivision (a) of Section 65941.1 was submitted." Construing these statutory provisions, along with section 65589.5, subdivision (d), the court concludes a Builder's Remedy "vests" if the local agency does not have a substantially compliant housing element at the time a complete preliminary application pursuant to section 65941.1 is submitted and "deemed complete."

Respondents have not developed any argument the Preliminary Application, submitted in November 2022, lacked the information required by section 65941.1 or was otherwise incomplete within the meaning of the HAA. (See AR 5234-5246.)[13] Thus, if the City's housing element did not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law at that time (see analysis *infra*), the Builder's Remedy "vested" when 600 Foothill submitted its Preliminary Application in November 2022.[14]

Respondents' reliance on subdivision (o) of the HAA is misplacec. Section 65589.5, subdivision (o)(4) provides " 'ordinances, policies, and standards' includes **general plan**, community plan, specific plan, zoning, design review standards and criteria, subdivision standards and criteria, and any other rules, regulations, requirements, and policies of a local agency." (Empasis added.)

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[13] 600 Foothill's Preliminary Application used the form generated by the City. 600 Foothill completed the form and included necessary attachments.

[14] 600 Foothill's Preliminary Application was "deemed complete," within the meaning of the HAA, when 600 Foothill submitted its application in November 2022. (See AR 5241-5246, 7171; see also Gov. Code §§ 65589.5, subdivision (h)(5) and 65941.1.) During argument, Respondents appeared to conflate the Preliminary Application with a formal project application.

The housing element is a mandatory element of the general plan. (§ 65582, subd. (f).) Section 65589.5, subdivision (o)(1) precludes Respondents from retroactively applying a housing element to a Builder's Remedy project that "vested" before certification of the housing element.

Respondents' vesting argument is also inconsistent with the HAA's policy of promoting housing. (§ 65589.5, subd. (a)(2)(L).) If Respondents' position was correct, as a practical matter "no housing developer would ever submit a builder's remedy application because of the uncertainty about whether the project would remain eligible long enough to be approved." (CHDF Reply 19:8-9.)

600 Foothill's Preliminary Application was "deemed complete," for purposes of the HAA, in November 2022 when 600 Foothill submitted its Preliminary Application. If the Builder's Remedy applies (see *infra*), it therefore "vested" in November 2022.[15]

The City Could Not Be in Substantial Compliance with the Housing Element Law until it Completed Rezoning

Petitioners contend the City's housing element was not in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law when 600 Foothill filed its Preliminary Application because the City had not completed the rezoning required by sections 65583, subdivision (c)(1)(A) and section 65583.2, subdivision (c). (See 600 Foothill Opening Brief 12:21-23.) Petitioners are correct.

Section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(i) states:

> For the adoption of the sixth revision and each subsequent revision, a local government that does not adopt a housing element that the department has found to be in substantial compliance with this article within 120 days of the applicable deadline described in subparagraph (A) or (C) of paragraph (3) shall comply with subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583 and subdivision (c) of Section 65583.2 within one year of the statutory deadline to revise the housing element.

Section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) states:

> A jurisdiction that adopts a housing element more than one year after the statutory deadline described in subparagraph (A) or (C) of paragraph (3) **shall not be found in substantial compliance with this article until it has completed the**

[15] However, the court reaches the same result in its analysis below even if the application was deemed complete or "vested" anytime up to May 1, 2023, the date of City Council's decision. The City did not complete its required rezoning until September 12, 2023. (See § 65588, subd. (e)(4)(C)(iii).)

rezoning required by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583 and subdivision (c) of Section 65583.2. (Emphasis added.)[16]

Thus, the statute mandates the jurisdiction "shall not be found in substantial compliance" until completing the rezoning. (*Ibid.*)[17] The plain language of the statutory prohibition is not limited to HCD; the prohibition therefore applies to the courts.

As applied here, the City's statutory deadline to adopt a substantially compliant 6th cycle housing element was October 15, 2021. (AR 443.) The City submitted its draft housing element to HCD on October 15, 2021. (AR 443.) Because the City failed to secure certification of its 6th cycle housing element within 120 days of its statutory deadline of October 15, 2021 (see AR 443-447), October 15, 2022 served as the City's deadline to complete its required rezoning. (§ 65583, subd. (c)(1)(A).) It is undisputed the City did not complete the required rezoning until September through November 2023.

Pursuant to the plain language of section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii), the City "shall not be found" in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law until the City completed its rezoning in September through November 2023. As a result, the City did not have a substantially compliant housing element when 600 Foothill submitted its Preliminary Application to the City in November 2022; the Builder's Remedy therefore applies to the Project.

Respondents do not challenge the plain language interpretation of section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii).[18] Thus, they concede where an agency has failed to adopt a substantially compliant housing element by more than a year after the statutory deadline to do so, the agency cannot be found in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law by HCD or a court until it

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[16] During argument, Respondents objected to the court's consideration of legislative history referenced in the court's tentative order distributed prior to the hearing. The court relied 600 Foothill's RJN, Exh. D at 82 and Exh. E at 149. Respondents correctly argued resort to legislative history here is inappropriate given the plain language of the statute and lack of ambiguity. (See *River Garden Retirement Home v. Franchise Tax Bd.* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 922, 942.) While the parties later agreed the court could rely on all of the evidence that had been submitted by the parties, the court nonetheless revised its decision to eliminate the discussion of legislative history. Given Respondents' argument, there can be no claim the statute is unclear. "If there is no ambiguity, we presume the Legislature meant what is said and the plain meaning of the language controls." (*Ibid.*)

[17] In any event, as discussed *infra*, the court concludes the City did not adopt a substantially compliant housing element until after 600 Foothill submitted its complete Preliminary Application. Accordingly, even if the statutory bar of section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) does not apply to the courts, the court still concludes the Builder's Remedy applies to the Project.

[18] As noted *supra* in footnote 16, Respondents agree there is no ambiguity in the statute.

completes its required rezoning. (*Sehulster Tunnels/Pre-Con v. Traylor Brothers, Inc.* (2003) 111 Cal.App.4th 1328, 1345, fn. 16 [failure to address point is "equivalent to a concession"].)

Respondents contend the "City could not rezone until it had a General Plan Housing Element under Section 65860(c), HCD did not promulgate draft [Affirmatively Further Fair Housing] requirements for the 6th Cycle housing element until April 23, 2020, and did not promulgate the final version until April 2021, only six months before the then-existing deadline (within SCAG) for submitting a 6th RHNA Cycle Housing Element." (Opposition to CHDF 8: 11-15.)

Respondents' evidence does not demonstrate actions or omissions of HCD or the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) precluded the City from adopting a substantially compliant housing element or the required rezoning. Director Koleda advises the final affirmatively further fair housing requirements were available by April 2021, and the City's RHNA increased by only two dwelling units between March 22, 2021 and July 1, 2021. (Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 20, 36.) As persuasively argued by Intervenors, the City "had sufficient time to accommodate its RHNA allocation, or at the very least, the two additional dwelling units added between March and July 2021." (Intervenors' Reply 16, fn. 8.) Respondents also do not show, with persuasive evidence, the timing of HCD's promulgation of affirmatively further fair housing requirements prevented the City from adopting a substantially compliant housing element.

Respondents also argue section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii)'s rezoning requirement "is illegal, unconstitutional, and unenforceable" because "[t]he Government Code specifically contemplates that rezoning will occur after adoption of an amendment to a General Plan, including Housing Elements, ..." (Opposition to Intervenors 12:19, 14:26-27.) Respondents' statutory argument is not fully developed, lacks sufficient analysis of governing legal principles, and is unpersuasive.

Respondents wholly fail to explain how section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) is "illegal" or "unconstitutional." At most, Respondents assert section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) conflicts with other statutes requiring consistency between the zoning ordinances of a general law city and its general plan, and the requirement such zoning ordinances be amended "within a reasonable time" to be consistent with a general plan that is amended. (Opposition to Intervenors 13:13-16 [citing § 65860].)

Respondents do not show a conflict between section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) and section 65860 or any other statute. Contrary to Respondents' assertion, a city could comply with both statutes. Thus, as argued by 600 Foothill, a city could update its zoning simultaneously with the adoption of its housing element. A city could also adopt a housing element that is provisionally certified by HCD and then subsequently complete the rezoning, which is what occurred here. While section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) may subject a city to the Builder's Remedy it if does not complete its rezoning at the same time adopts its housing element, Respondents do not show such possibility conflicts with section 65860 or that the

Legislature lacked the authority to impose such measures to encourage the development of housing.[19]

Because the City had not completed its required rezoning, the City's housing element was not in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law when 600 Foothill filed the Preliminary Application in November 2022. As a result, the City Council prejudicially abused its discretion when it found the Builder's Remedy did not apply to the Project in its May 1, 2023 Decision.

Did the City's October 2022 Housing Element Substantially Comply with the Housing Element Law Without Consideration of Rezoning?

In its May 1, 2023 Decision, the City Council found "the 'builder's remedy' under the Housing Accountability Act does not apply and is not available for the project . . . because the City's Housing Element was, as of October 4, 2022, in substantial compliance with the Housing Element law." (AR 7167.) Petitioners contend the City Council's finding was a prejudicial abuse of discretion. The court agrees. The October 4, 2022 Housing Element was not in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law.

Standard of Review—Substantial Compliance with Housing Element Law

"In an action to determine whether a housing element complied with the requirements of the Housing Element Law, the court's review 'shall extend to whether the housing element . . . *substantially complies* with the requirements' of the law. (§ 65587, subd. (b), italics added.) Courts have defined substantial compliance as '*actual* compliance in respect to the substance essential to every reasonable objective of the statute,' as distinguished from 'mere technical imperfections of form.' [Citations.] Such a review is limited to whether the housing element satisfies the statutory requirements, 'not to reach the merits of the element or to interfere with the exercise of the locality's discretion in making substantive determinations and conclusions about local housing issues, needs, and concerns.' " (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 237.)

HCD is mandated by statute to determine whether a housing element substantially complies with the Housing Element Law. (See e.g., § 65585, subds. (i)-(j); Health & Saf. Code § 50459, subds. (a), (b).) Given HCD's statutory mandate and its expertise, HCD's determination of substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law, or lack thereof, is entitled to deference from the courts. (See *Hoffmaster v. City of San Diego* (1997) 55 Cal.App.4th 1098, 1113, fn. 13

[19] Further, even assuming a conflict existed, Respondents do not explain why section 65860 would take precedence over section 65588, subdivision (e)(4)(C)(iii) under the specific circumstances presented here (i.e., a statutory bar to attaining substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law until rezoning is complete). (See *State Dept. of Public Health v. Superior Court* (2015) 60 Cal.4th 940, 960-961. ["If conflicting statutes cannot be reconciled, later enactments supersede earlier ones [citation], and more specific provisions take precedence over more general ones."])

["We substantially rely on the Department of Housing and Community Development's interpretation [. . .] regarding compliance with the housing element law . . . ."]; accord *Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 243 ["courts generally will not depart from the HCD's determination unless 'it is clearly erroneous or unauthorized' "].)

However, "HCD's housing element compliance determinations are not binding on courts." (See Intervenor Reply 10:2; see also 600 Foothill Opening Brief 15:8-9.) The trial and appellate courts "'independently ascertain as a question of law whether the housing element at issue substantially complies with the requirements of the Housing Element Law.' . . ." (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 237.)[20] Thus, to be clear (and as noted during the hearing) the court has not deferred to HCD concerning substantial compliance—the issue is properly subject to the court's independent review as a question of law.

Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

As background, HCD found the City's October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the City's duties under the Housing Element Law to analyze how the housing element will affirmatively further fair housing. Specifically, HCD wrote:

> While the element now analyzes census tracts and sites with a concentration of affordable units (p. D71-73), it should still discuss whether the distribution of sites improves or exacerbates conditions. This is critical as the sites to accommodate the lower-income households are only located along Foothill Boulevard near the 210 Freeway. If sites exacerbate conditions, the element should include programs to mitigate conditions (e.g., anti-displacement strategies) and promote inclusive communities. (AR 5263-5264.)

HCD also found "the element must include a complete assessment of fair housing. Based on the outcomes of that analysis, the element must add or modify programs." (AR 5264.)

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[20] While *Martinez* advises " '[t]he burden is on the challenger to demonstrate that the housing element . . . is inadequate" (*ibid.*), the HAA provides the City "bear[s] the burden of proof that its decision has conformed to all of the conditions specified in Section 65589.5." (§ 65589.6; see also § 65587, subd. (d)(2) [city has burden of proof in action to compel compliance with requirements of section 65583, subd. (c)(1)-(3)].) The parties do not address the language in *Martinez* or how it should be applied, if at all, in this proceeding. The court concludes based on sections 65589.6 and 65587, subdivision (d)(2) the burden is on Respondents to show the City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision complied with the HAA. Such a showing requires the City to demonstrate it attained substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law before 600 Foothill's submitted its Preliminary Application and it was "deemed complete." The court notes and clarifies, however, it would reach the same result herein even if the initial burden of proof is with Petitioners.

Housing elements must contain "an inventory of land suitable and available for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having realistic and demonstrated potential for redevelopment during the planning period to meet the locality's housing need for a designated income level"—the "sites inventory." (§ 65583, subd. (a)(3).) The sites inventory must be accompanied by "an analysis of the relationship of the sites identified in the land inventory to the jurisdiction's duty to affirmatively further fair housing." (*Ibid.*) In addition, each updated housing element must include "a statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to affirmatively furthering fair housing" (§ 65583(b)(1)), and must commit to programs that will, among other things, "Affirmatively further fair housing in accordance with [Section 8899.50]." (§ 65583, subd. (c)(10).)[21]

Here, the October 2022 Housing Element discloses the sites identified by the City to accommodate affordable housing are all located near the Foothill Freeway. (AR 5130.) In this context, HCD found the October 2022 Housing Element lacked sufficient analysis of the relationship of the sites identified in the land inventory to the City's duty to affirmatively further fair housing, i.e. whether the site inventory would improve or exacerbate fair housing conditions. (AR 5263-5264.)

Respondents do not cite to any specific analysis in the October 2022 Housing Element addressing the concern raised by HCD. (See Opposition to 600 Foothill 9:14 [citing AR 1741, 5203].) In fact, neither AR 1741 nor 5203 demonstrate the October 2022 Housing Element analyzed how the clustering of affordable housing near the Foothill Freeway would promote or exacerbate fair housing. While Respondents now explain in the context of *this proceeding* why the City clustered all affordable housing near the freeway (See Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 9-16),

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[21] Section 8899.50, subd. (b)(1) provides: "A public agency shall administer its programs and activities relating to housing and community development in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing, and take no action that is materially inconsistent with its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing." Compliance with the obligation is mandatory. (*Id.* at subd. (b)(2).) The statute defines "affirmatively further fair housing" as:

> taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all of a public agency's activities and programs relating to housing and community development. (*Id.* at subd. (a)(1).)

Respondents were required to include that analysis in the October 2022 Housing Element. (See § 65583, subds. (a)(3), (b)(1), and (c)(10).)[22]

Respondents contend the "City undertook numerous outreach efforts to reach a variety of economic groups, including via two housing workshops with 18 different stakeholder organizations." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 9:10-12 [citing Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 38-50 and AR 3896-3900, 4651].) Respondents do not cite any authority that outreach alone satisfies the City's statutory obligations to include in its housing element "an **analysis** of the relationship of the sites identified in the land inventory to the jurisdiction's duty to affirmatively further fair housing." (§ 65583, subd. (a)(3) [emphasis added].) Exercising its independent judgment on the statutory question, the court concludes outreach alone does not substantially comply with the requirement—outreach does not constitute analysis.

The deficiencies in the October 2022 Housing Element as to the affirmatively further fair housing analysis are demonstrated by changes made by the City in the February 2023 Housing Element.[23] Specifically, the February 2023 Housing Element added analysis—"the sites to accommodate the lower and moderate-income households are concentrated primarily in the western end of the City along the Foothill Boulevard Corridor, and near the 210 Freeway." (AR 6090.) The analysis recognized "adverse air quality conditions have the potential to be exacerbated" based on "close proximity to the freeway[.]" (AR 6090.) In addition, the revised February 2023 Housing Element committed to Program 24 to mitigate these impacts. (AR 6091; See also AR 5577-5578 [adding Program 24, "Mitigation for Housing in Proximity to Freeways" committing to building design measures for new residential development near the freeway].)

Respondents contend "those air quality mitigation measures were adopted in 2013 and the 2023 Housing Element merely added a heading regarding these existing measures." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 9:7-8 [citing Koleda Decl. ¶ 33 and AR 4515].) Respondents cite AQ Policy 1.1.6 from its General Plan Air Quality Element, which states the policy to "Ensure that new developments implement air quality mitigation measures, such as ventilation systems, adequate buffers, and other pollution reduction measures and carbon sequestration sinks, especially those that are located near existing sensitive receptors." (Koleda Decl. ¶ 33.)

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[22] During argument, Respondents suggested the material included in the February 23, 2023 housing element had previously been provided in the October 2022 Housing Element. While it is true Table D-12 can be found in both versions of the housing element (compare AR 6090 p. D22 with AR 5158 p. D22), the February 23, 2023 revisions to the October 2022 Housing Element (AR 6090-6092) included additional narrative material beyond repeating information from Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health. Further, AR 5193-5204, identified by Respondents during the hearing as an analysis of how the clustering of affordable housing near the Foothill Freeway would promote or exacerbate fair housing within the October 2022 Housing Element, does not appear to address the issue. Finally, it does not appear Respondents cited any of this material in their briefs before the court in response to the claims raised by Petitioners. 600 Foothill objected to the argument as new during the hearing.

[23] See *supra* footnote 22.

While Program 24 and AQ Policy 1.1.6 have similarities, they are not the same. Program 24 identifies specific mitigation measures that apply to receptors near the freeways and is enforceable by HCD. (See § 65585, subd. (i) [requiring HCD to investigate a "failure to implement any program actions included in the housing element."].) In contrast, AQ Policy 1.1.6 is a shorter and more general policy that is *not enforceable by HCD* as a housing element program. Contrary to Respondents' assertion, the inclusion of Program 24 in the February 2023 Housing Element supports HCD's findings that the October 2022 Housing Element lacked sufficient analysis of the City's affirmatively further fair housing obligations.

Exercising its independent judgment on the issue, the court concludes the City's October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the affirmatively further fair housing requirements in section 65583, subdivisions (a)(3), (b)(1), and (c)(10).[24]

Nonvacant Sites Analysis

HCD found the October 2022 Housing Element's analysis of nonvacant sites did not sufficiently analyze "redevelopment potential and evaluate the extent existing uses impede additional development." (AR 5264.) HCD also found "as the element relies on nonvacant sites to accommodate 50 percent or more of the housing needs for lower-income households, the adoption resolution must make findings based on substantial evidence in a complete analysis that existing uses are not an impediment and will likely discontinue in the planning period." (AR 5264.)

For nonvacant sites, the Housing Element Law provides "the city or county shall specify the additional development potential for each site within the planning period and shall provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential." (§ 65583.2, subd. (g)(1).) In addition, "when a city or county is relying on nonvacant sites . . . to accommodate 50 percent or more of its housing need for lower income households, the methodology used to determine additional development potential shall demonstrate that the existing use . . . does not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element. An existing use shall be presumed to impede additional residential development, absent findings based on substantial evidence that the use is likely to be discontinued during the planning period." (§ 65583.2, subd. (g)(2).)

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[24] In reaching this conclusion, the court has considered Respondents' assertion the City undertook outreach efforts "in the face of 'changing goal posts' and what appeared to be intentional obstructive behavior by HCD." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 9:16-21.) The court finds Respondents' evidence does not prove substantial compliance with the affirmatively further fair housing requirements in section 65583 or an excuse from substantial compliance. (See e.g. Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 49-50.) The court has also considered CHDF's arguments and evidence that the City discriminated on the basis of race and income when it selected sites for rezoning. The court further discusses CHDF's claims of discrimination and bad faith *infra*.

The Court of Appeal explains "there are many types of sites the Legislature has either deemed infeasible to support lower income housing or that require additional evidence of their feasibility or by-right development approvals before being deemed adequate to accommodate such housing [including] . . . when a city relies on over 50 percent of the inventory to be accommodated on nonvacant sites . . . . The goal is not just to identify land, *but to pinpoint sites that are adequate and realistically available* for residential development targets for each income level." (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 244 [emphasis added].)

Here, more than 50 percent of the parcels included in the City's site inventory to accommodate the lower income RHNA are nonvacant. (AR 4506.) Accordingly, the City is required to comply with section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2). The site inventory in the October 2022 Housing Element does not show substantial compliance with section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2). (See AR 5124-5129.) The criteria used to describe nearly all of the lower income nonvacant sites are some combination of "underutilized site," "buildings that are older than 30 years," "vacant lot or parking lot with minimal existing site improvements," "property has not been reassessed" in some time, "antiquated commercial uses," or "existing use retained and institution would add residential units." (AR 5124-5129; see also AR 4601-4603 [discussing methodology].) While these factors may be relevant to and inform on the analysis of "additional development potential" required by section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(1), they do not sufficiently address in any substantive way whether the sites are "likely to be discontinued during the planning period," as required by section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2).

In the resolution adopting the October 2022 Housing Element, the City Council made the following finding:

> Based on general development trends resulting from continuously rising land values, changes in desired land uses, the financial pressures placed on religious institutions that have been impacted by falling congregation numbers, aging structures, and underutilized properties, rising demand for housing, adjacency to public transportation and commercial services, and other factors/analysis as identified in the Section 9.4.1.3 Future Residential Development Potential and Section 9.4.1.4 Overview of Residential Development Potential and Realistic Capacity Assumptions by Zone of the Housing Element, the existing uses on the sites identified in the site inventory to accommodate the lower income RHNA are likely to be discontinued during the planning period, and therefore do not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element. (AR 4506.)

The City Council's generalized statement does not reference any specific evidence to support a finding the existing uses of nonvacant sites, which were identified to accommodate housing need for lower income households, are "likely to be discontinued during the planning period." (§ 65583.2, subd. (g)(2).)

Further, Petitioners cite record evidence that the owners of several of the nonvacant sites included in the October 2022 site inventory, including certain sites identified for lower income households, informed the City they did not intend to redevelop the site or discontinue the existing use during the planning period. (See AR 5114-5116, 2222, 2238, 2206, 5126, 12812, 5233, 5123-5129, 6054-6061.)[25] Significantly, the City subsequently amended the housing element to disclose that some of the identified lower income category sites are "not currently available" and were included in the site inventory "as a buffer site because it may become available further along in the 6th cycle HE planning period." (AR 6054-6061, 6098.) Such a change in characterization is a major substantive change in the site inventory and demonstrates the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law.

The court has also reviewed Director Koleda's summary of changes to the October 2022 Housing Element. The court concludes, on the whole, Director Koleda's summary is consistent with Petitioners' arguments the October 2022 Housing Element was not substantially compliant and required significant changes. (See Koleda Decl. ¶ 56 and Exh. A.) As Intervenors argue, the substantial changes to the October 2022 Housing Element show the City did not substantially comply with section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2) until *after* it adopted the October 2022 Housing Element.

Respondents assert the City "adopted a Site Inventory using both a data-driven model endorsed by HCD . . . and along with that gathered 'substantial evidence' by sending TWO mailings to each commercial and religious property owner in the City to determine potential inclusion on the Site Inventory." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 11:9-12 [citing Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 29, 54-56].) However, Respondents do not dispute it included multiple nonvacant sites in the October 2022 Site Inventory for which the City lacked substantial evidence, *in October 2022*, that the existing uses were "likely to be discontinued during the planning period." (§ 65583.2, subd. (g)(2).) Notably, Respondents do not cite any written communications with the nonvacant site owners, prior to the adoption of the October 2022 Housing Element, as evidence the uses were "likely to be discontinued during the planning period." (§ 65583.2, subd. (g)(2).)

Respondents assert their methodology should be sufficient. During the hearing, they followed HCD guidance and should not be penalized for doing so. Respondents also argue for purposes of section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2), they should not be required to knock on owners' doors and undertake an active investigation for its sites inventory.

The court cannot find on this record the City followed HCD guidance on the section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2) issue. While the City's reliance on methodology alone may be consistent with

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[25] For example, a representative of a restaurant (Panda Express) wrote "we have NO intention of discontinuing the current use of this property during the next eight-year housing planning period." (AR 5115.) The owner of sites 86-89 on the October 2022 site inventory (identified in the lower income category) similarly informed the City that the premises are leased to retail store (Big Lots) under a 20-year lease with two 10-year extension options, and it had no intention of discontinuing the current use during the planning period. (AR 5116.)

HCD's section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(1) compliance guidance, that is not the case for section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2).

As discussed during the hearing, HCD guidance specifies at Step 3 how to prepare a nonvacant sites inventory when a municipality has relied on "nonvacant sites to accommodate more than 50 percent of the RHNA for lower income households." (Koleda Decl., Exh. Q p. 26.) Consistent with section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2), the guidance makes clear:

> If a housing element relies on nonvacant sites to accommodate 50 percent or more of its RHNA for lower income households, the nonvacant site's existing use is presumed to impede additional residential development, unless the housing element describes findings based on substantial evidence that the use will likely be discontinued during the planning period. (*Id.* at 27.)

"The goal is not just to identify land, *but to pinpoint sites that are adequate and realistically available* for residential development targets . . . ." (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 244 [emphasis added].) Accordingly, HCD guidance also explains the "housing element should describe the findings and include a description of the substantial evidence they are based on," and a housing element "should describe the findings and include a description of the substantial evidence they are based on." (Koleda Decl., Exh. Q at 27.)
(*Ibid.*)

HCD further advised substantial evidence "includes facts, reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts, and expert opinion supported by facts." (*Ibid.*) HCD provides specific examples of what constitutes substantial evidence "that an existing use will likely be discontinued in the current planning period . . . ." (*Ibid.*) Those examples include:

> [1] The lease for the existing use expires early within the planning period,
> [2] The building is dilapidated, and the structure is likely to be removed, or a demolition permit has been issued for the existing uses,
> [3] There is a development agreement that exists to develop the site within the planning period,
> [4] The entity operating the existing use has agreed to move to another location early enough within the planning period to allow residential development within the planning period.
> [5] The property owner provides a letter stating its intention to develop the property with residences during the planning period. (*Ibid.*)

Of the 21 nonvacant sites identified by the City as "sites that are adequate and realistically available for residential development targets" for lower income persons (*Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 244), 19 percent or only four (sites 74, 91, 95 and 96) provide any site-specific evidence to support the City's inclusion of the site in its sites inventory. (AR 5124-5128.) For the four sites, the owner indicated some interest in redevelopment. (AR 5126, 5128.) The

remaining sites rely on the City's generalized methodology to meet their obligations under section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2).

Respondents argue 600 Foothill's principal "actively manipulated" certain sites that were later deemed "buffer sites." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 10:22.) Respondents also blame deficiencies in their October 2022 site inventory on "dilatory guidance" of HCD and dilatory actions of SCAG. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 12:9-10.) Having considered the evidence cited by Respondents, the court finds Respondents' arguments unpersuasive. As discussed *infra* with Respondents' unclean hands defense, Respondents do not demonstrate 600 Foothill or its principals have engaged in any inequitable or wrongful conduct related to these proceedings, including the City's adoption of its housing element. Respondents also do not prove deficiencies in the site inventory of the October 2022 Housing Element resulted from actions or omissions of 600 Foothill, SCAG or HCD. Nor do Respondents cite any authority suggesting a city or county may be excused from substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law based on actions or omissions of SCAG, HCD or a project applicant.

Respondents contend the City was permitted "to rely upon letters with site owners and between itself and HCD not included specifically in its Housing Element" and the City "made reasonable inferences" from the information it received from site owners. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 12:15-19.) Respondents rely on *Martinez* to support their claims. (See *Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 248.)

Martinez addressed the City of Clovis' nonvacant site analysis under section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(1); the Court did not analyze the heightened requirements of section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2). (See *Martinez, supra,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 248-250.) While *Martinez* held the substantive material required by section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(1), need not appear in the Housing Element itself, the Court did not suggest nonvacant sites may be included in a site inventory if the agency lacks substantial evidence, or has not sufficiently investigated or analyzed, whether the sites are "likely to be discontinued during the planning period." (§ 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2).)

Here, Respondents have not cited substantial evidence to support the City's position multiple nonvacant sites listed in the October 2022 inventory could realistically be developed in a manner to satisfy the City's RHNA obligations. In addition, that Respondents made substantive revisions to the site inventory **after** October 2022 also supports a reasonable inference the City did not complete the analysis and attain the evidence required by section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2), for many of the sites on its site inventory, **before** it adopted the October 2022 Housing Element. (Compare AR 5124-5129 with 6054-6061.)

Exercising its independent judgment, the court concludes the City's October 2022 Housing Element did not include a nonvacant site analysis that substantially complied with the Housing Element Law, including section 65583.2, subdivision (g)(2).

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Realistic Assessment of Development Capacity

The Housing Element Law requires that municipalities "specify for each site [in its inventory] the number of units that can realistically be accommodated on that site." (§ 65583.2, subd. (c).) The law provides "the number of units calculated" for each site "shall be adjusted" to account for "the land use controls and site improvements requirement identified in paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) of Section 65583, the realistic development capacity for the site, typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction, and on the current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities." (*Id.* at subd. (c)(2).)

CHDF contends the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with these statutory provisions because it failed to apply a "downward adjustment on the number of units projected on each site to account for, among other constraints, the City's maximum floor-area ratio of 1.5 (AR 4607), its 80-percent maximum lot-coverage requirement (AR 4566), its 35-foot height limit (AR 4567), and significant parking requirements (AR 4572) for sites in mixed-use zones." (CHDF Opening Brief 20:4-7.)

Respondents did not address or rebut CHDF's argument. (*Sehulster Tunnels/Pre-Con v. Traylor Brothers, Inc., supra,* 111 Cal.App.4th at 1345, fn. 16 [failure to address point is "equivalent to a concession"].) The court concludes the City's October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with Housing Element Law because the City failed to adjust the development capacity for each site based on the factors set forth in section 65583.2, subdivision (c)(2).[26]

Government Code Section 65583.2, Subdivision (h)

CHDF argues fewer than 50 percent of the October 2022 Housing Element's low-income sites were zoned exclusively for residential use, and the City did not include analysis showing it would "accommodate all of the very low and low-income housing need on sites designated for mixed use [and] allow 100 percent residential use and require that residential use occupy 50 percent of the total floor area of a mixed-use project." (CHDF Opening Brief 20:21-23 [citing § 65583.2, subd. (h)].) CHDF supports its assertion with citations to the administrative record. (CHDF Opening Brief 21:1-4 [citing AR 5124-5129, 4607-4610]; see also AR 4612.) Based on the

[26] During argument, the court engaged CHDF and Respondents at length on this issue. While Respondents provide an explanation that their rezoning included the required adjustments, the court finds Respondents conceded the issue by not addressing it in their brief. (Compare CHDF Opening Brief 19:20-20:15 with Opposition to CHDF 10:10-11:20.) Respondents' analysis of development constraints is not entirely clear and undeveloped in their brief. (See AR 4565-4570.)

evidence, CHDF argues the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with section 65583.2, subdivision (h).[27]

Respondents do not squarely address CHDF's position, and they do not show, with citation to the administrative record, the October 2022 Housing Element substantially complied with section 65583.2, subdivision (h). (Opposition to CHDF 12:4-9.) Accordingly, the court concludes the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law for this reason as well.

Based on the foregoing, the court concludes the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law. Accordingly, the City Council prejudicially abused its discretion when it found in its May 1, 2023 Decision the Builder's Remedy did not apply to the Project.

Respondents' Defenses to the HAA Causes of Action

Respondents raise a defense of unclean hands to the HAA causes of action asserted by 600 Foothill. Respondents also raise defenses of ripeness, exhaustion of administrative remedies, and claim the petitions violate rules designed to prevent piecemeal litigation.

Unclean Hands

A party seeking equitable relief must have "clean hands" and inequitable conduct by the party seeking relief is a complete defense. (*Dickson, Carlson & Campillo v. Pole* (2000) 83 Cal.App.4th 436, 446; *Salas v. Sierra Chem. Co.* (2014) 59 Cal.4th 407, 432.) The plaintiff must "come into court with clean hands, and keep them clean," or the plaintiff "will be denied relief, regardless of the merits of his claim." (*Kendall-Jackson Winery, Ltd. v. Superior Court* (1999) 76 Cal.App.4th 970, 978.) For the doctrine to apply, "there must be a direct relationship between the misconduct and the claimed injuries." (*Mattco Forge, Inc. v. Arthur Young & Co.* (1997) 52 Cal.App.4th 820, 846, citation omitted.)

Respondents contend "the only reasonable inference to draw [from the opposition evidence] is that on the eve of final review and approval of the Housing Element containing the Site Inventory, 600 Foothill's principal was running around town attempting to manipulate owners to 'decline' inclusion on the inventory and derail the process." (Opposition to 600 Foothill 14:2-5.) The court has reviewed all of the evidence cited by Respondents. (Koleda Decl. ¶¶ 46-51; Hernandez Decl. ¶¶ 4, 5; AR 7081-7085, 5233; Sheridan Decl. Exh. DD.) Respondents' assertion

[27] Section 65583.2, subdivision (h) provides in pertinent part: "At least 50 percent of the very low and low-income housing need shall be accommodated on sites designated for residential use and for which nonresidential uses or mixed uses are not permitted, except that a city or county may accommodate all of the very low and low-income housing need on sites designated for mixed use if those sites allow 100 percent residential use and require that residential use occupy 50 percent of the total floor area of a mixed-use project."

that Garret Weyand, one of 600 Foothill's principals, engaged in "deliberate attempts to manipulate the Site Inventory" is speculative and not supported by the evidence. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 10:22.) To the contrary, the court finds Weyand's public advocacy in support of the Project is not evidence of inequitable conduct. (See Reply Weyand Decl.) Respondents have not demonstrated, by a preponderance of the evidence, 600 Foothill or any of its principals, including Weyand and Jon Curtis, engaged in inequitable conduct that has a direct relationship to any cause of action in 600 Foothill's petition. Respondents failed to meet their burden of demonstrating unclean hands and their entitlement to the defense.[28]

Ripeness, Exhaustion, and Piecemeal Litigation

" 'A decision attains the requisite administrative finality when the agency has exhausted its jurisdiction and possesses 'no further power to reconsider or rehear the claim.' . . . Until a public agency makes a 'final' decision, the matter is not ripe for judicial review." (*California Water Impact Network v. Newhall County Water Dist.* (2008) 161 Cal.App.4th 1464, 1485.) Relatedly, "[t]he exhaustion doctrine precludes review of an intermediate or interlocutory action of an administrative agency. A party must proceed through the full administrative process 'to a final decision on the merits.' " (*Id.* at 1489.) There are exceptions to the exhaustion requirement, including "when the aggrieved party can positively state what the administrative agency's decision in his particular case would be." (*Edgren v. Regents of University of California* (1984) 158 Cal.App.3d 515, 520.)

Respondents do not show any lack of finality or any further administrative remedy to exhaust as to the May 1, 2023 Decision. The May 1, 2023 Decision of the City Council is final because there is no further avenue for administrative appeal. As discussed, the City disapproved (within the meaning of the HAA) the Project. Nothing in the HAA requires Petitioners to complete CEQA review before suing to enforce the HAA.

Respondents argue 600 Foothill did not sufficiently raise issues pursued in this proceeding, including that the City failed to rezone, the housing element does not meet its affirmatively further fair housing obligation, as well as the site inventory issues. The court concludes Petitioners sufficiently raised and preserved their contentions during the administrative proceedings. (See AR 6284-6286, 6307-6317.) Many of the issues in these petitions were also raised by HCD in letters to the City at the administrative level, including a notice of violation. (AR 7170-7175.)

Respondents argue "[n]o express 'disapproval' of the entire project occurred here . . . ." (Opposition to CHDF 16:25.) While not entirely clear, Respondents seemingly suggest 600 Foothill should *redesign the Project* to avoid reliance on the Builder's Remedy. Respondents do not develop an argument 600 Foothill has any legal obligation, under the circumstances here, to redesign the Project "as a standard, nonbuilder's remedy project." (AR 7103.). Respondents

[28] This defense only applies to 600 Foothill. Respondents do not develop any argument the HAA claims of CHDF or Intervenors are subject to the defense.

also do not show that any further administrative action, including appeal of the City's June 24, 2023 letter describing inconsistency between the Project and the City's general plan and zoning ordinances (see AR 7176), could remedy the harm suffered by 600 Foothill when the City Council determined the Builder's Remedy does not apply to the Project.

Moreover, Petitioners can positively state what the City's decision is with respect to 600 Foothill's application to develop the Builder's Remedy Project. In its May 1, 2023 Decision, the City Council made clear any required land use approvals or entitlements would not be issued for the Project as a Builder's Remedy project. Based on its review of the administrative record and the parties' declarations, the court finds no reasonable possibility Respondents, including the City Council, will change their position and process 600 Foothill's Project as a Builder's Remedy under the HAA. Accordingly, even if some additional appeal or administrative process were available, the futility exception to exhaustion applies under these facts. (See, e.g., *Felkay v. City of Santa Barbara* (2021) 62 Cal.App.5th 30, 40-41 [futility exception, which is a question of fact, applied where city "made plain" it would not permit the proposed development]; *Ogo Associates v. City of Torrance* (1974) 37 Cal.App.3d 830, 832-34 [futility exception applied where it was "inconceivable the city council would grant a variance for the very project whose prospective existence brought about the enactment of the rezoning" that necessitated the variance in the first place].)

Respondents do not demonstrate (1) the HAA claims in the petitions are unripe, (2) Petitioners failed to exhaust their administrative remedies, or (3) Petitioners have violated rules designed to prevent piecemeal litigation. Further, even if Petitioners have additional administrative remedies (such as an appeal of the June 24, 2023 inconsistency letter), the court finds exhaustion of such remedies is futile under the circumstances presented here.

CHDF's Claims of Bad Faith and Discrimination Based on Race and Income

CHDF contends:

> La Cañada Flintridge officials *clearly* acquiesced to the biases and prejudices of city residents when they revised the draft Housing Element's sites inventory and rezoning program to eliminate multiple 'low-income' sites south of Foothill Boulevard. This was a blatant violation of California and Federal fair housing laws alike. (See Gov. Code, § 65008, subd. (b)(1)(C) . . . ; Cal. Code Regs, tit. 2, § 12161, subd. (c) . . . ; *Mhany Management, Inc., supra*, 819 F.3d 581 . . . .) (CHDF Opening Brief 17:13-21.)

As acknowledged in reply, CHDF did not plead a cause of action in its petition alleging the City violated the Fair Housing Act or state or federal discrimination laws. (CHDF Reply 10:15-20.) CHDF also did not move to amend its petition or request leave to amend its petition. (See *Simmons v. Ware* (2013) 213 Cal.App.4th 1035, 1048. ["The pleadings are supposed to define the issues to be tried."])

In reply, CHDF argues the "City's discriminatory site-selection practices demonstrates the City did not substantially comply with the Housing Element Law's requirements to affirmatively further fair housing." (CHDF Reply 10:18-19.) However, CHDF failed to plead that claim in its petition. (See CHDF Reply 10:20-21 [citing CHDF Pet. ¶¶ 22, 26, 29-30 (generalized allegations the City "did not affirmatively further fair housing or provide an assessment of fair housing")].)

On the merits of CHDF's claim, even if the affirmatively further fair housing allegations in the petition are interpreted to encompass CHDF's arguments about race and income discrimination (a difficult task), the court finds Respondents' opposition persuasive. (Opposition to CHDF 13:5-15:21.) There is insufficient evidence the City Council "acquiesced" to or acted based on public comments at the August and September 2022 public hearings highlighted in CHDF's briefs. (See e.g., AR 2602-2603 ["different value system and much more high crime . . . the value system is different than people that move here"], 3491-3494 [similar comments from same individual at AR 2602-2603], 3539-3541, 3543-3545 ["dust off my shotgun" "likelihood of being some bad apples"], 3493 [additional similar comments from commenter at AR 2602-2603 and AR 3491-3494], 5107-5110 [crime and will become dangerous community], 5112 ["fear poor or homeless people will move into La Canada and bring crime"].)

While some of the public comments were quite unfortunate, CHDF cites statements of councilmembers out of context and does not show those councilmembers "agreed" with the public comments highlighted by Petitioners. (CHDF Opening Brief 10:13-11:6.) Even if the councilmembers could have stated their disagreement with certain public comments, but did not, there is insufficient evidence to support an inference the City Council took any action on the housing element based on the unfortunate public comments and discrimination.[29]

Other Contentions Related to the HAA Causes of Action

Several other contentions are not necessary to the court's ruling on the HAA claims. For completeness, the court briefly addresses them.

The court agrees with Intervenors that the City did not have authority under the HAA or Housing Element Law to backdate its housing element and "self-certify" or declare its housing element to be in substantial compliance with state law as of October 2022. (Intervenors Opening Brief 14:3-15:24.) Respondents appear to concede the point. (See Opposition to Intervenors 19:18-21:7 [asserting City did not back date or self-certify].)

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[29] During argument, 600 Foothill provided a series of acts undertaken by Respondents that it believed demonstrated bad faith. Many of those acts, however, flowed from the City's belief it properly adopted the October 2022 Housing Element or the City's violation of the Permit Streamlining Act (PSA) discussed *infra*. Based on all of the evidence before the court, the evidence is insufficient to establish the City acted with bad faith and "will continue to use all means to obstruct" as suggested by CDHF during argument.

As argued by 600 Foothill, when HCD found the October 2022 Housing Element did not substantially comply with the law, section 65585, subdivision (f) required City to take "one" of the following actions: "(1) Change the draft element or draft amendment to substantially comply with this article; [or] (2) Adopt the draft element or draft amendment without changes [, but with] written findings which explain the reasons the legislative body believes that the draft . . . substantially complies with this article despite the findings of the department." (600 Foothill Opening Brief 14:16-19.) The court agrees the "City unlawfully blended these approaches by making some changes in response to HCD's comments, adopting the February 2023 Housing Element with written findings explaining why the October 2022 Housing Element was sufficient, and then resubmitting its revised draft to HCD." (600 Foothill Opening Brief 14:19-22.)

If the City believed its October 2022 Housing Element substantially complied with the Housing Element Law, it should have taken the action set forth in section 65585, subdivision (f)(2). Thereafter, the City could have sued for a judicial declaration that its October 2022 Housing Element substantially complied with state law. The City did not do so here.

The court finds 600 Foothill's arguments based on section 65589.5, subdivisions (j) and (o) are not ripe at this time. Once ripe, the claims are subject to exhaustion. (See 600 Foothill Opening Brief 9:12-10:21; Pet. ¶¶ 134-162.) Upon the remand ordered here, the City is required to process the application as a Builder's Remedy project and in accordance with the HAA, including sections 65589.5, subdivisions (j) and (o). Thus, it is premature to adjudicate today whether the City has complied with those provisions of the HAA.

Relatedly, since the court concludes the City is required by law to process the application pursuant to the Builder's Remedy provision of the HAA, the court need not address the financial infeasibility of a redesigned project. (600 Foothill Opening Brief 8:21-9:3 and 10, fn. 6.)

Summary of HAA Causes of Action and Scope of Writ Relief

The court finds the City Council prejudicially abused its discretion with its finding in its May 1, 2023 Decision that the Builder's Remedy does not apply to the Project. As a remedy, the court grants 600 Foothill's petition and will issue a writ directing Respondents to set aside the May 1, 2023 City Council decision finding 600 Foothill's Project does not qualify as Builder's Remedy and compelling the City to process the application in accordance with the HAA and state law. That remedy is consistent with section 65589.5, subdivision (k)(1)(A)(ii) of the HAA (compliance required in 60 days) and Code of Civil Procedure section 1094.5, subdivision (f).

CHDF argues the court should order the Project "approved" due to the City's alleged bad faith and unlawful discrimination. (CHDF Opening Brief 23:18-24:24.) For the reasons discussed, the court finds evidence the City Council "acquiesced" to or acted based on the public comments from the August and September 2022 public hearings highlighted in CHDF's briefs insufficient. (See e.g., AR 2602-2603, 3491-3494, 3539-3541, 3543-3545, 3493, 5107-5110, 5112.) CHDF has

not met its burden of demonstrating Respondents acted in bad faith in connection with those public comments.

CHDF also argues "[w]hen 600 Foothill subsequently proposed a project under the HAA's builder's remedy, the City Council concocted a bizarre scheme to evade judicial review of their decision to disapprove that project, ..." (CHDF Opening Brief 24:15-18.) 600 Foothill contends the court should order Respondents to approve the Project on similar grounds. (600 Foothill Reply 18:13-19:8.) While the court finds the City prejudicially abused its discretion with its May 1, 2023 Decision finding the Builder's Remedy inapplicable to the Project, the court does not find sufficient evidence to conclude the City Council acted in bad faith when it made its legally incorrect decision.

Further, even if it could be argued the City Council lacked a good faith reason to find the Project did not qualify as a Builder's Remedy, Petitioners do not show it would be equitable for the court to compel the City to approve the Project. Among other reasons, CEQA review is specifically preserved by the HAA. (See § 65589.5, subds. (e) and (o)(6); *Schellinger, supra,* 179 Cal.App.4th at 1245.) In the exercise of the court's discretion, the court finds a writ compelling Respondents to approve the Project, without CEQA review, would not be an equitable or proportionate remedy for the violations of the HAA at issue. Respondents should be permitted on remand to process 600 Foothill's application, as a Builder's Remedy, in conformance with state law, including the HAA and CEQA.

Based on the foregoing, the HAA causes of action are GRANTED IN PART.

<u>600 Foothill's First Cause of Action – Violation of Housing Element Law</u>

600 Foothill prays for a writ of mandate "compelling Respondents to adopt a revised housing element pursuant to Government Code Section 65754. 2" and "to complete the required rezoning consistent with an HCD-approved housing element." (Pet. Prayer ¶¶ 1-2.) 600 Foothill filed its petition on July 21, 2023. The petition alleged the City had not substantially complied with the Housing Element Law at that time. (Pet. ¶ 91.)

As discussed, the City completed the required rezoning in September through November 2023, after 600 Foothill filed its petition. On November 17, 2023, HCD sent a letter to the City finding the City had "completed actions to address requirements described in HCD's April 24, 2023 review letter" and was in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law. (See Coy Decl. ¶ 12, Exh. D.)

600 Foothill has not pleaded in the petition, or argued in its briefing, there is any deficiency in the February 2023 Housing Element that HCD found to be substantially compliant with the Housing Element Law in November 2023, after the City completed its rezoning. Accordingly, the first cause of action is moot. (*Wilson & Wilson v. City Council of Redwood City* (2011) 191 Cal.App.4th 1559, 1573 ["A case is considered moot when 'the question addressed was at one time a live issue in the case,' but has been deprived of life 'because of events occurring after

the judicial process was initiated.' . . . . 'The pivotal question in determining if a case is moot is therefore whether the court can grant the plaintiff any effectual relief.'"])

600 Foothill's first cause of action is DENIED as moot.

600 Foothill's Second Cause of Action – Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

600 Foothill prays for a writ "compelling Respondents to comply with their statutory obligation to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing." (Pet. Prayer ¶ 9.) 600 Foothill's writ briefing, however, only challenges the City's compliance with affirmatively further fair housing obligations as to the October 2022 Housing Element and required rezoning. (See 600 Foothill Opening Brief 21:10-12; Pet. ¶¶ 106-108.) 600 Foothill does not develop any argument the City's February 2023 housing element, after completion of the required rezoning, does not comply with the City's affirmatively further fair housing obligations. Accordingly, the second cause of action is moot. (*Wilson & Wilson, supra,* 191 Cal.App.4th at 1573.) Alternatively, to the extent 600 Foothill contends in the petition the City remains out of compliance with its affirmatively further fair housing obligations (see Pet. ¶ 105), 600 Foothill has not sufficiently supported its position with evidence and legal analysis.

600 Foothill's second cause of action is DENIED as moot.

600 Foothill's Sixth Cause of Action – Violation of the PSA

600 Foothill contends the City violated the PSA in several ways with its incompleteness determinations and the City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision. (600 Foothill Opening Brief 19:14-20-25; Pet. ¶¶ 163-175.) 600 Foothill prays for a writ "compelling Respondents review and process applications pursuant to the Permit Streamlining Act's provisions, including refraining from refusing to process development applications based on erroneous assertions of incompleteness." (Pet. Prayer ¶ 4.)

600 Foothill has demonstrated Respondents violated the PSA in at least two respects. Specifically, section 65943, subdivision (a) provides "[i]f the application is determined to be incomplete, the lead agency shall provide the applicant with **an exhaustive list** of items that were not complete." (Emphasis added.) In addition, the list "**shall** be limited to those items actually required on the lead agency's submittal requirement checklist." (*Ibid.* [Emphasis added].) "**In any subsequent review** of the application determined to be incomplete, the local agency shall not request the applicant to provide any new information **that was not stated in the initial list of items that were not complete**." (*Ibid.* [Emphasis added].)

While neither party has cited any published authority interpreting these provisions, the plain language of section 65943, subdivision (a) is clear. The PSA required the City to provide 600 Foothill with an "exhaustive list" of incomplete items in its First Incompleteness Determination; incomplete items are limited to items on the City's "submittal requirement checklist"; and the City could not later request new information it omitted from the initial list. Respondents

provide no alternative interpretation of the statutory language. (Opposition to 600 Foothill 20:5-21:8.) Director Koleda reports "it is **a common practice** for the City to provide information to a developer in the early stages of the application review regarding ways that the development does not meet applicable development standards." (Koleda Decl. ¶ 42 [emphasis added].) Even if true, the City's common practice does not supersede the statutory requirements of the PSA.

In violation of these provisions of the PSA, the Second Incompleteness Determination found the Project was inconsistent with City's zoning and general plan standards because the Project did not qualify as a Builder's Remedy. (AR 6280-6281.) However, that issue was not raised in the First Incomplete Determination and was also not included on the City's submittal requirement checklist. (See AR 5276-5279, 6280-6281; see also Koleda Decl. ¶ 42.) Accordingly, the City violated section 65943, subdivision (a).[30]

Respondents suggest 600 Foothill was not prejudiced by the violations of the PSA because the application was deemed complete on May 26, 2023. (Oppo. to 600 Foothill 22:19-21 [citing AR 7169].) Respondents do not cite any authority for the proposition that PSA violations are excused by a purported lack of prejudice. Moreover, 600 Foothill was prejudiced when Respondents made a legally unauthorized incompleteness determination.

600 Foothill does not cite a statute or published authority suggesting the appropriate remedy for these types of violations of the PSA is an order compelling the City to approve the project. As discussed for the HAA causes of action, the court will grant a writ directing Respondents to set aside the City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision and process 600 Foothill's application in accordance with the HAA. The violations of the PSA proven by 600 Foothill provide additional support for that remedy. 600 Foothill does not demonstrate any additional relief is justified under the PSA.

To the extent 600 Foothill prays for a writ directing the City to comply with the PSA in the future or with respect to development applications of non-parties (see Prayer ¶ 4), 600 Foothill

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[30] 600 Foothill also contends "Respondents' Second Incompleteness Determination was issued on March 1, 2023 (AR 6280-81) more than 30 days after Petitioner submitted the Project application on January 13, 2023." (600 Foothill Opening Brief 20:22-24.) 600 Foothill did not pay the fees for the application until January 31, 2023, which was less 30 days before March 1, 2023. (AR 7161-7162.) When submitting its application, the City advised 600 Foothill "the 30-day time limit to determine completeness of a development application per Government Code Section 65943 does not begin until all invoiced fees have been paid." (AR 7161-7162) Section 65943 is ambiguous as to whether the 30-day period begins running when the application is submitted/received or when the fees are paid. While 600 Foothill has a colorable argument the 30-day period began when City "received" the application on January 13, 2023, Respondents' alternative interpretation is also reasonable. 600 Foothill has not submitted any legislative history to support its interpretation. Accordingly, the court is not persuaded 600 Foothill met its burden as to it complaint about timeliness under the PSA.

does not sufficiently support such a prayer in its briefing. Specifically, 600 Foothill does not explain how it has standing to enforce the PSA on behalf of non-parties, or how any claim with respect to the City's future compliance with the PSA is ripe for judicial review.

600 Foothill's sixth cause of action is GRANTED IN PART. The court finds the City violated the PSA in the manner it processed 600 Foothill's application. As a remedy, the May 1, 2023 Decision finding that the application was incomplete because the Project does not qualify as a Builder's Remedy must be set aside. In all others respect, the sixth cause of action is DENIED.

600 Foothill's Seventh and Eighth Causes of Action – State Density Bonus Law and Subdivision Map Act

600 Foothill argues the City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision effectively denied 600 Foothill's requests for a density bonus and concessions or incentives under the State Density Bonus Law, and "necessarily constituted a disapproval" under the Subdivision Map Act. (600 Foothill Opening Brief 21:25-22:12; see Pet. ¶¶ 176-197.)

The court's analysis of the seventh and eighth causes of action is similar to that set forth earlier with 600 Foothill's claims under section 65589.5, subdivisions (j) and (o). Upon remand, the City will be required to process 600 Foothill's application as a Builder's Remedy and in accordance with the HAA and other state housing laws, including the State Density Bonus Law and the Subdivision Map Act. It is premature at this time to adjudicate whether the City has complied with those statutes. 600 Foothill has been informed that the City's review process under the State Density Bonus Law and the Subdivision Map Act is ongoing. (See AR 7176-7178, 7169.) Accordingly, 600 Foothill does not prove its seventh and eighth causes of action are ripe for judicial review or that the issues have been exhausted. Further, to the extent 600 Foothill seeks a writ directing the City to "approve" the Project in full, it does not demonstrate it is entitled to that remedy, as discussed earlier.

600 Foothill's seventh and eighth causes of action are DENIED.

600 Foothill's Ninth Cause of Action is Stayed

Respondents specially moved to strike 600 Foothill's ninth cause of action (right to fair hearing) pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 425.16. The court denied the motion, and Respondents appealed. Given the appeal, the ninth cause of action is stayed. (See Code Civ. Proc., §§ 425.16, subd. (i), 916, subd. (a); *Varian Medical Systems, Inc. v. Delfino* (2005) 35 Cal.4th 180, 195.)[31]

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[31] Respondents conceded at the time the court heard the special motion to strike that an appeal would stay only the ninth cause of action.

Causes of Action for Declaratory Relief by All Petitioners

Issuance of a declaratory judgment is discretionary. (Code Civ. Proc., § 1060.) Further, "it is settled that declaratory relief is not an appropriate method for judicial review of administrative decisions." (*Selby Realty Co. v. City of San Buenaventura* (1973) 10 Cal.3d 110, 127; accord *Sheetz v. County of El Dorado* (2022) 84 Cal.App.5th 394, 414 ["administrative mandamus is 'the proper and sole remedy' to challenge a local agency's application of the law (e.g., application of a zoning ordinance to a particular property)"].)

Although the petitions include various requests for declaratory relief, all such requests pertain to the validity of City Council's May 1, 2023 Decision, including the City Council's determination the October 2022 Housing Element substantially complied with state law and the Project did not qualify as a Builder's Remedy. None of the Petitioners have developed a legal argument that declaratory relief is an appropriate, *or necessary*, form of judicial review of the administrative decisions at issue. Accordingly, Petitioners have not demonstrated they are entitled to declaratory relief.

600 Foothill's eleventh cause of action for declaratory relief, CHDF's second cause of action for declaratory relief, and Intervenors' second cause of action for declaratory relief are DENIED as unnecessary given the court's decision on the HAA causes of action.

Retention of Jurisdiction

The court found Respondents, "in violation of subdivision (d), disapproved a housing development project . . . without making findings supported by a preponderance of the evidence."[32] (§ 65589.5, subd. (k)(1)(A)(i).) Accordingly, the court is required to "retain jurisdiction to ensure that its . . . judgment is carried out . . . ." (*Id.* at subd. (k)(1)(A)(ii).)

CONCLUSION

The petitions of 600 Foothill, CHDF, and Intervenors to enforce the HAA are GRANTED IN PART. The court finds the City Council prejudicially abused its discretion when it found in its May 1, 2023 Decision that the Builder's Remedy does not apply to the Project. The court will grant a writ directing Respondents to set aside the City Council's decision, dated May 1, 2023, finding 600 Foothill's application does not qualify as a Builder's Remedy and to process the application in accordance with the HAA and state law. The HAA claims are denied in all other respects. 600 Foothill's first, second, seventh, and eighth causes of action are DENIED.

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[32] The City's finding its October 2022 Housing Element was in substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law was not supported by substantial evidence. As discussed *supra*, HCD had advised the City why the October 2022 Housing Element was not in substantial compliance. Moreover, Director Koleda on January 11, 12 and February 9, 2023 appeared to accept HCD's evaluation that the City could not achieve substantial compliance with the Housing Element Law without "additional changes" and "clarifications." (AR 12894, 13011.)

600 Foothill's sixth cause of action is GRANTED IN PART. The court finds the City violated the PSA in the manner it processed 600 Foothill's application and, as a remedy, the May 1, 2023 Decision finding the application was incomplete because the Project does not qualify as a Builder's Remedy must be set aside. In all others respect, the sixth cause of action is DENIED.

600 Foothill's ninth cause of action is stayed pending Respondents' appeal of denial of its anti-SLAPP motion. (See Code Civ. Proc. §§ 425.16, subd. (i), 916, subd. (a).)

600 Foothill's eleventh cause of action for declaratory relief, CHDF's second cause of action for declaratory relief, and Intervenors' second cause of action for declaratory relief are DENIED.

As to Case No. 23STCP02614 brought by CDHF, the court will enter judgment on the first cause of action in favor of CDHF and Intervenors on the first cause of action.

As to Case No. 23STPC02575 brought by 600 Foothill, the court does not enter judgment at this time given the pending appeal on 600 Foothill's ninth cause of action and Respondents' special motion to strike. The matter is continued to December 4, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. for a hearing on the status of Respondents' appeal.

The court will retain jurisdiction over this matter (in both cases) as required by section 65589.5, subd. (k)(1)(A)(ii).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

March 4, 2024

Hon. Mitchell Beckloff
Judge of the Superior Court

Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

CALIFORNIANS FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP, INC., Petitioner, vs. CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS, Respondent.	Case No. 23STCP00143 **RULING ON VERIFIED FIRST AMENDED PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDATE** Dept. 82 (Hon. Curtis A. Kin)

Petitioner Californians for Homeownership, Inc. petitions for a writ of mandate directing respondent City of Beverly Hills to adopt a revised housing element pursuant to Government Code § 65754.

I. Factual Background

The State of California requires each city to have a "comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development" of the city. (Gov. Code § 65300.)[1] Each general plan must have a housing element. (§ 65302(c).) The housing element consists of 'standards and plans for housing sites in the municipality that 'shall endeavor to make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.' [Citations.]" (*California Building Industry Assn. v. City of San Jose* (2015) 61 Cal.4th 435, 444; *see also* § 65580 [legislative findings concerning housing element law].)

"A municipality must review its housing element for the appropriateness of its housing goals, objectives, and policies and must revise the housing element in accordance with a statutory schedule." (*Martinez v. City of Clovis* (2023) 90 Cal.App.5th 193, 222, citing § 65588(a), (b).) "The interval between the due dates for

[1] All statutory references are to the Government Code, unless otherwise specified.

the revised housing element is referred to as a planning period or cycle, which usually is eight years." (*Martinez,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 222, citing § 65588(e)(3), (f)(1).)

"A revised housing element's assessment of needs must quantify the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels, which includes the locality's proportionate share of regional housing needs for each income level." (*Martinez,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 223, citing § 65583(a)(1).) "The projected regional housing needs for a planning period are determined by the HCD [Department of Housing and Community Development] in consultation with regional 'councils of government.'" (*Martinez,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 223, citing §§ 65584(a) & (b), 65584.01, 65588(e)(3).) "Based on the HCD's regional housing needs determination, each regional council of governments adopts a 'final regional housing need plan that allocates a share of the regional housing need' among the cities and counties within its region." (*Martinez,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 223, citing § 65584(b).)

For the 2021-2029 planning period, the City Council of respondent City of Beverly Hills ("City") adopted a housing element on October 12, 2021 and submitted it for review to HCD. (JR 776.) On January 14, 2022, HCD determined that the housing element did not fully comply with the housing element law and provided necessary revisions. (JR 1309-16.)

On September 28, 2022, the City submitted a revised housing element to HCD. (JR 776.) On November 28, 2022, HCD determined that the revised housing element did not fully comply with the housing element law and provided necessary revisions. (JR 1318-24.)

On February 21, 2023, after having revised the September 2022 housing element, the City adopted the revision. (JR 5.) On February 21, 2023, petitioner Californians for Homeownership, Inc., who monitors local compliance with the housing element law, sent a letter to the City asserting that the revised housing element was inadequate for reasons identified by HCD and petitioner. (JR 1584-85.) On May 12, 2023, HCD determined that the housing element does not substantially comply with housing element law. (RJN Ex. B.)

II. Procedural History

On January 18, 2023, petitioner filed a verified petition for writ of mandate. On May 24, 2023, pursuant to stipulation, petitioner filed a verified first amended petitioner for writ of mandate.

On June 22, 2023, during the trial setting conference, the Court set the hearing on the instant petition for September 12, 2023.

On July 14, 2023, petitioner filed an opening brief. On August 15, 2023, respondent filed an opposition. On August 31, 2023, petitioner filed a reply.

III. Request for Judicial Notice

Petitioner's requests for judicial notice are ruled on as follows:

- Exhibit A (September 15, 2017 Assembly Floor Analysis of AB 1397 (2017-2018 Session)) – GRANTED (Evid. Code § 452(c); *Wood v. Kaiser Foundation Hospitals* (2023) 88 Cal.App.5th 742, 751, fn. 4)

- Exhibit B (May 12, 2023 Letter from HCD to City) – GRANTED (Evid. Code § 452(c))

- Exhibit C (Staff Report for June 22, 2023 Meeting of Beverly Hills Planning Commission) – DENIED

- Exhibit D (Minutes of June 22, 2023 Meeting of Beverly Hills Planning Commission) – DENIED

- Exhibit E (Resolution No. 1907 of Beverly Hills Planning Commission) – DENIED

- Exhibit F (2022 Form 10-K for Creative Media & Community Trust Corporation (Excerpts)) – DENIED

- Exhibit G (June 10, 2020 Memorandum of the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Entitled "Housing Element Site Inventory Guidebook") – GRANTED (Evid. Code § 452(c))

- Exhibit H (City of Gardena's 2021-2029 Housing Element, Table C-1) – GRANTED (Evid. Code § 452(c))

With respect to denying the request for judicial notice of Exhibits C, D, E, and F, the Court notes these exhibits are extra-record evidence petitioner presents to demonstrate that certain sites listed in the sites inventory of the housing element are improperly included. For the reason stated in section V.C below, this is improper. The exhibits are accordingly irrelevant. (*Mangini v. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.* (1994) 7 Cal.4th 1057, 1063 ["Although a court may judicially notice a variety of matters (Evid. Code, § 450 *et seq.*), only relevant material may be noticed"].)

IV. Standard of Review

CCP § 1085(a) provides: "A writ of mandate may be issued by any court to any inferior tribunal, corporation, board, or person, to compel the performance of an act which the law specially enjoins, as a duty resulting from an office, trust, or station, or to compel the admission of a party to the use and enjoyment of a right or office to

which the party is entitled, and from which the party is unlawfully precluded by that inferior tribunal, corporation, board, or person."

"Any action brought by any interested party to review the conformity with the provisions of this article of any housing element or portion thereof or revision thereto shall be brought pursuant to Section 1085 of the Code of Civil Procedure; the court's review of compliance with the provisions of this article shall extend to whether the housing element or portion thereof or revision thereto substantially complies with the requirements of this article." (§ 65587(b); *see also* § 65751.) Substantial compliance means "actual compliance in respect to the substance essential to every reasonable objective of the statute, as distinguished from mere technical imperfections of form." (*Martinez,* 90 Cal.App.5th at 237, internal citations omitted.)

"[A] city's adoption of a housing element is a legislative enactment, something which is generally entitled to some deference." (*Fonseca v. City of Gilroy* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 1174, 1191.) "If the municipality has substantially complied with statutory requirements, we will not interfere with its legislative action, unless that action was arbitrary, capricious, or entirely lacking in evidentiary support." (*Ibid.*) The challenging party has the burden to demonstrate that the housing element is inadequate. (*Ibid.*)

V. Analysis

A. This Dispute is Not Moot

As a preliminary matter, respondent asserts that the City anticipates adopting a revised housing element in November of this year to address concerns about the current housing element. (Wiener Decl. ¶ 2.) However, there is no guarantee that a revision will be completed by November or that the City will adopt a revision at that time, or at any time thereafter. The Court can only rule based on the current housing element. The instant petition is entitled to preference. (§ 65752.) Further, if the Court were to enter judgment in favor of petitioner, the housing element law provides deadlines for the City to address the deficiencies in the housing element and to submit the revision to HCD. (§ 65754(a).) If respondent were to appeal, the appeal would be given preference also. (§ 65752.) Accordingly, there is no reason to delay ruling on the merits of the operative first amended petition.

B. Whether Sites Inventory Meets Statutory Requirements

1. Realistic Development Capacity

The inventory in a housing element must "specify for each site the number of units that can realistically be accommodated on that site and whether the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing, moderate-income housing, or above moderate-income housing." (§ 65583.2(c).) For a city that does not require a

minimum residential density,[2] the city "shall demonstrate how the number of units determined for [each] site...will be accommodated." (§ 65583.2(c)(1).) As part of the calculation, " [t]he number of units calculated...shall be adjusted as necessary, based on the land use controls and site improvements requirement identified in paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) of Section 65583, the realistic development capacity for the site, typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction, and on the current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities." (§ 65583.2(c)(2).)

An "assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs" shall include an "analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels...including land use controls, building codes and their enforcement, site improvements, fees and other exactions required of developers, local processing and permit procedures, and any locally adopted ordinances that directly impact the cost and supply of residential development." (§ 65583(a)(5).)

To demonstrate that its inventory is adequate, respondent relies on a Mixed Use Overlay Zone ("Overlay Zone") adopted by ordinance on November 17, 2020, where the maximum residential density within the zone was increased from 0 in commercial areas to 79.2 units/acre. (JR 200, 209.) The Overlay Zone spans the length of the City from east to west and partially north to south, along its largest commercial corridors, including Wilshire Boulevard, Robertson Boulevard, Olympic Boulevard, South Doheny Drive, and South Beverly Drive. (JR 125; *see also* JR 213 [map of Overlay Zone].) In the housing element, the City describes the purported benefits of the Overlay Zone: "This wide-scale rezoning allows for the creation or conversion of non-residential space into residential units, and therefore will create all net new housing, since it does not involve the displacement of any existing occupied housing/residents." (JR 125.)

Respondent argues that the maximum residential density exceeds the minimum 30 units per acre that is statutorily deemed appropriate to accommodate housing for lower income individuals. (§ 65583.2(c)(3)(B)(iv).) Respondent also argues that existing commercial buildings in the Overlay Zone may obtain a permit to convert to a mixed-use building and obtain relief from having to comply with standards concerning parking requirements, loading facilities, outdoor living space, commercial-residential transitional setbacks, or height limits if compliance is physically infeasible. (JR 1636; *see also* Chen Decl. Ex. G [Beverly Hills Municipal Code ("BMMC") § 10-3-1888].) The vacancy rates for commercial buildings also purportedly create an incentive for commercial building owners to convert their buildings to mixed-use projects. (JR 201.)

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[2] It is undisputed Beverly Hills does not mandate a minimum residential density.

For commercial properties listed in the sites inventory of the housing element that were designated for conversion or indicated as having conversion potential (JR 229-34), to calculate the total number of units on the site, the City multiplied the total parcel size by the maximum allowable residential density.[3] However, the total parcel size listed in the sites inventory refers to land area, not the square footage of the existing building that can accommodate residential units. Contrary to respondent's contention, the sites inventory does not account for floor area capacity; the sites inventory lists the height limit of the building, not the number of stories to be converted to residential use. (*See, e.g.*, JR 229 [column name is "Height Limit (stories)," 233 [8500 Wilshire Blvd. described as "8 story building – conversion," but height limit is 3 stories].) As a result, for buildings to be converted to mixed use, the housing element does not demonstrate how the number of units indicated in the sites inventory will be accommodated, as required by section 65583.2(c)(1).

Moreover, as petitioner points out in the reply, most of the sites in the City's sites inventory are not designated as conversions or potential conversions. (JR 229-34.) For sites not indicated as conversions, any construction of residential units is subject to land use and building controls. For example, multi-family developments are subject to height limits from three to five stories. (JR 153-54.) Any building in the Overlay Zone must include commercial uses on the ground floor, and residential uses on the first floor within the first 40 feet from the street are prohibited. (BMMC §§ 10-3-1877(C), 10-3-1879.) Moreover, each multi-family development must have at least 200 square feet for each dwelling unit, excluding front yards, balconies, and pedestrian accessways. (BHMC §§ 10-3-1886, 10-3-2803.)

The sites inventory contains no adjustment based on land use controls for new construction, as required by section 65583.2(c)(2). Rather, like the sites designated as conversions, the number of units for each site is calculated based on the land area multiplied by the maximum residential density. Moreover, the housing element contains no meaningful consideration and analysis of the governmental constraints on the development of housing, as required by § 65583(a)(5). Rather, the City relies on prior approved and proposed developments in arguing in conclusory fashion that "the current standards are not inhibiting development of housing." (JR 158-159, 203-04.) Accordingly, the housing element, including the sites inventory, fails to account for the realistic development capacity for the sites listed in the inventory.

With respect to respondent's contention that the maximum residential density exceeds the density set forth in section 65583.2(c)(3)(B)(iv), this only means that the

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[3] For example, for 8730 Wilshire Blvd., the parcel size is 11,863 square feet. (JR 233.) There are 1/43,560 acres in one square foot. (*See* https://www.britannica.com/science/acre-unit-of-measurement [43,560 square feet in 1 acre].) 11,863 square feet multiplied by 1/43,560 acre per square foot is 0.27 acres. 0.27 acres multiplied by 79.2 units per acre is approximately 21 units.

City does not have to provide an analysis demonstrating how its adopted density accommodates its share of the regional housing need for lower income households. (§ 65583.2(c)(3)(A-B).) However, the City still must adjust the number of units for each site based on the realistic development capacity of the site under section 65583.2(c)(1) and (c)(2) and provide an "analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the...development of housing for all income levels" under section 65583(a)(5).

Petitioner also argues that the City designated the majority of the sites on the sites inventory as 100% low-income or 100% moderate-income housing without explaining the basis for such designation. (OB at 10:6-7.) Petitioner further argues that the City did not adjust the unit counts based on "typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction," as required by section 65583.2(c)(2). (OB 10:7-8.)

Petitioner, however, does not reference any statute that requires an explanation for the basis for the low-income or moderate-income housing designation. The housing element law only requires that the City specify "the number of units that can realistically be accommodated on that site and whether the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing, moderate-income housing, or above moderate-income housing" and demonstrate "how the number of units determined for that site...will be accommodated." (§ 65583.2(c), (c)(1).) The sites inventory indicates the total number of units for each site. (JR 229 ["Total Units" column].) By indicating the number of units that are designated as low-income or moderate-income housing, the City also indicates "whether the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing [or] moderate-income housing." (JR 229 ["Lower" and "Mod" columns].) While the City did not explain how the total number of units will be accommodated for the reasons stated above, the designation of housing as low-income or moderate-income is not deficient.

Nevertheless, it is not apparent from the sites inventory whether the City adjusted the numbers for low-income and moderate-income housing based on "typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction." (§ 65583.2(c)(2).) By multiplying the land area by the maximum residential density of 79.2 units per acre and designating all housing as low- or moderate-income housing, the City assumes that all units built on the site will be low-income or moderate-income housing. The City does not account for the possibility that only a certain percentage of the housing on the site will be designated for residents with low- or moderate-income. A revised housing element would need to contain an adjustment based on typical densities at similar affordability levels.

In sum, with respect to realistic development capacity, the housing element is deficient for the following reasons: (1) for conversions, the sites inventory calculates the total number of units based on a product of land area and the maximum residential density without accounting for the floor area of the building; (2) the sites

inventory does not contain any adjustments based on land use controls for new construction; (3) the housing element contains no analysis of the governmental constraints on the development of housing; and (4) the sites inventory does not contain any adjustments based on typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at similar affordability levels in the City.

2. Nonvacant Sites

For nonvacant sites, the housing element law imposes the following additional requirement:

> [T]he city or county shall specify the additional development potential for each site within the planning period and shall provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential. The methodology shall consider factors including the extent to which existing uses may constitute an impediment to additional residential development, the city's or county's past experience with converting existing uses to higher density residential development, the current market demand for the existing use, an analysis of any existing leases or other contracts that would perpetuate the existing use or prevent redevelopment of the site for additional residential development, development trends, market conditions, and regulatory or other incentives or standards to encourage additional residential development on these sites.

(§ 65583.2(g)(1).)

Petitioner argues that the City does not explain how its methodology relates to the sites it has included or excluded in the sites inventory. For underutilized nonvacant sites, respondent explains that it selected sites that were more likely to be redeveloped or converted based on evidence of a lack of investment in the property, such as a lack of maintenance or lack of recent upgrades and improvements; parcels with underutilized improvements; and parcels with existing commercial buildings that are higher than 3 stories but whose floor plan is conducive to residential conversion. (JR 202-03, 210-11.) Respondent also explains that existing uses do not constitute an impediment to additional residential development because the creation of the Overlay Zone creates opportunities for residential development; conversion from non-residential to residential use costs less than new construction; and high residential property values in the City create financial incentives for residential development. (JR 209-10.) However, respondent discusses its methodology for determining development potential generally, without engaging in any site-specific analysis.

Respondent contends that it need not engage in an analysis of the methodology of the development potential for each site. The Court disagrees. Section

65583.2(g)(1) states that, for nonvacant sites, "the city or county shall specify the additional development potential for each site within the planning period and shall provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential." Reading the subdivision as a whole, the City is required to provide an explanation of the methodology for each site in the sites inventory. Among the factors that the methodology must consider are "the current market demand for the existing use" and "an analysis of any existing leases or other contracts that would perpetuate the existing use or prevent redevelopment of the site for additional residential development." (§ 65583.2(g)(1).) These factors necessarily relate to specific sites and cannot be discussed generally. Because the Legislature included these factors, the Legislature surely intended that the City provide "an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential" for each site.

Without a site-specific analysis, it is unclear how the methodology was applied. For example, as petitioner points out in the opening brief, the City purports to have excluded commercial buildings that contained medical uses and car dealerships from the sites inventory. (JR 210.) However, the sites inventory includes medical buildings and car dealerships. (*See, e.g.*, JR 229-30 [153 S. Doheny Dr., 239 S. La Cienega Blvd., 8833 W. Olympic Blvd., 8845 W. Olympic Blvd., 9134 W. Olympic Blvd.].) The City does not explain how the existing use does not serve as an impediment to residential development.

For the foregoing reasons, with respect to section 65583.2(g)(1), the housing element is deficient because the City did not provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential for each site, including a discussion of the factors probative of likelihood of redevelopment set forth in section 65583.2(g)(1).

Further, the sites inventory shows that the City is meeting all of its share of the need for lower-income housing through nonvacant sites. Accordingly, section 65583.2(g)(2), quoted below, is implicated:

> In addition to the analysis required in paragraph (1), when a city or county is relying on nonvacant sites described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) to accommodate 50 percent or more of its housing need for lower income households, the methodology used to determine additional development potential shall demonstrate that the existing use identified pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) does not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element. An existing use shall be presumed to impede additional residential development, absent findings based on substantial evidence that the use is likely to be discontinued during the planning period.

(§ 65583.2(g)(2).)

For nonvacant sites, the "Field Notes/Existing Conditions & Analysis for Keeping/Removing" column in the sites inventory only indicates the existing use of the site and whether the site is designated for conversion or has conversion potential. (JR 229-34.) The City does not engage in any discussion of occupancy rates, lease terms, viability of the business operating at the sites. Nor does the City present any other discussion demonstrating that the existing use for each site "does not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element." (§ 65583.2(g)(2).) Without any evidence concerning the existing use of each site, the existing use is presumed to impede additional residential development. (*Ibid.*)

Respondent maintains that Culver City and Gardena obtained HCD approval based on a chart similar to its sites inventory. However, unlike Beverly Hills, Gardena's sites inventory sets forth the existing use of each site and why the existing use is likely to be discontinued during the planning period. (Reply RJN Ex. B; cf. Chen Decl. Ex. B at 71 [listing criteria used in selection of sites].) With respect to Culver City, the sites inventory does not set forth the reason why the existing use is likely to be discontinued. (Chen Decl. Ex. A at Appendix B.) However, elsewhere in the housing element, Culver City discusses sites that present opportunities for development based on positive responses from property owners and developers. (Chen Decl. Ex. A at B-9 to B-10.) Unlike Beverly Hills, Culver City discussed how the existing use at certain sites would not impede residential development. Beverly Hills did not engage in any site-specific analysis concerning how the existing use would not impede additional residential development.

Respondent contends that the Court of Appeal in *Martinez v. City of Clovis* (2023) 90 Cal.App.5th 193 determined that no site-specific analysis concerning the methodology used to determine development potential and additional development factors is required. This is not quite accurate. In *Martinez*, the Court of Appeal found that section 65583.2(g)(1) "does not mandate the City 'specify the additional development potential for each [nonvacant] site within the planning period and ... provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential' *in the housing element itself.*" (*Martinez*, 90 Cal.App.5th at 248-49, emphasis added.) While specification of the additional development potential for each site does not have to be part of the housing element, the City still must demonstrate the additional development potential for each site. In *Martinez*, for example, the City of Clovis provided evidence outside of the housing element to demonstrate the development potential of a nonvacant site. (*Id.* at 249-51.)

Here, there is no analysis of the additional development potential for each site listed in the sites inventory in the housing element or elsewhere. Further, the housing element does not contain findings based on substantial evidence that the existing uses of nonvacant sites are likely to be discontinued, as required by section 65583.2(g)(2).

In sum, with respect to nonvacant sites, the housing element is deficient for the following reasons: (1) the City did not provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential for each site in the sites inventory, including a discussion of the factors probative of likelihood of redevelopment set forth in section 65583.2(g)(1); and (2) the City fails to demonstrate with substantial evidence that the existing use for each site in the sites inventory does not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element.

C. Specific Sites

Petitioner also contends that certain sites were improperly included in the sites inventory. (OB at 15:6-17:1.) Petitioner maintains that the City did not make the findings based on substantial evidence that are required to rebut the presumption under section 65583.2(g)(2) that the existing use will impede additional residential development. (Reply at 4:13-14.)

However, in contending that additional residential development is not possible on certain sites, petitioner relies on extra-record evidence. For example, for 55 North La Cienega, the sites inventory indicates that the property will have 70 low-income units. (JR 229.) However, petitioner presents a Planning Commission Report and meeting minutes to assert that the City's Planning Commission approved development on the site with only 11 units of very low-income housing. (Gelfand Decl. Exs. C at 1, D at 3-4.)

"[W]here the scope of review of factual findings is substantial evidence, review limited to the administrative record is appropriate because extra-record evidence is irrelevant to whether the agency's decision is supported by substantial evidence." (*Cinema West, LLC v. Baker* (2017) 13 Cal.App.5th 194, 208.) Petitioner cannot challenge the inclusion of sites in the inventory based on extra-record evidence. Ironically, petitioner would have the Court consider the propriety of certain sites based on extra-record evidence, but then bar respondent from presenting extra-record evidence to rebut petitioner's argument. (Reply at 4:18-5:13.)

With respect to sites which petitioner contends are unlikely to disappear based on their existing use (OB at 16:21-17:2; JR 1557-58), the Court already finds that respondent did not make findings based on substantial evidence that the existing use for each nonvacant site in the sites inventory is likely to be discontinued. The City must make such findings in revising the housing element.

VI. Conclusion

The petition is GRANTED. Pursuant to Local Rule 3.231(n), petitioner shall prepare, serve, and ultimately file a proposed judgment and proposed writ of mandate.

Date: September 12, 2023

HON. CURTIS A. KIN

April 3, 2024

City of Martinez
525 Henrietta St.
Martinez, CA 94553-2395

To: bzorn@cityofmartinez.org; jhoward@cityofmartinez.org; mross@cityofmartinez.org; ssmalhi@cityofmartinez.org; dmckillop@cityofmartinez.org;

CC: mchandler@cityofmartinez.org; dutyplanner@cityofmartinez.org; mcass@cityofmartinez.org; CBrock@chwlaw.us; thighsmith@chwlaw.us; talves@chwlaw.us; Paul.McDougall@hcd.ca.gov; Helen.Eldred@hcd.ca.gov

Re: Martinez Housing Element Revisions dated 25 March 2024

The California Housing Defense Fund ("CalHDF") submits this public comment regarding agenda item 11 of the City Council meeting on 3 April 2024, the City's revised housing element dated 25 March 2024. CalHDF submits these comments in order to help the City revise its housing element in order to achieve substantial compliance with state law. Additionally, CalHDF cites specific issues addressed in the HCD letter dated February 16, 2024.

1. Martinez must follow state law procedures to adopt its sixth cycle housing element

The resolution under consideration today is framed as a "Revised and Restated" resolution adopting a sixth cycle housing element. Under this framing, the resolution attempts to maintain that the adoption of the housing element occurred on the date of the previous adoption, in December of 2023. While it is unclear why the City is choosing to frame today's action this way, it is clear that this framing is an incorrect description of the city's actions required to adopt its sixth cycle housing element. The housing element under consideration today is substantially different from that which the City Council voted on in December. It contains numerous new substantive policy commitments not present in the previous draft. As outlined below, our view is that these changes fall short of substantial compliance, but the changes to the plan would nevertheless require a new adoption vote, along with all procedures required under state law.

As outlined by the HCD letter, the City Council's previous attempt to adopt a sixth cycle housing element failed due to the omission of a required finding under state law. The present resolution makes an attempt to remedy this omission retroactively, but also

characterizes that remedy as dating back to the adoption of the previous resolution. We recommend that rather than taking this confusing and nonsensical approach, the City should simply submit the draft housing element amendments to HCD for review prior to adoption. Once HCD has cleared the changes as likely achieving substantial compliance, then the City will be free to adopt its sixth cycle housing element without holding duplicative, procedurally defective votes. At this time, because Martinez has failed to adopt a substantial compliant housing element within one year of the statutory deadline, it cannot be found in substantial compliance until all rezonings required under the plan are completed. As such, the specific date of adoption for the housing element is of less importance than the City finally arriving at a plan that substantially complies with state housing element law.

2. Site K3 (the parking lot for Home Depot and Walmart).

From the HCD letter, paragraph B.1:

> "As noted in Finding A1, the element does not include a complete site analysis; therefore, the adequacy of sites and zoning were not established. Based on the results of a complete sites inventory and analysis, the County may need to add or revise programs to address a shortfall of sites or zoning available to encourage a variety of housing types."

Site K3 is relied upon for 240 units, including 103 very low income, 79 low-income, and 24 moderate-income units. This represents 17.8% of the City's total RHNA, and 33% of the combined RHNA allocations of very-low and low-income units. However, at present K3 is serving as the required accessory parking for a Walmart and a Home Depot, as required by Martinez Zoning Code § 22.36.050 - Parking—Commercial Uses. While the site is slated to be rezoned with a Mixed Use/Housing Overlay, it is unclear if that will be adequate to achieve redevelopment of the site given its current use as accessory parking.

- CalHDF recommends reanalyzing the site's likelihood of redevelopment when taking into account the commercial uses (i.e. the Walmart and the Home Depot) that rely upon K3 for their accessory parking. This analysis will likely require the revision of Appendix B, specifically the site's entry on page B-2, which reports that the site is completely undeveloped and therefore meets the criteria for an underutilized site. Such an analysis will return a significantly different result once the site is reanalyzed to include the commercial uses that it surrounds and that rely upon it for required accessory parking.
- CalHDF recommends including an additional zoning amendment to encourage residential development on sites such as K3. Such a zoning amendment would further reduce parking requirements for developments in which residential is

combined with large-format retail and/or building supply stores, beyond what is currently proposed.

3. AFFH.

From the HCD Letter, paragraph B3:

> "... As noted in HCD's prior review, the City has clear disparities in access to opportunity between the northern, central, and southern portions of the City. The City also has census tracts that are considered RCAA, lower resourced and high segregation and poverty. This warrants significant actions that promote housing mobility and increasing housing choices and affordability on the southern areas of the City and neighborhoods that are generally higher income and higher resourced."

Southern portions of the City contain many single family homes on large lots, often bordered by land zoned for open space. Sites 82 through 91 are planned for only 1 unit each, all above moderate income units. This represents a lost opportunity, as sites 83 through 90 are all more than one acre and are physically able to hold much more than a single family home on each.

CalHDF recognizes that the revised Housing Element, dated 25 March 2024, contains a missing middle program, a positive sign. However, program 16 does not contain concrete commitments for the City, and the timeline is not a rapid one. The main focus of the program is evaluating different options with missing middle, with a commitment to only adopt one of the options. Based on how the program is written, conceivably the City could accomplish the program simply by complying with SB 9, which would not adequately address the City's fair housing issues.

- CalHDF recommends that Program 16 be revised to be more specific. This program should include a zoning amendment that would allow residential sixplex development on a ministerial basis citywide, with reasonable development standards that would not inhibit use of the program. These development standards should be tailored to typical lot sizes in RCAA areas, ensuring that setback, lot coverage, open space, height, and other standards do not present barriers to sixplex developments.
- This would allow these sites to provide greater housing opportunity for families without the means to otherwise live in the high opportunity areas in the southern portions of the City.
- This would also create opportunities for redevelopment of existing homes into sixplexes, rather than the "McMansion" redevelopment that often occurs in single family neighborhoods with high property values.
- If Sites 82 through 91 were redeveloped with a sixplex each, they would yield 48 units of multifamily housing in a high-opportunity area of Martinex.

The southern portion of Martinez does contain potential housing development sites not identified in the Housing Element. Inclusion of these sites in the site inventory, along with a commitment to rezone the sites to AHO or CHO zoning, would make a meaningful contribution toward affirmatively furthering fair housing. Kaiser Permanente owns vacant land in the southern portion of the City that could be used for multifamily housing.

- CalHDF recommends including parcels 162-280-024 and 162-280-022 in the City's site inventory, along with a commitment to rezone them to AHO or CHO.
- Site 162-280-024 is partially used for healthcare facilities, but it contains 3.2 acres of empty land. Site 162-280-022 is 1.35 acres.
- If these two sites were redeveloped at 30 units/acre, they could yield at least 135 units of multifamily housing.

CalHDF is encouraged by the inclusion of Program 11.L Shared Housing in the 25 March 2024 revised Housing Element. However, the program's goals are too modest (i.e. only four successful matches per year) and the program fails to address the land use regulations that stand in the way of such shared housing. Specifically, Martinez Zoning Code § 22.12.080(A), in reference to allowed uses in single family residential districts, permits one family dwellings in which not more than 2 paying guests may be lodged and/or furnished meals. Lodging houses are only permitted in the R-1.5 district (*id.* at § 22.12.080(I)). The definitions of "family" (*id*. at § 22.04.170) and" lodging house" (*id.* at § 22.04.270) are also hurdles:

> "Family" means an individual or two or more persons related by blood or marriage, or a group of not more than 6 persons, not including servants, who need not be related by blood or marriage, living as a single housekeeping unit. The limitation of a family to 6 persons who need not be related by blood or marriage shall not be applied to a family, otherwise complying with this Chapter, with adoptive or foster children.
>
> "Lodging house" means a dwelling in which lodging or lodgings and meals are provided for compensation for more than 6 but not more than 15 persons other than members of the resident family, excepting a nursing home as defined in this Chapter.

To illustrate, it would be illegal for a family to take in three paying guests in a single family district. Similarly, it would be illegal for a family to start a lodging house in an R-1.5 with only five guests.

CalHDF recommends that Program 11.L be revised to address these regulatory hurdles.

- The program should include a commitment to amend the zoning code within two years to allow lodging houses in all residential districts.

- The program should include a commitment to amend the definition of lodging house to remove the requirement that it serve more than six persons other than members of the resident family. This would allow a family to take in a range of lodgers, from one up to 15.

4. Analysis of Constraints

HCD found that the housing element contained an inadequate analysis of governmental constraints. Specifically, HCD found the plan lacking analysis of existing or proposed height limits for higher density zones, those permitting above 40 units per acre. Additionally, the City failed to compare proposed and existing standards for "heights, lot coverage, minimum open space, and minimum unit requirements" to equivalent zoning districts in other jurisdictions.

CalHDF is encouraged by the fact that in the revised Housing Element, the City analyzed its land use regulations to determine if the allowable density would fit inside the allowed building envelope when taking into account all zoning requirements.

Unfortunately, the City neglected to incorporate the need for circulation space into its analysis for both the residential space and also the required accessory parking. Such circulation and other common space (e.g. hallways, stairwells, elevators, gyms, laundry rooms, etc.) increases the required square footage of the residential structure by 25-30%. Furthermore, such circulation space approximately doubles the amount of required parking area beyond what is devoted to the parking spots alone. The City's analysis therefore needs to approximately double the required square footage for parking, as the City's current analysis only includes the square footage of the parking spaces themselves.

CalHDF therefore recommends that the City redo its constraints analysis, taking into account the need for circulation and common space inside residential structures, and the need for circulation space in parking facilities.

CalHDF is encouraged by the City's inclusion of Program 11.V in its Housing Element to allow for up to 48 feet in height for projects on sites that allow 40-43 units per acre. However, given the shortfalls in Appendix G and best practices from other cities, we recommend the following:

- Revise Program 11 to commit the City to establishing height limits compatible with higher density districts. We recommend at a minimum establishing height limits of 60 feet for districts allowing over 40 units per acre.
- Rather than simply examine the standards from Martinez's immediate neighbors, the City should look to standards from zoning districts that have successfully produced

housing at densities exceeding 40 units per acre. The City should use this analysis to implement further commitments to reduce governmental constraints in Program 11.

We also suggest including the following policies to ensure governmental constraints are minimized:

- Maintain the proposed reduction in parking requirements for multi-family housing as follows: Parking requirements shall be one space per unit for the first bedroom and one-half space for each additional bedroom. Guest parking requirements shall be eliminated for housing development projects that set aside at least 15 percent of their units as housing for extremely low, very low, low, or moderate-income households (as defined under Gov. Code 65589.5, subd. (h)(3)). Allow either covered or uncovered spaces to fulfill the parking requirement for any multi-family housing development project.
- Waive City impact fees for units that are deed restricted as housing for extremely low, very low, low, or moderate-income households (as defined under Gov. Code 65589.5, subd. (h)(3)) for a minimum of 55 years. In addition, maintain the proposed fee deferral program until final inspection (and/or issuance of certificate of occupancy) for projects that meet affordability requirements.
- Waive all impact fees for accessory dwelling units ("ADUs") and junior accessory dwelling units ("JADUs"), and to establish a fee-waiver program for administrative fees for ADUs.
    - CalHDF recognizes that program 4 has been revised to include a commitment to research impact fee deferral or the use of CDBG or grant funds for ADUs developed for moderate/low/very-low income households.
    - CalHDF recommends that this program be strengthened to waive all impact fees for ADUs and JADUs.

5. Realistic Development Capacity

In addition to the above policies and analysis, Martinez must assess the realistic capacity of each site in its inventory. (Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (c).) If a site has a minimum zoned density, that density serves as the baseline for calculating how many units the site can realistically accommodate. (*Id.* at subd. (c)(1).) If the site does not have a minimum zoned density, the housing element "shall demonstrate how the number of units determined for that site [...] will be accommodated." (*Ibid.*) The current draft provides some information on this point on pages HBR 109-110, contending that most sites can be expected to develop at 80 percent of their maximum capacity. The justification for this conclusion is thin, however, and does not reference minimum densities, notwithstanding the Housing Element Law's reference to minimum densities as the starting point for realistic capacity assumptions. CalHDF reminds the City that sites slated for low income housing, other than non-vacant sites capable of higher-density development, *must* have a minimum zoned density pursuant to Gov. Code, section 65583.2, subdivision (h). (See also *Martinez v. City of Clovis* (2023) 90

Cal.App.5th 193, 241 [invalidating housing element that relied on overlay zone to accommodate low-income units when underlying zoning allowed for minimum densities below those set in Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (h)].) The current draft housing element recognizes this, moreover, on page HP-23. The City, in providing its realistic capacity assumptions, should affirm that the sites in its inventory that are required to have a minimum density have such a minimum density, and that this minimum density serves as the baseline for calculating the sites' realistic capacities.

The baseline number – whether calculated using minimum densities or other criteria – must also be "adjusted" to account for the effects of land use controls, other constraints (including constraints on housing development identified pursuant to Gov. Code, section 65583), and the availability of utilities. (Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (c)(2); HCD's Housing Element Site Inventory Guidebook ["HCD Inventory Guide"] pg. 27, attached to this letter for reference ["The capacity calculation must be adjusted to reflect the realistic potential for residential development capacity on the sites in the inventory"].) This is done for some sites (e.g. Map ID 220 in Appendix A), but not all. It must be done for all sites; where a site's circumstances do not call for any adjustment, the housing element must explain why. (See *California Housing Defense Fund v. City of La Cañada Flintridge*, Case No. 23STCP02614, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Ruling Issued Mar. 4, 2024, pg. 28, attached to this letter for reference [invalidating city's housing element for failure to apply downward adjustments to its realistic capacity estimates].) Although these adjustments may reduce the expected number of units on some sites below what is currently projected, with the additional sites recommended above, the City should have no difficulty meeting its projected RHNA requirements.

6. Suitability of Nonvacant Sites

Finally, as outlined by the HCD letter, Martinez is required to make findings supported on substantial evidence that existing uses on nonvacant sites will not impede development of low income sites. (Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (g)(2).) This includes a requirement that the resolution adopting the housing element state that such findings were made and summarize the basis for the findings, as well as a requirement that the housing element itself include detailed explanations of why the existing uses on the relevant nonvacant sites will not impede residential development. (See HCD Inventory Guide, pg. 27.) These explanations must be specific to each site unless multiple sites make up a common existing use and face a common set of circumstances. (See *id.* at pp. 27-28.) Courts have affirmed that HCD's reading of the statute is correct, and that, when subdivision (g)(2) applies, the absence of *site-specific* analysis of existing uses constitutes a fatal defect in a housing element. (See *Martinez v. City of Clovis* (2023) 90 Cal.App.5th 193, 244 ["The goal is not just to identify land, but to *pinpoint sites* that are adequate and *realistically available for residential development* targets for each income level."] [emphasis added]; see also *Californians for Homeownership v. City of Beverly Hills*, Case No. 23STCP00143, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Ruling

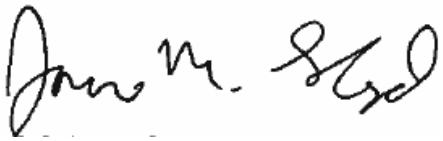
Issued Sep. 12, 2023, pg. 10, attached to this letter for reference [invalidating city's housing element for failure to engage in site-specific analysis of nonvacant sites under subdivision (g)(2)]; *California Housing Defense Fund v. City of La Cañada Flintridge*, pp. 23-27 [invalidating city's housing element for failure to engage in site-specific analysis of nonvacant sites under subdivision (g)(2)].)

The resolution adopting the housing element should reference this evidence and make the required findings in accordance with Gov. Code, Section 65583.2, subd. (g)(2). The Housing Element itself must also examine the specific existing uses on each nonvacant site, such as accessory parking located on Site K3, and establish evidence that each use is likely to discontinue. The current draft, to the City's credit, provides details on how the City selected nonvacant sites with existing uses that would be less likely to impede residential development; that methodology is discussed on pages HBR-110 through HBR-117. The draft also engages in individualized analysis of publicly-owned sites, including nonvacant sites, on pages HBR-119 through HBR-120. The analysis for other sites falls short, however: the comments on sites with existing uses in Appendix A do no more than skim the surface, and they do not provide the level of site-specific investigation called for in the Housing Element Law. Appendix B is better, but it applies a formulaic analysis where individualized analysis is called for. CalHDF urges the City to undertake a more serious effort for those sites: it is important to ensure that nonvacant sites slated for low income housing will be capable of producing that housing.

With these changes, analysis and policies, we believe the Martinez Housing Element will be brought into compliance.

Sincerely,

Dylan Casey
CalHDF Executive Director



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June 10, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Planning Directors and Interested Parties

FROM: Megan Kirkeby, Acting Deputy Director
Division of Housing Policy Development

SUBJECT: **Housing Element Site Inventory Guidebook**
Government Code Section 65583.2

The housing element of the general plan must include an inventory of land suitable and available for residential development to meet the locality's regional housing need by income level. The purpose of this Guidebook is to assist jurisdictions and interested parties with the development of the site inventory analysis for the 6th Housing Element Planning Cycle and identify changes to the law as a result of Chapter 375, Statutes of 2017 (AB 1397), Chapter 958, Statutes of 2018 (AB 686), Chapter 664, Statutes of 2019 (AB 1486), and Chapter 667, Statutes of 2019 (SB 6). The Guidebook should be used in conjunction with the site inventory form developed by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). These laws introduced changes to the following components of the site inventory:

- Design and development of the site inventory (SB 6, 2019)
- Requirements in the site inventory table (AB 1397, 2017 AB 1486, 2019)
- Capacity calculation (AB 1397, 2017)
- Infrastructure requirements (AB 1397, 2017)
- Suitability of nonvacant sites (AB 1397, 2017)
- Size of site requirements (AB 1397, 2017)
- Locational requirements of identified sites (AB 686, 2018)
- Sites identified in previous housing elements (AB 1397, 2017)
- Nonvacant site replacement unit requirements (AB 1397, 2017)
- Rezone program requirements (AB 1397, 2017)

The workbook is divided into five components: (Part A) identification of sites; (Part B) sites to accommodate the lower income RHNA; (Part C) capacity analysis; (Part D) non-vacant sites; and (Part E) determination of adequate sites.

If you have any questions, or would like additional information or technical assistance, please contact the Division of Housing Policy Development at (916) 263-2911.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Housing Element Site Inventory Requirements

Scarcity of land with adequately zoned capacity is a significant contributor to increased land prices and housing development costs. A lack of adequately zoned sites exacerbates the already significant deficit of housing affordable to lower income households. An effective housing element provides the necessary conditions for conserving, preserving and producing an adequate supply of housing affordable at a variety of income levels and provides a vehicle for establishing and updating housing and land-use strategies to reflect changing needs, resources, and conditions. Among other things, the housing element establishes a jurisdiction's strategy to plan for and facilitate the development of housing over the five-to-eight year planning period by providing an inventory of land adequately zoned or planned to be zoned for housing and programs to implement the strategy.

The purpose of the housing element's site inventory is to identify and analyze specific land (sites) that is available and suitable for residential development in order to determine the jurisdiction's capacity to accommodate residential development and reconcile that capacity with the jurisdiction's Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA). The available and suitable sites are referred to as "adequate sites" throughout this Guidebook. The site inventory enables the jurisdiction to determine whether there are sufficient adequate sites to accommodate the RHNA by income category. A site inventory and analysis will determine whether program actions must be adopted to "make sites available" with appropriate zoning, development standards, and infrastructure capacity to accommodate the new development need.

Sites are suitable for residential development if zoned appropriately and available for residential use during the planning period. If the inventory demonstrates that there are insufficient sites to accommodate the RHNA for each income category, the inventory must identify sites for rezoning to be included in a housing element program to identify and make available additional sites to accommodate those housing needs early within the planning period.

Other characteristics to consider when evaluating the appropriateness of sites include physical features (e.g., size and shape of the site, improvements currently on the site, slope instability or erosion, or environmental and pollution considerations), location (e.g., proximity to and access to infrastructure, transit, job centers, and public or community services), competitiveness for affordable housing funding (e.g., Low Income Housing Tax Credit scoring criteria), and likelihood or interest in development due to access to opportunities such as jobs and high performing schools[1]. When determining sites to include in the inventory to meet the lower income housing need, HCD recommends that a local government first identify development potential in high opportunity neighborhoods. This will assist the local government in meeting its requirements to affirmatively further fair housing and ensure developments are more competitive for development financing.

[1] Please Note: Significant increases in the housing capacity of the residential land inventory of the housing element could also warrant planning for updating of other elements, including the land use, safety, circulation elements and inclusion of an environmental justice element or environmental justice policies. The housing element must include a program describing the means by which consistency will be achieved with other general plan elements and community goals (GC 65583(c)(8)).

SITE INVENTORY GUIDEBOOK FRAMEWORK

The following is a Guidebook designed to assist a jurisdiction through the site inventory analysis required by Housing Element Law. Use of the Guidebook is not required for a determination of compliance by HCD. The Guidebook is intended to facilitate the jurisdiction in determining if adequate sites are available by income category to accommodate the jurisdiction's share of the RHNA or if rezoning or other program actions are needed. Areas of the law that are newly added since the beginning of the 5th housing element cycle are marked with the designation ***NEW*.**

Guidebook Structure

PART A: IDENTIFICATION OF SITES

General characteristics of suitable sites identified in the inventory, including zoning, infrastructure availability, and environmental constraints, among others.

PART B: SITES TO ACCOMMODATE LOW AND VERY LOW- INCOME RHNA

Analysis to determine if sites are appropriate to accommodate the jurisdiction's RHNA for low- and very low-income households.

PART C: CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Description of the methodology used to determine the number of units that can be reasonably developed on a site.

PART D: NONVACANT SITES

Analysis to determine if nonvacant sites are appropriate to accommodate the jurisdiction's RHNA.

PART E: DETERMINATION OF ADEQUATE SITES

After consideration of the above analysis and any alternate methods to accommodate RHNA, the determination of whether sufficient sites exist to accommodate RHNA or if there is a shortfall requiring a program to rezone additional sites.

PART A: IDENTIFICATION OF SITES

Step 1: Identification of Developable Sites

Government Code section 65583.2(a)

Generally, a site is a parcel or a group of parcels that can accommodate a portion of the jurisdictions RHNA. A jurisdiction must identify, as part of an inventory, sites within its boundaries (i.e., city limits or a county's unincorporated area)[2] that could have the potential for new residential development within the eight- or five-year timeframe of the housing element planning period.

Types of sites include:

- Vacant sites zoned for residential use.
- Vacant sites zoned for nonresidential use that allow residential development.
- Residentially zoned sites that are capable of being developed at a higher density (nonvacant sites, including underutilized sites).
- Sites owned or leased by a city, county, or city and county.
- Sites zoned for nonresidential use that can be redeveloped for residential use and a program is included to rezone the site to permit residential use.

Pending, approved, or permitted development:

Projects that have been approved, permitted, or received a certificate of occupancy since the beginning of the RHNA projected period may be credited toward meeting the RHNA allocation based on the affordability and unit count of the development. For these projects, affordability is based on the actual or projected sale prices, rent levels, or other mechanisms establishing affordability in the planning period of the units within the project (See Part E). For projects yet to receive their certificate of occupancy or final permit, the element must demonstrate that the project is expected to be built within the planning period.

Definition of Planning Period: The "Planning period" is the time period between the due date for one housing element and the due date for the next housing element (Government Code section 65588(f)(1).) For example, the San Diego Association of Governments' 6th Cycle Planning Period is April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2029.

Definition of Projection Period: "Projection period" is the time period for which the regional housing need is calculated (Government Code section 65588(f)(2).). For example, the San Diego Association of Governments' 6th Cycle Projection Period is June 30, 2020 to April 15, 2029.

Please note, sites with development projects where completed entitlements have been issued are no longer available for prospective development and must be credited towards the RHNA based on the affordability and unit count of the development. "Completed entitlements" means a housing development or project which has received all the required land use approvals or entitlements necessary for the issuance of a building permit. This

[2] In some cases, jurisdictions may want to include sites anticipated to be annexed in the planning period. Annexation is considered a rezoning effort to accommodate a shortfall of sites. For more information on annexation please see Part E, Step 3.

means that there is no additional action required to be eligible to apply and obtain a building permit.

Jurisdictions may choose to credit sites with pending projects since the beginning of the RHNA projection period towards their RHNA based on affordability and unit count within the proposed project but must demonstrate the units can be built within the remaining planning period. Affordability must be based on the projected sales prices, rent levels, or other mechanisms establishing affordability in the planning period of the units within the project.

Census definition of a unit: A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants do not live and eat with other persons in the structure and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall. Living quarters of the following types are excluded from the housing unit definition: dormitories, bunkhouses, and barracks; quarters in predominantly transient hotels, motels, and the like, except those occupied by persons who consider the hotel their usual place of residence; quarters in institutions, general hospitals, and military installations, except those occupied by staff members or resident employees who have separate living arrangements.

Student/University Housing: Please be aware, college and university student housing may be considered noninstitutional group quarters and not a housing unit for purposes of meeting the RHNA. According to the census, college/university student housing includes residence halls and other buildings, including apartment-style student housing, designed primarily to house college and university students in group living arrangements either on or off campus. These facilities are owned, leased, or managed by a college, university, or seminary or can be owned, leased, or managed by a private company or agency. Residents typically enter into “by the bed” leases (i.e., single-liability leases). Another distinguishing factor is that the unit is not available for rent to non-students. For further information on whether university housing meets the definition of a housing unit, please contact the Department of Finance at (916) 323-4086.

<u>Exempt entity-controlled sites (state excess sites, military, university, and tribal land)</u>

HCD recognizes that the development of new housing on exempt entity sites (land controlled by exempt federal, state, or tribal entities) can meet a portion of a jurisdiction’s RHNA. However, sites located on land controlled by exempt entities are analyzed differently because the jurisdiction may not have control over the planning, permitting, and decision-making processes of land owned by another public entity.

Sites controlled by exempt entities can be used to accommodate RHNA when documentation can be provided that demonstrates the likelihood that the planned housing will be developed within the current RHNA/housing element cycle. Adequate documentation can vary due to differences in the planning processes on land controlled by exempt federal, state, or tribal entities. The following are examples of documentation that demonstrates the likelihood of housing being developed on sites outside the control of a local government. In each of these examples, the units would have to meet the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) definition of a housing unit:

- Agreement with the entity controlling the land that grants the jurisdiction authority regarding approving, permitting, certifying occupancy, and/or reporting new units to the California Department of Finance.
- Documentation from the entity controlling the land that demonstrates planned housing has been approved to be built within the current RHNA cycle.
- Data pertaining to the timing of project construction and unit affordability by household income category.
- If the site is listed on the Department of General Services Real Estate Excess State Property map located EO N-06-19 Affordable Housing Development webpage.

Step 2: Inventory of Sites
Government Code section 65583.2(b)

Provide a parcel specific inventory of sites that includes the following information for each site:

- ***NEW*** Assessor parcel number(s).
- Size of each parcel (in acres).
- General plan land use designation.
- Zoning designation.
- For nonvacant sites, a description of the existing use of each parcel (See Part D)
- ***NEW*** Whether the site is publicly owned or leased.
- Number of dwelling units that the site can realistically accommodate (See Part C)
- ***NEW*** Whether the parcel has available or planned and accessible infrastructure (Part A: Step 3).
- ***NEW*** The RHNA income category the parcel is anticipated to accommodate (See Part A: Step 5).
- ***NEW*** If the parcel was identified in a previous planning period site inventory (Part B: Step 1).

NEW Please note pursuant to Chapter 667, Statutes of 2019 (SB 6), the site inventory must be prepared using the standards, form, and definitions adopted by HCD. HCD has prepared a form and instructions for this purpose that includes space for the information above and commonly provided optional fields. Starting January 1, 2021, local governments will need to submit an electronic version of the site inventory to HCD on this form along with its adopted housing element.

NEW Pursuant to Chapter 664, Statutes of 2019 (AB 1486), at Government Code section 65583.2(b)(3), if a site included in the inventory is owned by the city or county, the housing element must include a description of whether there are any plans to sell the property during the planning period and how the jurisdiction will comply with the Surplus Land Act Article 8 (commencing with Section 54220) of Chapter 5 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5.

Step 3: Infrastructure Availability
Government Code section 65583.2(b)(5)(B)

Determine if parcels included in the inventory, including any parcels identified for rezoning, have sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities available and accessible to support housing development or whether they are included in an existing general plan program or other mandatory program or plan, including a program or plan of a public or private entity to secure sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities supply to support housing development on the site in time to make housing development realistic during the planning period. Dry utilities include, at minimum, a reliable energy source that supports full functionality of the

home and could also include access to natural gas, telephone and/or cellular service, cable or satellite television systems, and internet or Wi-Fi service.

If Yes: Provide an analysis in the housing element describing existing or planned water, sewer, and other dry utilities supply, including the availability and access to parcels on the site inventory, distribution facilities, general plan programs or other mandatory program or plan (including a program or plan of a public or private entity to secure water or sewer service) to support housing development on the site. The housing element must include sufficient detail to determine whether the service levels of water delivery/treatment systems and sewer treatment facilities are sufficient and have the capacity to accommodate development on all identified sites in order to accommodate the RHNA. For example, the water supply should be a reliable supply that meets federal and state drinking water standards.

Please note sites identified as available for housing for above moderate-income households can still be in areas not served by public sewer systems.

If No: Include a program in the housing element that ensures access and availability to infrastructure to accommodate development within the planning period. If this is not possible, the site is not suitable for inclusion in the site inventory or in a program of action identifying a site for rezoning.

Step 4: Map of Sites
Government Code section 65583.2(b)(7)

Provide a map that shows the location of the sites included in the inventory. While the map may be on a larger scale, such as the land use map of the general plan, the more detailed the map, the easier it will be to demonstrate the sites meet new requirements pursuant to Chapter 958, Statutes of 2018 (AB 686) as stated below.

Step 5: Determination of Consistency with Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
Government Code section 65583.2(a)

NEW Pursuant to AB 686, for housing elements due on or after January 1, 2021, sites must be identified throughout the community in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing opportunities (Government Code Section 65583(c)(10)).

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing means "taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and fosters inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all of a public agency's[3]

[3] Public Agencies include the state, including every state office, officer, department, division, bureau, board, and commission, including the California State University, a city, including a charter city, county, including a charter county, city and county, and a redevelopment successor agency, a public housing authority created pursuant to the Housing Authorities Law, a public housing agency, and any other political subdivision of the state that is a grantee or subgrantee receiving funds provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (Government Code section 8899.5(a)(2).

activities and programs relating to housing and community development." (Government Code section 8899.50(a)(1)).

For purposes of the housing element site inventory, this means that sites identified to accommodate the lower-income need are not concentrated in low-resourced areas (lack of access to high performing schools, proximity to jobs, location disproportionately exposed to pollution or other health impacts) or areas of segregation and concentrations of poverty. Instead, sites identified to accommodate the lower income RHNA must be distributed throughout the community in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing. One resource the jurisdiction could use when completing this analysis is the California Tax Credit Allocation/California Department of Housing and Community Development Opportunity Maps, which can be accessed at https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/opportunity.asp. Particularly, the jurisdiction should consider the barriers and opportunities identified in its assessment of fair housing pursuant to Government Code section 65583(c)(10). HCD plans to release a technical assistance memo to assist jurisdictions in addressing AB 686 requirements in their housing element in the Summer of 2020.

Jurisdictions should also consider integrating this analysis with the requirements of Government Code 65302(h), as added by SB 1000 (Statutes of 2016), which requires the preparation and adoption of an Environmental Justice element or equivalent environmental justice-related policies, objectives, and goals throughout other elements of their general plan, to address the needs of disadvantaged communities. More information on Environmental Justice elements can be found on the Governor's Office of Planning and Research Website.

Step 6: Sites by RHNA Income Category
Government Code section 65583.2(c)

NEW Identify which RHNA income category that each site in the inventory is anticipated to accommodate. On the site inventory, specify whether the site or a portion of the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing, moderate-income housing, or above moderate-income housing. Sites can accommodate units for more than one income category. However, the inventory should indicate the number of units of each income category, and together the total of units attributed to each income category may not exceed total units attributed to the site, so that no unit is designated for more than one income category. This requirement is particularly important because the No Net Loss Law (Government Code section 65863) requires adequate sites be maintained throughout the planning period to accommodate the remaining RHNA by income category. For more information, please consult the HCD's memo on No Net Loss Law.

HCD Best Practices for selecting sites to accommodate the lower income RHNA:
When determining which sites are best suited to accommodate the RHNA for lower income households, the jurisdiction should consider factors such as:

- Proximity to transit.
- Access to high performing schools and jobs.
- Access to amenities, such as parks and services.
- Access to health care facilities and grocery stores.
- Locational scoring criteria for Low-income Housing Tax Credit (TCAC) Program funding.
- Proximity to available infrastructure and utilities.

- Sites that do not require environmental mitigation.
- Presence of development streamlining processes, environmental exemptions, and other development incentives.

Step 7: Environmental Constraints
Government Code section 65583.2(b)(4)

Provide in the analysis a general description of any known environmental or other features (e.g., presence of floodplains, protected wetlands, oak tree preserves, very high fire hazard severity zones) that have the potential to impact the development viability of the identified sites. The housing element need only describe those environmental constraints where documentation of such conditions is available to the local government. This analysis must demonstrate that the existence of these features will not preclude development of the sites identified in the planning period at the projected residential densities/capacities. This information need not be identified on a site-specific basis. However, local governments will find it beneficial to describe site specific environmental conditions when demonstrating site suitability and realistic buildout capacity of each site, as these types of impediments to building must be considered when determining how many residential units can be developed on the site.

NEXT STEP:

- If the site is selected to accommodate its low or very-low income RHNA, move to Part B: Sites to Accommodate Low and Very-Low Income RHNA.
- If the site accommodates moderate or above-moderate RHNA, move to Part C: Capacity Analysis.

PART B: SITES TO ACCOMMODATE LOW AND VERY LOW- INCOME RHNA

Step 1: *NEW* Sites Used in Previous Planning Periods Housing Elements

Government Code section 65583.2(c)

Determine if the site identified to accommodate the low- and very low-income RHNA pursuant to Part A, Step 6 was used in the previous planning period[4]. Generally, previously identified sites refer to parcels that were identified in a previous housing element's site inventory to accommodate any portion of any income category of the jurisdiction's RHNA, as follows:

For a nonvacant site: Included in a prior planning period's housing element (e.g., 5th cycle housing element)

For a vacant site (see definition of vacant site on page 21): Included in two or more consecutive planning periods (e.g., 5th cycle and 4th cycle housing element)

If Yes: move to Step 1A

If No: move to Step 2

Unusual Circumstances

Sites rezoned or identified for rezoning to accommodate a RHNA shortfall

Previously identified sites can also include sites that were subject to a previous housing element's rezone program but that were ultimately not rezoned. For example: a previous housing element's rezone program to address a shortfall of sites for lower income households committed to rezone four acres to R-4 zoning, and identified five candidate sites for rezoning, A through E, and each site was two acres in size. If the program was completed in the prior planning period and four acres were rezoned, only those sites rezoned are considered "previously identified." However, if none or fewer than four acres were rezoned, all the non-rezoned sites identified as candidate sites would be considered as "previously identified."

Sites rezoned to a higher density as part of a general plan update (not needed to accommodate a shortfall)

Due to updates in the prior planning period to the general plan or other planning activities, such as the creation of a specific plan, some sites previously identified in the housing element may have been rezoned allowing a higher density, and therefore increasing the potential housing capacity of the site. Because the zoning characteristics of this site have changed, it can be considered a new site for the purposes of the housing element inventory. This is only the case if it was not utilized to accommodate a shortfall of sites to accommodate the RHNA.

[4] Sites in unincorporated areas in a nonmetropolitan county without a micropolitan area are exempt from this step. This includes the unincorporated parts of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Glenn, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Plumas, Sierra, Siskiyou, Trinity.

Step 1A:
Indicate in the housing element site inventory that this parcel was used in a prior housing element planning period.

Step 1B:
Include a program in the housing element requiring rezoning within three years of the beginning of the planning period to allow residential use by right at specified densities (see Step 2) for housing developments in which at least 20 percent of the units are affordable to lower income households. This program can be an overlay on these specific sites. Please be aware that the intent of this requirement is to further incentivize the development of housing on sites that have been available over one or more planning periods. The application of the requirement should not be used to further constrain the development of housing. As such, housing developments that do not contain the requisite 20 percent would still be allowed to be developed according to the underlying (base) zoning but would not be eligible for "by right" processing. However, the jurisdiction would have to make findings on the approval of that project pursuant to No Net Loss Law (Government Code section 65863) and proceed to identify an alternative site or sites pursuant to that law. Sites where zoning already permits residential "use by right" as set forth in Government Code section 65583.2 (i) at the beginning of the planning period would be considered to meet this requirement.

Definition of Use By Right (Government Code section 65583.2 (i))

By right means the jurisdiction shall not require:

- A conditional use permit.
- A planned unit development permit.
- Other discretionary, local-government review or approval that would constitute a "project" as defined in Section 21100 of the Public Resources Code (California Environmental Quality Act "CEQA").

However, if the project requires a subdivision, it is subject to all laws, including CEQA.

This does not preclude a jurisdiction from imposing objective design review standards. However, the review and approval process must remain non discretionary and the design review must not constitute a "project" as defined in Section 21100 of the Public Resources Code. For example, a hearing officer (e.g., zoning administrator) or other hearing body (e.g., planning commission) can review the design merits of a project and call for a project proponent to make design-related modifications, but cannot exercise judgment to reject, deny, or modify the "residential use" itself. (See *McCorkle Eastside Neighborhood Group v. City of St. Helena* (2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 80.)

For reference, CEQA applies when a governmental agency can exercise judgment in deciding whether and how to carry out or approve a project. This makes the project "discretionary" (CEQA Guidelines, §15357.) Where the law requires a governmental agency to act on a project using fixed standards and the agency does not have authority to use its own judgment, the project is called "ministerial," and CEQA does not apply. (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15268(a), 15369.)

Sample Program:
Provide Adequate Sites for Lower Income Households on Nonvacant and Vacant Sites Previously Identified

The City of X will rezone to allow developments by right pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2(i) when 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households on sites identified in Table A to accommodate the lower income RHNA that was previously identified in past housing elements. Specifically, the City will rezone the nonvacant sites identified on Table A previously identified in the 5th cycle housing element, and the vacant sites identified on Table A as previously identified for both the 5th and 4th cycle housing elements.

Objective: Create opportunity for at least X units of rental housing for lower income households

Responsible Agency: Community Development Department

Timeline: Sites rezoned by (a specific date, no more than three years from the beginning of the planning period)

Funding Source(s): General fund

Step 2: Zoning Appropriate to Accommodate Low- and Very Low- Income RHNA
Government Code section 65583.2(c)(3)

Determine if the zoning on the site is appropriate to accommodate low- and very low-income (termed together as "lower") housing.

The statute allows jurisdictions to use higher density as a proxy for lower income affordability, as long as certain statutory requirements are met. Parcels must be zoned to allow sufficient density to accommodate the economies of scale needed to produce affordable housing. To make this determination, the statute allows the jurisdiction to either demonstrate that the zoning allows a specific density set forth in the statute (default density)[5] or to provide an analysis demonstrating the appropriateness of the zoned densities of the site identified to accommodate the lower RHNA.

Step 2A: Does the parcel's zoning allow for "at least" the following densities?

- For an incorporated city within a nonmetropolitan county and for a nonmetropolitan county that has a micropolitan area: sites allowing at least 15 units per acre.
- For an unincorporated area in a nonmetropolitan county not included in the first bullet: sites allowing at least 10 units per acre.
- For a suburban jurisdiction: sites allowing at least 20 units per acre.
- For a jurisdiction in a metropolitan county: sites allowing at least 30 units per acre.

"At least" means the density range allowed on the parcel by the zone has to include the default density. For example, if a jurisdiction has a default density of 30 units per acre and the zone allows for range of 24 – 35 units per acre, the zoning is considered appropriate to accommodate the RHNA for lower income households. This is different than the program standard outlined in Part E which requires a minimum of a specific density in the allowed

[5] Sometimes called "Mullin densities" after the author of AB 2348, Statutes of 2004, which originated these requirements.

density range in the zone. To determine the default density for jurisdictions, please refer to HCD Memorandum: Default Density Standard Option (2010 Census Update).

If Yes: Move to Step 3

If No: Move to Step 2B

Step 2B: Can the analysis demonstrate the appropriateness of the zoning to accommodate housing?

Provide an analysis demonstrating how the allowed densities facilitate the development of housing to accommodate the lower income RHNA. The analysis shall include, but is not limited to, factors such as market demand, financial feasibility, and information based on development project experience within a zone or zones, or at densities that accommodate housing for lower income households.

Information gathered from local developers on densities ideal for housing development in the community and examples of recent residential projects that provide housing for lower income households is helpful in establishing the appropriateness of the zone. Other information could include land costs, market demand for various types of affordable housing, and the gap between typical market rents and subsidized rents. It is recognized that housing affordable to lower income households requires significant subsidies and financial assistance. However, for this analysis, identifying examples of subsidized housing projects alone is not sufficient to demonstrate the adequacy of a zone and/or density to accommodate the housing affordable to lower income households. In particular, identification of older project(s) or one-off projects that cannot be easily duplicated is not sufficient to demonstrate a development trend.

The analysis of “appropriate zoning” should not include residential buildout projections resulting from the implementation of a jurisdiction’s inclusionary program or potential increase in density due to a density bonus, because these tools are not a substitute for addressing whether the underlining (base) zoning densities are appropriate to accommodate the RHNA for lower income households. Additionally, inclusionary housing ordinances applied to rental housing must include options for the developer to meet the inclusionary requirements other than exclusively requiring building affordable units on site. While an inclusionary requirement may be a development criterion, it is not a substitute for zoning. The availability of density bonuses is also not a substitute for an analysis, since they are not a development requirement, but are development options over the existing density, and generally require waivers or concessions in development standards to achieve densities and financial feasibility.

If Yes: Move to Step 3

If No: Site is not appropriate to accommodate lower income. Reclassify pursuant to Part A, Step 5.

Housing Overlays

Affordable housing or zoning overlays are a zoning tool that allows jurisdictions to modify existing zoning to allow for or require certain types of residential development, or development at certain densities, on a parcel without modifying the standards of the underlying zoning district. Usually, they have specific requirements and conditions (e.g., a percentage of the development must be deed-restricted as affordable to lower income households for a specific number of years) that must be met in order for a developer to take advantage of the overlay. These are often combined with incentives to encourage developers to utilize the overlay. Jurisdictions use overlays to help promote a specific type of development, and to increase densities without having to go through a rezoning procedure on the actual parcel and can be more useful when issues such as density and affordable housing become contentious. To ensure the overlay is considered zoning and not just a development incentive, the overlay must demonstrate the following:

- There is no additional discretionary action needed above what is required in the base zone (i.e., a conditional use permit or other review) for a developer to take advantage of overlay.
- Development standards are consistent with those needed to allow for the density allowed under the overlay. Development standards for use exclusively in the overlay may be needed in order to ensure maximum allowable densities can be achieved.
- The developer can access State Density Bonus Law in addition to using the densities allowed in the overlay. For example, if the underlying zoning allows a maximum density of 15 units per acre, but the overlay allows a maximum density of 25 units per acre, and if the developer is using the overlay and wants to use State Density Bonus Law, the density bonus is calculated assuming the base density is 25 units per acre.

If the overlay has conditions such as an affordability requirement, incentives should be sufficient and available to make development feasible and more profitable than the underlying zoning.

For an affordable housing overlay, the element should describe affordability threshold requirements to utilize the overlay (i.e., percentage of units and levels of affordability which must be met to develop at the increased densities). Please note, the jurisdiction should talk with for-profit and nonprofit developers to determine an appropriate mix of incomes that make development feasible in their community. For example, a 100 percent affordability requirement may act as a constraint to using the overlay depending on the level of subsidy required per unit and the availability of funding to support the level of affordability or available incentives.

Step 3: Size of Sites

Government Code section 65583.2(c)(2)(A), (B), and (C)

NEW Is the size of the site appropriate to accommodate housing for lower income households?

To achieve financial feasibility, many assisted housing developments using state or federal resources are between 50 to 150 units. Parcels that are too small may not support the number of units necessary to be competitive and to access scarce funding resources. Parcels that are large may require very large projects, which may lead to an over concentration of affordable housing in one location, or may add cost to a project by

requiring a developer to purchase more land than is needed, or render a project ineligible for funding. If the size of the site is smaller than one half acre or larger than 10 acres, the following analysis is required.

If the parcel is more than 0.5 acres or less than 10 acres, is the size of the site automatically considered appropriate to accommodate lower income RHNA?

Not necessarily. If the size of the parcel in combination with the allowable density and accompanying development standards cannot support a housing development affordable to lower income households, further analysis and programs may be needed to demonstrate the suitability of that site to accommodate the portion of the RHNA for lower income households.

Is the size of the parcel under 0.5 acres?
If Yes: Move to Step 3A

Is the size of the parcel over 10 acres?
If Yes: Move to Step 3B

If No to Both: Move to Part C: Capacity Analysis

Step 3A: Sites smaller than 0.5 acres
A parcel smaller than one half acre is considered inadequate to accommodate housing affordable to lower income households, unless the housing element demonstrates development of housing affordable to lower income households on these sites is realistic or feasible. While it may be possible to build housing on a small parcel, the nature and conditions (i.e., development standards) necessary to construct the units often render the provision of affordable housing infeasible. The housing element must consider and address the impact of constraints associated with small lot development on the ability of a developer to produce housing affordable to lower income households. To demonstrate the feasibility of development on this type of site, the analysis must include at least one of the following:

- An analysis demonstrating that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period with an equivalent number of lower income housing units as projected for the site.
- Evidence that the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing. Evidence could include developer interest, potential for lot consolidation, densities that allow sufficient capacity for a typical affordable housing project, and other information that can demonstrate to HCD the feasibility of the site for development. For parcels anticipated to be consolidated, the housing element must include analysis describing the jurisdiction's role or track record in facilitating small lot consolidation, policies or incentives offered or proposed to encourage and facilitate lot consolidation, conditions rendering parcels suitable and ready for consolidation such as common ownership, and recent trends of lot consolidation. The housing element should include programs promoting, incentivizing, and supporting lot consolidations and/or small lot development.
- A site may be presumed to be realistic for development to accommodate lower income housing need if, at the time of the adoption of the housing element, a development affordable to lower income households has been proposed and approved for development on the site.

The housing element must also describe existing and proposed policies or incentives the jurisdiction will offer to facilitate development of small sites. Examples of program incentives for lot consolidation include deferring fees specifically for consolidation, expediting permit processing, providing flexible development standards such as setback requirements, reduced parking or increased heights, committing resources for development of affordable housing on small sites, or increasing allowable density, lot coverage or floor area ratio.

Step 3B: Sites larger than 10 acres

Parcels larger than 10 acres are considered inadequate to accommodate housing affordable to lower income households, unless the housing element demonstrates development of housing affordable to lower income households on such sites was successful during the prior planning period, or there is other evidence that the site is realistic and feasible for lower income housing.

Definition of a Large Site

For purposes of this requirement, "site" means that portion of the parcel designated to accommodate lower income housing needs. For example, a parcel greater than 10 acres in size could have to be split zoned, have an overlay zone with identified boundaries, or be identified in a specific plan that provides for subdivision of the parcel. If the specified boundaries of the site identified to accommodate the RHNA for lower income is less than 10 acres in size, then the large site analysis would not be required. However, the analysis must describe how the development will work on the site, including opportunities and timing for specific-plan development, further subdivision, or other methods to facilitate the development of housing affordable to lower income households on the identified site within the planning period.

To demonstrate the feasibility of development on this type of site, the analysis must include at least one of the following:

- An analysis demonstrating that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period with an equivalent number of lower income housing units as projected for the site.
- Evidence that the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing. Evidence may include developer interest, proposed specific-plan development, potential for subdivision, the jurisdiction's role or track record in facilitating lot splits, or other information that can demonstrate to HCD the feasibility of the site for development. The housing element should include programs promoting, incentivizing, and supporting lot splits and/or large lot development.
- A site may be presumed to be realistic for development to accommodate lower income housing need if, at the time of the adoption of the housing element, a development affordable to lower income households has been proposed and approved for development on the site.

Specific Plans, Master Plan, and other Subdivisions

To utilize residential capacity in Specific Plan areas, areas under a Master Plan, or a similar multi-phased development plan, the housing element must identify specific sites by parcel number and demonstrate that the sites are available and suitable for development within the planning period. The analysis should include the following information:

- Identify the date of approval of the plans and expiration date.
- Identify approved or pending projects within these plans that are anticipated in the planning period, including anticipated affordability based on the actual or projected sale prices, rent levels, or other mechanisms establishing affordability in the planning period of the units within the project.
- Describe necessary approvals or steps for entitlements for new development (e.g., design review, site plan review, etc.).
  Describe any development agreements, and conditions or requirements such as phasing or timing requirements, that impact development in the planning period.

The housing element must also describe existing and proposed policies or incentives the jurisdiction will offer to facilitate development of large sites. Examples of facilitation include expedited or automatic approval of lot splits or creation of new parcels, waivers of fees associated with subdivision, or expedited processing or financial assistance with the development of infrastructure required to develop the site.

NEXT STEP:

- Move to Part C: Capacity Analysis

PART C: CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Government Code Section 65583.2(c) requires, as part of the analysis of available sites, a local government to calculate the projected residential development capacity of the sites identified in the housing element that can be realistically be achieved. The housing element must describe the methodology used to make this calculation. Jurisdictions have two options to make this calculation.

- Utilize minimum densities (Step 1)
- Utilize adjustment factors (Step 2)

Step1: Utilizing minimum densities to calculate realistic capacity of sites

Government Code section 65583.2(c)(1)

If the jurisdiction has adopted a law, policy, procedure, or other regulation that requires the development of a site to contain at least a certain minimum residential density, the jurisdiction can utilize that minimum density to determine the capacity of a site. For purposes of this analysis, the use of either gross or net acreage is acceptable but should be consistent with the standard the jurisdiction typically uses for determining allowable units for a residential development project. For example:

Site Description	Value
Size of site (Gross acreage)	3 acres
Zoning	Residential Multifamily
Allowable density	20 (required minimum) – 30 dwelling units per acre
Realistic capacity utilizing minimum	**3 X 20 = 60 units**

Please note, to meet this standard on a zone that allows for multiple uses, the general plan or zoning must require the specified minimum number of residential units on the identified sites regardless of overlay zones, zoning allowing nonresidential uses, or other factors potentially impacting the minimum density. Otherwise, the capacity of the site must be calculated using the factors outlined in Step 2.

Step 2: Utilizing factors to calculate realistic capacity of sites

Government Code section 65583.2(c)(2)

The housing element must describe the methodology used to determine the number of units calculated based on the following factors:

- Land use controls and site improvements requirements,
- ***NEW*** The realistic development capacity for the site,
- ***NEW*** Typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction,
- ***NEW*** The current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities.

Applicable land-use controls and site improvement requirements

The analysis must consider the imposition of any development standards that impact the residential development capacity of the sites identified in the inventory. When establishing realistic unit capacity calculations, the jurisdiction must consider the cumulative impact of standards such as maximum lot coverage, height, open space, parking, on-site improvements such as sidewalks or easements, and floor area ratios. The analysis should consider any development standards or the cumulative effect of development standards that would limit the achievable density on a site. For example, if a mixed-use zone requires commercial on the ground floor and has a height limit of three stories along with lot coverage and other development standards, the density that can actually be achieved on that site might be less than the maximum allowable density.

The capacity of a site should also be adjusted for areas that cannot be developed due to environmental factors such as hazards, wetlands, or topography that cannot be mitigated. The capacity of sites subject to specific plans, overlays or other modifications of the base zoning should be adjusted to reflect those factors. For purposes of this analysis, it is recommended that the jurisdiction start with the gross acreage and adjust the buildable acreage accordingly to reach net buildable acreage.

Form Based Codes

To estimate capacity for sites in jurisdictions that have adopted form-based codes, the element should describe the relationship between general plan land-use designation and the form-based code and density assumptions used to determine capacity. Specifically, describe where residential development is allowed, how density requirements found within the general plan are incorporated, how the zoning designations under the form-based code relate to the land-use designations of the general plan, identify potential densities, and consider development standards such as bulk, height, and build-to requirements, buildings types, and use requirements. The element could include examples of recently built projects and densities to support the analysis.

Realistic development capacity for nonresidential, nonvacant, or overlay zoned sites

The capacity calculation must be adjusted to reflect the realistic potential for residential development capacity on the sites in the inventory. Specifically, when the site has the potential to be developed with nonresidential uses, requires redevelopment, or has an overlay zone allowing the underlying zoning to be utilized for residential units, these capacity limits must be reflected in the housing element. Factors used to make this adjustment may include the following:

- Performance standards mandating a specified portion of residential development in mixed use or nonresidential zones (e.g., residential allowed only above first floor commercial).
- The likelihood for residential development such as incentives for residential use, market demand, efforts to attract and assist developers, or allowance of 100 percent residential development.
- Local or regional residential development trends in the same nonresidential zoning districts.
- Local or regional track records, past production trends, or net unit increases/yields for redeveloping sites or site intensification. This estimate may be based on the rate at which similar parcels were developed during the previous planning period, with

adjustments as appropriate to reflect new market conditions or changes in the regulatory environment. If no information about the rate of development of similar parcels is available, report the proportion of parcels in the previous housing element's site inventory that were developed during the previous planning period. For example, if past production trends indicate that two out of three similar sites were developed for residential use, and one out of three similar sites was developed for commercial use, an initial estimate of the proportion of new development which is expected to be residential would be two-thirds, i.e., 0.67.

- Local or regional track records, trends, or build out yields for redeveloping sites or site intensification.

In addition, the housing element should include monitoring programs with next-step actions to ensure sites are achieving the anticipated development patterns. The programs should identify modifications to incentives, sites, programs, or rezoning the jurisdiction will take should these strategies not yield the expected housing potential.

Typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction

While using typically built densities to determine realistic capacity has long been an option to be used as an adjustment factor, the statute now requires this factor to be adjusted based on approved project by affordability level. For example, if a site is identified to accommodate the lower income RHNA, it should use project densities for housing affordable to lower income households developed either locally or regionally to determine typical densities[6]. Using this adjustment factor may result in utilizing different capacity methodologies for above moderate-, moderate-, and lower income sites.

Current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities

The capacity methodology must be adjusted to account for any limitation as a result of availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities (i.e., if the capacity of the site could be limited because a development would have to use a septic system, if there are any septic tank requirements or restrictions that constrain capacity, or limitations on water hook-ups). See Part A, Step 3 for more information on infrastructure requirements.

Example Capacity Calculation

Here is an example of the actual capacity calculation for a particular site in the inventory. The methodology analysis must describe how each of these adjustments was generated per the analysis requirements above. The factors used below are based on the factors outlined in the statute. The percentages and how the factors are applied will vary depending on the unique circumstance in each jurisdiction.

[6] In using this adjustment factor, because of the use of density bonus, it may be possible that trends demonstrate typical densities higher than the maximum allowable densities, especially for housing affordable to lower income households. On a case-by-case basis, it may be appropriate to utilize increased densities due to density bonuses when determining the adjustment factor in the capacity methodology.

Site Description	
Size of site	2.5 acres
Zoning	Residential Mixed-Use
Allowable density	20 – 45 dwelling units per acre
RHNA affordability	Lower income
Existing Use	Nonvacant, single storefront
Infrastructure availability	Yes, no constraints
Environmental constraints	None known

Capacity Factors	Adjustment	Reasoning
Land Use Controls and Site Improvements	95%	For net acreage due to on-site improvements including sidewalks, utility easement
Realistic capacity of the site	55%	55% adjustment based on past development trends for residential redevelopment in the residential mixed-use zones, and programs to incentivize development in this zone.
Typical densities	95%	Affordable housing projects are built out to almost maximum density
Infrastructure availability	No adjustment	Not applicable, no constraint
Environmental constraints	No adjustment	No known site constraint

Realistic capacity utilizing factors = (2.5 X 45)(.95)(.55)(.95) = 56 units

Realistic Capacity = 56 Units

No Net Loss Law

In estimating realistic capacity on sites in the sites inventory, jurisdictions may want to consider No Net Loss Law. This law was amended by Chapter 367, Statutes of 2017 (Senate Bill 166), which requires sufficient adequate sites to be available at all times throughout the RHNA planning period to meet a jurisdiction's remaining unmet housing needs for each income category. To comply with the No Net Loss Law, as jurisdictions make decisions regarding zoning and land use, or development occurs, jurisdictions must assess their ability to accommodate new housing in each income category on the remaining sites in their housing element site inventories. A jurisdiction must add additional sites to its inventory if land use decisions or development results in a shortfall of sufficient sites to accommodate its remaining housing need for each income category. In particular, a jurisdiction may be required to identify additional sites according to the No Net Loss Law if a jurisdiction rezones a site or if the jurisdiction approves a project at a different income level than shown in the sites inventory. Lower density means fewer units than the capacity assumed in the site inventory.

To ensure that sufficient capacity exists in the housing element to accommodate the RHNA throughout the planning period, it is recommended the jurisdiction create a buffer in the housing element inventory of at least 15 to 30 percent more capacity than required, especially for capacity to accommodate the lower income RHNA. Jurisdictions can also create a buffer by projecting site capacity at less than the maximum density to allow for some reductions in density at a project level.

NEXT STEP:

- If the parcel is nonvacant, including underutilized sites (see definition of vacant site on page 22), move to Part D: Nonvacant Sites Analysis
- If not, move to Part E: Determination of Adequate Sites

PART D: NONVACANT SITES

Local governments with limited vacant land resources or with infill and reuse goals may rely on the potential for new residential development on nonvacant sites, including underutilized sites, to accommodate their RHNA. Examples include:

- Sites with obsolete uses that have the potential for redevelopment, such as a vacant restaurant.
- Nonvacant publicly owned surplus or excess land; portions of blighted areas with abandoned or vacant buildings.
- Existing high opportunity developed areas with mixed-used potential.
- Nonvacant substandard or irregular lots that could be consolidated.
- Any other suitable underutilized land.

Local governments can meet other important community objectives to preserve open space or agricultural resources, as well as assist in meeting greenhouse gas emission-reduction goals, by adopting policies to maximize existing land resources and by promoting more compact development patterns or reuse of existing buildings.

Definition of a Vacant Site

A vacant site is a site without any houses, offices, buildings, or other significant improvements on it. Improvements are generally defined as development of the land (such as a paved parking lot, or income production improvements such as crops, high voltage power lines, oil-wells, etc.) or structures on a property that are permanent and add significantly to the value of the property.

Examples of Vacant Sites:

- No improvement on the site (other than being a finished lot).
- No existing uses, including parking lots.
- Underutilized sites are not vacant sites.
- Sites with blighted improvements are not vacant sites.
- Sites with abandoned or unoccupied uses are not vacant sites.

If the inventory identifies nonvacant sites to address a portion of the RHNA, the housing element must describe the realistic development potential of each site within the planning period. Specifically, the analysis must consider the extent that the nonvacant site's existing use impedes additional residential development, the jurisdiction's past experience converting existing uses to higher density residential development, market trends and conditions, and regulatory or other incentives or standards that encourage additional housing development on the nonvacant sites.

Step 1: Description of the nonvacant site
Government Code Section 65583.2(b)

As stated in Part A, the site inventory must describe the specific existing use on the site, such as a surplus school site, auto shop, restaurant, single family residence, nursery, etc. Additional details, such as whether the use is discontinued, land to value information, age and condition of the structure, known leases, developer or owner interest, whether the property is currently being marketed, degree of underutilization, etc., are useful for demonstrating the potential for the site to be redeveloped within the planning period (See Step 2).

Step 2: Nonvacant site analysis methodology
Government Code section 65583.2(g)(1)

Provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential. This methodology can be done on a site-specific basis by utilizing factors (e.g., common ownership, valuation, age, etc.) in common that demonstrate the potential for residential development within the planning period, or a combination of both approaches. The methodology shall consider factors including:

<u>Existing Uses:</u>
Include an analysis that demonstrates the extent to which existing uses may constitute an impediment to additional residential development. Among other things, this analysis includes considerations for the current market demand for the existing use, ***NEW*** an analysis of any known existing leases or other contracts that would perpetuate the existing use or prevent redevelopment of the site for additional residential development, and could include other market conditions that would encourage redevelopment of the property. For example, an analysis might describe an identified site as being developed with a 1960's strip commercial center with few tenants and expiring leases and, therefore, a good candidate for redevelopment, versus a site containing a newly opened retail center, an active Home Depot, the only grocery store in the city, etc. that is unlikely to be available for residential development within the planning period.

<u>Development Trends:</u>
The inventory analysis should describe development and/or redevelopment trends in the community as it relates to nonvacant sites, i.e., the rate at which similar sites have been redeveloped. This could include a description of the local government's track record and specific role in encouraging and facilitating redevelopment, adaptive reuse, or recycling to residential or more intensive residential uses. If the local government does not have any examples of recent recycling or redevelopment, the housing element should describe current or planned efforts (via new programs) to encourage and facilitate this type of development (e.g., providing incentives to encourage lot consolidation or assemblage to facilitate increased residential-development capacity). The results of the analysis should be reflected in the capacity calculation described in Part C, above.

<u>Market Conditions:</u>
Housing market conditions also play a vital role in determining the feasibility or realistic potential of nonvacant sites for residential development. The nonvacant sites analysis should include an evaluation of the impact of local market conditions on redevelopment or reuse strategies. For example, high land and construction costs, combined with a limited supply of available and developable land, may indicate conditions "ripe" for more intensive, compact and infill development or redevelopment and reuse.

Availability of Regulatory and/or other Incentives:
The analysis should describe existing or planned financial assistance, incentives or regulatory concessions to encourage residential development on nonvacant sites. Many local governments develop partnerships with prospective developers to assist in making redevelopment/reuse economically feasible. Examples of these incentives include:

- Organizing special marketing events geared towards the development community.
- Identifying and targeting specific financial resources.
- Allowing streamlined or by right development application processing for infill sites.
- Reducing appropriate development standards.

Absent a track record or development trends to demonstrate the feasibility of a recycling or redevelopment strategy, the housing element should describe existing or planned financial assistance or regulatory relief from development standards that will be provided sufficient to encourage and facilitate more intensive residential development on the identified nonvacant sites.

Step 3: *NEW* Reliance on nonvacant sites to accommodate more than 50 percent of the RHNA for lower income households
Government Code Section 65583.2(g)(2)

Determine if more than 50 percent of the lower income RHNA is on nonvacant sites.

- Calculate the sum of lower income RHNA capacity on vacant sites and other alternatives not related to capacity on nonvacant sites (e.g., accessory dwelling units, vacant sites to be rezoned (see Part E)).
- Subtract that sum from the total lower income RHNA to get the amount of RHNA needed to be accommodated on nonvacant sites.
- Determine if this number is greater than 50 percent of the RHNA.

Example calculation for a jurisdiction with a lower income RHNA of 500:

Adjustment Factor	Number of units
Proposed Lower Income Project	50
Accessory Dwelling Unit Capacity (affordable to lower)	15
Capacity on Vacant Sites	100
Total Capacity (not related to non-vacant sites)	165
RHNA on Nonvacant sites	500 - 165 = 335
Percentage of Lower Income RHNA accommodated on Nonvacant sites	**335/500 = 77%**

If Yes: Move to Step 3A

If No: Move to Step 4

Step 3A:

If a housing element relies on nonvacant sites to accommodate 50 percent or more of its RHNA for lower income households, the nonvacant site's existing use is presumed to impede additional residential development, unless the housing element describes findings based on substantial evidence that the use will likely be discontinued during the planning period. The housing element must include the following:

- As part of the resolution adopting the housing elements, findings stating the uses on nonvacant sites identified in the inventory to accommodate the RHNA for lower income is likely to be discontinued during the planning period and the factors used to make that determination. This can be included in the body or in the recital section of the resolution.

  Example: WHEREAS, based on <name factors here (e.g., expiring leases, dilapidated building conditions, etc.)>, the existing uses on the sites identified in the site inventory to accommodate the lower income RHNA are likely to be discontinued during the planning period, and therefore do not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element.

- The housing element should describe the findings and include a description of the substantial evidence they are based on.

  In general, substantial evidence includes facts, reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts, and expert opinion supported by facts. An example of substantial evidence would be a nonvacant site with a grocery store and with a building lease expiring in a year, and evidence that the store has entered into a lease to relocate to another site subsequent to the lease expiring.

  Examples of substantial evidence that an existing use will likely be discontinued in the current planning period include, but are not limited to:

  - The lease for the existing use expires early within the planning period,
  - The building is dilapidated, and the structure is likely to be removed, or a demolition permit has been issued for the existing uses,
  - There is a development agreement that exists to develop the site within the planning period,
  - The entity operating the existing use has agreed to move to another location early enough within the planning period to allow residential development within the planning period.
  - The property owner provides a letter stating its intention to develop the property with residences during the planning period.

  If multiple sites make up a common existing use and the same factors affect each of the sites, the same findings can be used for each of the sites (e.g., an abandoned shopping mall with sites under common ownership that will not be restored to commercial use located in an area where there is recent residential development). The "substantial evidence" would indicate the existing use will not impede further residential development or that the existing use will be discontinued during the planning period. In this type of situation, use of the same findings for each of the multiple sites would be appropriate.

However, the same finding for multiple sites in a specific area may not be appropriate if their characteristics widely vary. For example, nonvacant sites with differing existing uses and lacking in common ownership, whether contiguous or located in the same general area, may not rely on a generalized analysis. While the sites may be located in an area with common economic issues, individual owners may not wish to sell their property or redevelop their site with residential uses. In addition, each site's existing use, e.g., grocery store, retail shop, parking lot, and offices, may have lease agreements of different lengths of time or the owner may not wish to relocate or redevelop the site with a more intensive residential use. In this type of situation, use of the same findings for the multiple sites would not be appropriate.

Step 4: *NEW* Program and policy requiring replacement of existing affordable units
Government Code Section 65583.2(g)(3)

The housing element must include a program in the housing element and policy independent of the housing element requiring the replacement of units affordable to the same or lower income level as a condition of any development on a nonvacant site consistent with those requirements set forth in Density Bonus Law (Government Code section 65915(c)(3).) Replacement requirements shall be required for sites identified in the inventory that currently have residential uses, or within the past five years have had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished, and:

- Were subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low or very low-income, or
- Subject to any other form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power, or
- Occupied by low or very low-income households

For the purpose of this program "previous five years" is based on the date the application for development was submitted.

Please note, until 2025, pursuant to Government Code section 66300(d) (Chapter 654, Statutes of 2019 (SB 330)), an affected city or county shall not approve a housing development project that will require the demolition of residential dwelling units regardless of whether the parcel was listed in the inventory unless a) the project will create at least as many residential dwelling units as will be demolished, and b) certain affordability criteria are met. A listing of affected cities and counties can be found at https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/accountability-enforcement/statutory-determinations.shtml.

SAMPLE PROGRAM

Program X: Replacement Unit Program

XXXX will adopt a policy and will require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code section 65915, subdivision (c)(3) on sites identified in the site inventory when any new development (residential, mixed-use or nonresidential) occurs on a site that is identified in the inventory meeting the following conditions:

- currently has residential uses or within the past five years has had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished, and
- was subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low or very low-income, or
- subject to any other form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power, or
- occupied by low or very low-income households

Funding: General Funds

Responsible Parties: Planning and Community Development Department

Objectives: In order to mitigate the loss of affordable housing units, require new housing developments to replace all affordable housing units lost due to new development.

Timeframes: The replacement requirement will be implemented immediately and applied as applications on identified sites are received and processed, and local policy shall be adopted by <DATE>. End of Sample Program

NEXT STEP:

- Move to Part E: Determination of Adequate Sites

PART E: DETERMINATION OF ADEQUATE SITES

The last step in this process is a determination of whether the housing element demonstrates sufficient land suitable and available for residential development to meet the locality's housing need for each designated income level or if further program actions are required to accommodate a shortfall.

Step 1: Consider any alternative means of meeting the RHNA
Government Code section 65583.1

The housing element may satisfy its RHNA requirement though a variety of methods other than identifying sites. The following is a description of those alternative methods.

- Units permitted, built, entitled or pending: (See Part A, Step 1)
- Potential for accessory dwelling units (ADU) or junior accessory dwelling units (JADU): The jurisdiction can count the potential for the development of ADUs within the planning period. The analysis is based on the following factors:

  - the number of ADUs or JADUs developed in the prior planning period
  - community need and demand for these types of housing units
  - the resources and/or incentives available that will encourage the development of ADUs
  - the availability of ADUs and JADUs for occupancy, rather than used as offices or guest houses
  - the unit must meet the Census definition of a housing unit, which can be found on the U.S. Census Bureau website, and be reported to the Department of Finance as part of the annual City and County Housing Unit Change Survey
  - the anticipated affordability of these units. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the appropriate RHNA income category to be accommodated through ADU and JADU development.

    Affordability can be determined in a number of ways. As an example, a community could survey existing ADUs and JADUs for their current market rents and consider other factors such as square footage, number of bedrooms, amenities, age of the structure and general location, including proximity to public transportation. Another method could examine current market rents for reasonably comparable rental properties to determine an average price per square foot in the community. This price can be applied to anticipated sizes of these units to estimate the anticipated affordability of ADUs and JADUs. Available regional studies and methodology on ADU affordability can also be a resource to determine the likely affordability mix for ADUs and JADUs.

  - other relevant factors as determined by HCD.

  In addition, the housing element must describe and analyze any currently adopted ordinance and other factors that could affect ADU and JADU development within the planning period. At a minimum, the housing element should analyze whether the ordinance conforms with state ADU and JADU requirements and any additional development standards (i.e., setbacks, maximum unit sizes, lot coverage, etc.) adopted by the local government, zones allowing ADUs, fees and exactions, and any other potential constraints impacting the development of ADUs and JADUs.

Impact of New Accessory Dwelling Unit Laws

Since 2017, the Legislature has passed a series of new laws that significantly increase the potential for development of new ADUs and JADUs by removing development barriers, allowing ADUs through ministerial permits, and requiring jurisdictions to include programs in their housing element that incentivize their development. As a result, using trend analysis when estimating the potential for development may not accurately reflect the increased potential for these units. To account for this increased potential, HCD recommends the following options when performing this analysis:

- Use the trends in ADU construction since January 2018 to estimate new production. This is a conservative option to only account for the effect of the new laws without local promotional efforts or incentives (safe harbor option).
- Where no other data is available, assume an average increase of five times the previous planning period construction trends prior to 2018. This option is a conservative estimate based upon statewide data on ADU development since the implementation of the new laws (safe harbor option).
- Use trends from regional production of ADUs.
- Include programs that aggressively promote and incentivize ADU and JADU construction.
- Other analysis (reviewed on a case-by-case basis).

Potential affordability of these units must still be calculated per the analysis outlined on the previous page. In addition to the above options, the element should also include a monitoring program that a) tracks ADU and JADU creation and affordability levels, and b) commits to a review at the planning cycle mid-point to evaluate if production estimates are being achieved. Depending on the finding of that review, amendments to the housing element may be necessary, including rezoning pursuant to Government Code 65583.2 (h)and (i).

- Alternative Adequate sites: Under limited circumstances, a local government may credit up to 25 percent of their adequate sites requirement per income category through existing units that will be:

  - substantially rehabilitated
  - in a multifamily rental or ownership housing complex of three or more units that are converted from non affordable to affordable rental
  - preserved at levels affordable to low- or very low-income households, where the local government has provided those units with committed assistance

  For more information on this option, please refer to HCD's Building Blocks Webpage

- Manufactured housing, manufactured housing park hook-ups, floating homes/live aboard berths: In certain circumstances a jurisdiction can utilize the potential for new manufactured housing either in a manufactured housing park or on large properties in rural areas, or new floating home/liveaboard berths with sewer and water hook ups. In cases of a manufactured home park or in floating home/liveaboard berth marinas, the jurisdiction may count new spaces with infrastructure hook-ups intended for permanent residential occupancy and reported to the Department of Finance. Potential for manufactured homes in rural areas should be analyzed using the same factors as those

for potential ADUs, including establishing the market rate affordability of the units and crediting them to the appropriate RHNA category. In addition, the analysis should indicate if appropriate water and sewer infrastructure is available to support the development.

- Former military housing: Sites that contain permanent housing units located on a military base undergoing closure or conversion as a result of action pursuant to the Defense Authorization Amendments and Base Closure and Realignment Act (Public Law 100-526), the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), or any subsequent act requiring the closure or conversion of a military base may be identified as an adequate site if the housing element demonstrates that the housing units will be available for occupancy by households within the planning period of the housing element. No sites containing housing units scheduled or planned for demolition or conversion to nonresidential uses shall qualify as an adequate site.

- In consultation with HCD, other alternatives may be considered, such as motel conversions, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, or legalization of units not previously reported to the Department of Finance.

Step 2: Determine whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the RHNA for the jurisdiction by income.
Government Code Section 65583(a)(3)

The following table is an example of that calculation:

Adjustment Factor	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate
RHNA	**300**	**200**	**165**	**465**
Entitled, Permitted, or Constructed Project Projects	50	50	0	200
Accessory Dwelling Unit Potential	10	15	15	10
Adequate Sites Alternative Preservation	20	16		
Multifamily Residential R-3 (Vacant)	75	50		
Mixed Use MU (Nonvacant)	75	50	50	
Multifamily Residential (Vacant) R-2			75	
Single-Family (Vacant) R-1				200
Spring Valley Specific Plan			150	250
Total	**230**	**181**	**290**	**660**
Shortfall/Surplus	**-70**	**-19**	**+125**	**+195**

While the jurisdiction has sufficient sites to accommodate its RHNA for moderate- and above moderate-income units, it has a shortfall of 89 units to accommodate its lower income need. The jurisdiction would be required to include a program in the housing element to accommodate that shortfall.

If Yes: Congratulations, the site inventory analysis is complete

If No: Move to Step 3

Step 3: Adequate Sites Program
Government Code section 65583(f) and Government Code section 65583.2(h)

Where the inventory of sites does not identify adequate sites to accommodate the RHNA for lower income households, a program must be included to identify sites that can be developed for housing within the planning period. The housing element should include an inventory of potential sites for rezoning. Those sites must meet the adequate sites requirements in terms of the suitability and availability outlined above.

General Program Requirements
A jurisdiction's adequate sites program must accommodate 100 percent of the shortfall of sites necessary to accommodate the remaining housing need for housing for very low- and low-income households during the planning period and include the following components:

- Permit owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by right for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households. By right means local government review must not require a conditional use permit, planned unit development permit, or other discretionary review or approval.
- Permit the development of at least 16 units per site.
- Ensure sites within suburban and metropolitan jurisdictions — as defined by Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)(B)(iii) and (iv) — permit a minimum of 16 dwelling units per acre for incorporated cities within nonmetropolitan/rural counties and nonmetropolitan counties with micropolitan areas or 20 dwelling units per acre for suburban and metropolitan jurisdictions.
- Ensure a) at least 50 percent of the shortfall of low- and very low-income regional housing need can be accommodated on sites designated for exclusively residential uses, or b) if accommodating more than 50 percent of the low- and very low-income regional housing need on sites designated for mixed-uses, all sites designated for mixed-uses must allow 100 percent residential use and require residential use to occupy at least 50 percent of the floor area in a mixed-use project.

Timing
Rezones due to a shortfall from the current planning period:

A locality's ability to accommodate needed housing during the planning period requires designating appropriate zoning as early as possible. Generally, however, a rezoning should occur no later than three years and 120 days from the beginning of the planning period. A one-year extension to the deadline to complete required rezoning may be allowed if a local government has completed rezoning at sufficient densities to accommodate at least 75 percent of the units for very-low and low-income households. Also, the jurisdiction must determine after a public meeting that substantial evidence supports findings and adoption of a resolution that the rezone deadline was not met due to one of the following reasons:

- Action or inaction beyond the control of the local government of any other state, federal, or local agency.
- Infrastructure deficiencies due to fiscal or regulatory constraints.

- The local government must undertake a major revision to its general plan in order to accommodate the housing-related policies of a sustainable communities strategy or an alternative planning strategy adopted pursuant to Section 65080.

The jurisdiction must provide HCD a copy of the resolution and findings along with: - a detailed budget and schedule for preparation and adoption of required rezoning within one year of the adoption of the resolution, - plans for citizen participation, and - expected interim actions to complete the rezoning, and any revisions to the general plan (Government Code section 65583(f).

Consequences for Failing to Complete Rezoning Deadline:
If a local government fails to complete all rezoning's by the prescribed deadline, a local government may not disapprove a housing development project[7], nor require a conditional use permit, planned unit development permit, or other locally imposed discretionary permit, or impose a condition that would render the project infeasible, if the housing development project:

- Is proposed to be located on a site included in a housing element program to be rezoned.
- Complies with applicable objective general plan and zoning standards and criteria, including design review standards, described in the rezone program action.

However, any subdivision of the site is subject to the Subdivision Map Act.

A jurisdiction may disapprove a housing development or approve it upon the condition that the project be developed at a lower density only if it makes written findings supported by substantial evidence on the record that both of the following conditions exist:

- The housing development project would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety[8].
- There is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the adverse impact.

The local government may also be subject to enforcement actions by HCD, including a determination that the housing element no longer complies with the requirements of state law and referral to the Attorney General pursuant to Government Code section 65585(i) and (j).

[7] "Housing development project" is defined a project to construct residential units for which the project developer provides sufficient legal commitments to the appropriate legal agency to ensure the continued availability and use of at least 49 percent of the housing units for very-low, low-, and moderate-income households with an affordable housing cost or affordable rent.

[8] "Specific, adverse impact" means a significant, quantifiable, direct, and unavoidable impact, based on objective, identified written public health or safety standards, policies, or conditions as they existed on the date the application was deemed complete.

Housing Accountability Act and the Housing Element

The Housing Accountability Act (Government Code section 65589.5) establishes state overarching policy that a local government not deny, reduce the density of, or make infeasible housing development projects, emergency shelters, or farmworker housing that are consistent with objective local development standards and contribute to meeting housing need. Jurisdictions without a housing element in compliance with State Housing Element Law or without a complete site inventory are further limited in the ability to deny a housing development application.

Among other requirements (including those related to housing development regardless of affordability levels), the Housing Accountability Act states that a local agency shall not disapprove or condition approval in a manner that renders the housing development project infeasible, including through the use of design review standards, for development of an emergency shelter or a housing development project for very low, low-, or moderate-income households unless it makes written findings, based upon a preponderance of the evidence in the record, as to one of the following:

- The jurisdiction has adopted a housing element in substantial compliance with Housing Element Law and the jurisdiction has met or exceeded its share of the RHNA for the planning period for the income category proposed for the housing development project.
- The project would have a specific, adverse impact upon the public health or safety, and there is no feasible method to satisfactorily mitigate or avoid the specific adverse impact without rendering the development unaffordable to low- and moderate-income households or rendering the development of the emergency shelter financially infeasible.
- The denial of the project or imposition of conditions is required in order to comply with specific state or federal law, and there is no feasible method to comply without rendering the development unaffordable or rendering the development of the emergency shelter financially infeasible.
- The project is proposed on land zoned for agriculture or resource preservation, or which does not have adequate water or wastewater facilities to serve the project.
- The project is inconsistent with both the jurisdiction's zoning ordinance and general plan land use designation, unless the housing development project is proposed on a site that is identified as suitable or available for very low, low-, or moderate-income households in the jurisdiction's housing element, or if the local agency has failed to identify in the inventory of land in its housing element sites that can be developed for housing within the planning period and are sufficient to provide for the jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need for all income levels pursuant to Section 65584.

"Housing for very low, low-, or moderate-income households" means where at least 20 percent of the total units are or will be sold or rented to lower income households or 100 percent of the units will be sold or rented to persons and families of moderate income, or persons and families of middle income.

Rezoned due to an unaccommodated need from previous planning period[9]:
Pursuant to Government Code section 65584.09, if the jurisdiction failed to make adequate sites available to accommodate the regional housing need in the prior planning period, the jurisdiction must zone or rezone sites to accommodate any unaccommodated need within the first year of the planning period. If more than one year has lapsed since the beginning of the planning period, the housing element cannot be found in compliance with Housing Element Law until the required zoning or rezoning is complete and the housing element is amended to reflect the necessary rezoning.

Annexation

If the jurisdiction must rely on annexation to accommodate its RHNA, the housing element must include a program committing to completing the annexation within three years of the planning period. In addition, the housing element must also include an evaluation of the suitability of the annexed sites, including the following information:

- Consistency with Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) policies
- Actions to pre-zone prior to annexation
- Descriptions of the zone, density, development standards and design requirements
- The anticipated housing capacity allowed by each site
- Timeline to complete annexation which is early enough in the planning period to facilitate development of annexed sites (e.g., within the first three years of the planning period)
- Analysis of the suitability and availability of sites, including identification of any sites currently under Williamson Act contracts
- Demonstrated compliance with the requirements of the adequate sites program requirements of Government Code section 65583.2, subdivisions (h) and (i)

Please note, if the potential for annexation was not included in the RHNA allocation methodology, a portion of the county's allocation may be transferred to the city pursuant to Government Code section 65584.07(d). This transfer of RHNA would require an amendment to the housing element to ensure that any additional RHNA can be accommodated on sites within the inventory.

[9] Sometimes called the AB 1233 consequence.

Sample Rezone Program:

To accommodate the remaining lower-income RHNA of 89 units, the City of X will identify and rezone a minimum of 4.5 acres of vacant land to the R3 zoning district, allowing exclusively residential uses and a minimum of 20 units per acre to a maximum of 30 units per acre by June 30, 2024. Rezoned sites will permit owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by right pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2(i) for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households and will be selected from sites 20 through 30 in the parcel listing (Appendix A). As reflected in Appendix A, each site has the capacity to accommodate at least 16 units and will be available for development in the planning period where water, sewer, and dry utilities can be provided.

Objective: Create opportunity for at least 89 units of multifamily housing for lower income households

Responsible Agency: Community Development Department

Timeline: Sites rezoned by June 30, 2024

Funding Source(s): General fund

Other program ideas for increasing capacity or facilitating development on identified sites:

- Up-zone existing neighborhoods in areas of opportunity or in high quality neighborhood transit areas at appropriate densities to facilitate development of housing.
- Increase maximum allowable residential densities in existing residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones and modify development standards, such as height limitations to ensure maximum density can be achieved.
- Establish minimum densities — Designate minimum densities of development to ensure that existing available land is not underutilized.
- Allow and encourage mixed-use zoning — Permit housing in certain nonresidential zones either as part of a mixed-use project or as a standalone residential use.
- Rezone underutilized land from nonresidential to residential to expand the supply of available residential land.
- Institute flexible zoning — Allow various residential uses within existing nonresidential zones without requiring rezoning or conditional approvals.
- Redevelop and/or recycle underutilized existing land to more intensive uses.
- Convert obsolete, older public/institutional/commercial/industrial buildings to residential use through adaptive reuse and/or historic preservation.
- Over-zone — Create a surplus of land for residential development during the current planning period of at least 20 percent more than the locality's share of the regional housing need. Over-zoning compensates for urban land left vacant due to ownership and development constraints and creates a real surplus. A sufficient supply of land beyond the time frame of the housing element helps prevent land shortages from bidding up land costs.
- Allow and promote small and irregular-size lot development.

- Consolidate lots — Facilitate combining small residential lots into larger lots to accommodate higher-density development.
- Increase height limitations — At a minimum, allow three stories in multifamily zones.
- Increase Floor Area Ratios — Allow for larger buildings on smaller lots and/or more units per lot by reducing the floor area ratio (total lot area divided by the total building area).
- Identify publicly owned land suitable for affordable housing development and sell parcels for $1 (with consideration of the Surplus Land Act as amended by AB 1486, Statutes of 2019).
- Facilitate development by encouraging staff outreach to owners of potential sites and affordable housing developers to discuss needs and constraints in the jurisdiction.
- Adopt incentives such as a super density bonus or by right approval for housing that meets community objectives, such as housing near transit, affordability, housing that meets the needs of special populations, etc.
- Adopt a specific plan that streamlines CEQA compliance.

Common Program Questions and Answers for Shortfall Zoning:

Q: How do I establish the density range for a rezone site?
A: The density range is set at the minimum density (either 16 or 20 dwelling units per acre, depending on the jurisdiction). While there is no specific maximum density requirement, the range must include the density that was identified as appropriate to accommodate housing affordable to lower-income households (Part B, Step 2).

However, jurisdictions should not set the minimum and maximum density range at the same density (e.g., 20 units per acre minimum as both a minimum and maximum density). If identifying a narrow density range, the housing element must analyze the range as a potential governmental constraint on housing development, including potential impacts resulting from site constraints, financial considerations, and other development factors.

Q: If a development is proposed with less than 20 percent affordability to lower income, can the jurisdiction approve it?
A: Yes, however, the project would not qualify for the by right provisions of this law unless the underlining zone already permitted housing by right. This, and all housing development projects, is subject to the Housing Accountability Act. In addition, the jurisdiction may be subject to No Net Loss Law provisions.

Q: How is the 20 percent calculated when State Density Bonus Law is added?
A: This 20 percent calculation is based upon the total number of units in the development including additional units provided by a density bonus. This calculation methodology is consistent with several other pieces of housing laws, including the Streamlined Ministerial Approval Process (Government Code section 65913.4) and the Housing Accountability Act.

ATTACHMENT 1: SUMMARY OF NEW LAWS REFERENCED IN THE GUIDEBOOK

AB 1397, Low (Chapter 375, Statutes of 2017): The law made a number of revisions to the site inventory analysis requirements of Housing Element Law. In particular, it requires stronger justification when nonvacant sites are used to meet housing needs, particularly for lower income housing, requires by right housing when sites are included in more than one housing element, and adds conditions around size of sites, among others.

AB 686, Santiago (Chapter 958, Statutes of 2018): The law ensures that public entities, including local governments, administer their programs relating to housing and urban development in a manner affirmatively to further the purposes of the federal Fair Housing Act and do not take any action that is materially inconsistent with its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing. It also requires that housing elements of each city and county promote and affirmatively further fair housing opportunities throughout the community for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, familial status, or disability, and other characteristics protected by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Government Code Section 65008, and any other state and federal fair housing and planning law. AB 686 requires jurisdictions to conduct an assessment of fair housing in the housing element, prepare the housing element site inventory through the lens of affirmatively furthering fair housing, and include program(s) to affirmatively further fair housing.

SB 6, Beall (Chapter 667, Statutes of 2019): Jurisdictions are required to prepare the site inventory on forms developed by HCD and send an electronic version with their adopted housing element to HCD. HCD will then send those inventories to the Department of General Services by December 31 each year. The law (?) authorizes HCD to review, adopt, amend, and repeal the standards, forms, or definitions to implement this subdivision and subdivision (a) of Section 65583.

AB 1486, Ting (Chapter 644, Statutes of 2019): The law expanded the definition of surplus land and added additional requirements on the disposal of surplus land. In addition, local agencies must send notices of availability to interested entities on a list maintained by HCD. This list and notices of availability are maintained on HCD's website. Local agencies must also send a description of the notice and subsequent negotiations for the sale of the land, which HCD must review, and within 30 days submit written finding of violations of law. Violations of the Surplus Land Act can be referred to the Attorney General. Finally, it adds a requirement in Housing Element Law for the jurisdiction to identify which of the sites included in the inventory are surplus property.

ATTACHMENT 2: GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65583.2

As of January 1, 2020

(a) A city's or county's inventory of land suitable for residential development pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 65583 shall be used to identify sites throughout the community, consistent with paragraph (9) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583, 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 pursuant to Section 65584. As used in this section, "land suitable for residential development" includes all of the sites that meet the following standards set forth in subdivisions (c) and (g):

(1) Vacant sites zoned for residential use.

(2) Vacant sites zoned for nonresidential use that allows residential development.

(3) Residentially zoned sites that are capable of being developed at a higher density, including sites owned or leased by a city, county, or city and county.

(4) Sites zoned for nonresidential use that can be redeveloped for residential use, and for which the housing element includes a program to rezone the site, as necessary, rezoned for, to permit residential use, including sites owned or leased by a city, county, or city and county.

(b) The inventory of land shall include all of the following:

(1) A listing of properties by assessor parcel number.

(2) The size of each property listed pursuant to paragraph (1), and the general plan designation and zoning of each property.

(3) For nonvacant sites, a description of the existing use of each property. If a site subject to this paragraph is owned by the city or county, the description shall also include whether there are any plans to dispose of the property during the planning period and how the city or county will comply with Article 8 (commencing with Section 54220) of Chapter 5 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5.

(4) A general description of any environmental constraints to the development of housing within the jurisdiction, the documentation for which has been made available to the jurisdiction. This information need not be identified on a site-specific basis.

(5) (A) A description of existing or planned water, sewer, and other dry utilities supply, including the availability and access to distribution facilities.

(B) Parcels included in the inventory must have sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities supply available and accessible to support housing development or be included in an existing general plan program or other mandatory program or plan, including a program or plan of a public or private entity providing water or sewer service, to secure sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities supply to support housing development. This paragraph does not impose any additional duty on the city or county to construct, finance, or otherwise provide water, sewer, or dry utilities to parcels included in the inventory.

(6) Sites identified as available for housing for above moderate-income households in areas not served by public sewer systems. This information need not be identified on a site-specific basis.

(7) A map that shows the location of the sites included in the inventory, such as the land use map from the jurisdiction's general plan, for reference purposes only.

(c) Based on the information provided in subdivision (b), a city or county shall determine whether each site in the inventory can accommodate the development of some portion of its share of the regional housing need by income level during the planning period, as determined pursuant to Section 65584. The inventory shall specify for each site the number of units that can realistically be accommodated on that site and whether the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing, moderate-income housing, or above moderate-income housing. A nonvacant site identified pursuant to paragraph (3) or (4) of subdivision (a) in a prior housing element and a vacant site that has been included in two or more consecutive planning periods that was not approved to develop a portion of the locality's housing need shall not be deemed adequate to accommodate a portion of the housing need for lower income households that must be accommodated in the current housing element planning period unless the site is zoned at residential densities consistent with paragraph (3) of this subdivision and the site is subject to a program in the housing element requiring rezoning within three years of the beginning of the planning period to allow residential use by right for housing developments in which at least 20 percent of the units are affordable to lower income households. An unincorporated area in a nonmetropolitan county pursuant to clause (ii) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) shall not be subject to the requirements of this subdivision to allow residential use by right. The analysis shall determine whether the inventory can provide for a variety of types of housing, including multifamily rental housing, factory-built housing, mobilehomes, housing for agricultural employees, supportive housing, single-room occupancy units, emergency shelters, and transitional housing. The city or county shall determine the number of housing units that can be accommodated on each site as follows:

(1) If local law or regulations require the development of a site at a minimum density, the department shall accept the planning agency's calculation of the total housing unit capacity on that site based on the established minimum density. If the city or county does not adopt a law or regulation requiring the development of a site at a minimum density, then it shall demonstrate how the number of units determined for that site pursuant to this subdivision will be accommodated.

(2) The number of units calculated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be adjusted as necessary, based on the land use controls and site improvements requirement identified in paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) of Section 65583, the realistic development capacity for the site, typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in that jurisdiction, and on the current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities.

(A) A site smaller than half an acre shall not be deemed adequate to accommodate lower income housing need unless the locality can demonstrate that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period for an equivalent number of lower income housing units as projected for the site or unless the locality provides other evidence to the department that the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing.

(B) A site larger than 10 acres shall not be deemed adequate to accommodate lower income housing need unless the locality can demonstrate that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period for an equivalent number of lower income housing units as projected for the site or unless the locality provides other evidence to the department that the site can be developed as lower income housing. For purposes of this subparagraph, "site" means that portion of a parcel or parcels designated to accommodate lower income housing needs pursuant to this subdivision.

(C) A site may be presumed to be realistic for development to accommodate lower income housing need if, at the time of the adoption of the housing element, a development affordable to lower income households has been proposed and approved for development on the site.

(3) For the number of units calculated to accommodate its share of the regional housing need for lower income households pursuant to paragraph (2), a city or county shall do either of the following:

(A) Provide an analysis demonstrating how the adopted densities accommodate this need. The analysis shall include, but is not limited to, factors such as market demand, financial feasibility, or information based on development project experience within a zone or zones that provide housing for lower income households.

(B) The following densities shall be deemed appropriate to accommodate housing for lower income households:

(i) For an incorporated city within a nonmetropolitan county and for a nonmetropolitan county that has a micropolitan area: sites allowing at least 15 units per acre.

(ii) For an unincorporated area in a nonmetropolitan county not included in clause (i): sites allowing at least 10 units per acre.

(iii) For a suburban jurisdiction: sites allowing at least 20 units per acre.

(iv) For a jurisdiction in a metropolitan county: sites allowing at least 30 units per acre.

(d) For purposes of this section, a metropolitan county, nonmetropolitan county, and nonmetropolitan county with a micropolitan area shall be as determined by the United States Census Bureau. A nonmetropolitan county with a micropolitan area includes the following counties: Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Nevada, Tehama, and Tuolumne and other counties as may be determined by the United States Census Bureau to be nonmetropolitan counties with micropolitan areas in the future.

(e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a jurisdiction shall be considered suburban if the jurisdiction does not meet the requirements of clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) and is located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of less than 2,000,000 in population, unless that jurisdiction’s population is greater than 100,000, in which case it shall be considered metropolitan. A county, not including the City and County of San Francisco, shall be considered suburban unless the county is in an MSA of 2,000,000 or greater in population in which case the county shall be considered metropolitan.

(2) (A) (i) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if a county that is in the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont California MSA has a population of less than 400,000, that county shall be considered suburban. If this county includes an incorporated city that has a population of less than 100,000, this city shall also be considered suburban. This paragraph shall apply to a housing element revision cycle, as described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (e) of Section 65588, that is in effect from July 1, 2014, to December 31, 2028, inclusive.

(ii) A county subject to this subparagraph shall utilize the sum existing in the county’s housing trust fund as of June 30, 2013, for the development and preservation of housing affordable to low- and very low-income households.

(B) A jurisdiction that is classified as suburban pursuant to this paragraph shall report to the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development, the Senate Committee on

Housing, and the Department of Housing and Community Development regarding its progress in developing low- and very low income housing consistent with the requirements of Section 65400. The report shall be provided three times: once, on or before December 31, 2019, which report shall address the initial four years of the housing element cycle, a second time, on or before December 31, 2023, which report shall address the subsequent four years of the housing element cycle, and a third time, on or before December 31, 2027, which report shall address the subsequent four years of the housing element cycle and the cycle as a whole. The reports shall be provided consistent with the requirements of Section 9795.

(f) A jurisdiction shall be considered metropolitan if the jurisdiction does not meet the requirements for “suburban area” above and is located in an MSA of 2,000,000 or greater in population, unless that jurisdiction’s population is less than 25,000 in which case it shall be considered suburban.

(g) (1) For sites described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b), the city or county shall specify the additional development potential for each site within the planning period and shall provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the development potential. The methodology shall consider factors including the extent to which existing uses may constitute an impediment to additional residential development, the city’s or county’s past experience with converting existing uses to higher density residential development, the current market demand for the existing use, an analysis of any existing leases or other contracts that would perpetuate the existing use or prevent redevelopment of the site for additional residential development, development trends, market conditions, and regulatory or other incentives or standards to encourage additional residential development on these sites.

(2) In addition to the analysis required in paragraph (1), when a city or county is relying on nonvacant sites described in paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) to accommodate 50 percent or more of its housing need for lower income households, the methodology used to determine additional development potential shall demonstrate that the existing use identified pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) does not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the period covered by the housing element. An existing use shall be presumed to impede additional residential development, absent findings based on substantial evidence that the use is likely to be discontinued during the planning period.

(3) Notwithstanding any other law, and in addition to the requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2), sites that currently have residential uses, or within the past five years have had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished, that are or were subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low or very low income, subject to any other form of rent or price control through a public entity’s valid exercise of its police power, or occupied by low or very low income households, shall be subject to a policy requiring the replacement of all those units affordable to the same or lower income level as a condition of any development on the site. Replacement requirements shall be consistent with those set forth in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 65915.

(h) The program required by subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 65583 shall accommodate 100 percent of the need for housing for very low and low-income households allocated pursuant to Section 65584 for which site capacity has not been identified in the inventory of sites pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) on sites that shall be zoned to permit owner-occupied and rental multifamily residential use by right

for developments in which at least 20 percent of the units are affordable to lower income households during the planning period. These sites shall be zoned with minimum density and development standards that permit at least 16 units per site at a density of at least 16 units per acre in jurisdictions described in clause (i) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (c), shall be at least 20 units per acre in jurisdictions described in clauses (iii) and (iv) of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) and shall meet the standards set forth in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (5) of subdivision (b). At least 50 percent of the very low and low-income housing need shall be accommodated on sites designated for residential use and for which nonresidential uses or mixed uses are not permitted, except that a city or county may accommodate all of the very low and low-income housing need on sites designated for mixed uses if those sites allow 100 percent residential use and require that residential use occupy 50 percent of the total floor area of a mixed-use project.

(i) For purposes of this section and Section 65583, the phrase “use by right” shall mean that the local government’s review of the owner-occupied or multifamily residential use may not require a conditional use permit, planned unit development permit, or other discretionary local government review or approval that would constitute a “project” for purposes of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code. Any subdivision of the sites shall be subject to all laws, including, but not limited to, the local government ordinance implementing the Subdivision Map Act. A local ordinance may provide that “use by right” does not exempt the use from design review. However, that design review shall not constitute a “project” for purposes of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code. Use by right for all rental multifamily residential housing shall be provided in accordance with subdivision (f) of Section 65589.5.

(j) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, within one-half mile of a Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit station, housing density requirements in place on June 30, 2014, shall apply.

(k) For purposes of subdivisions (a) and (b), the department shall provide guidance to local governments to properly survey, detail, and account for sites listed pursuant to Section 65585.

(l) This section shall remain in effect only until December 31, 2028, and as of that date is repealed.

(Amended (as amended by Stats. 2018, Ch. 958, Sec. 3) by Stats. 2019, Ch. 664, Sec. 15.5. (AB 1486) Effective January 1, 2020. Repealed as of December 31, 2028, by its own provisions. See later operative version amended by Sec. 16.5 of Stats. 2019, Ch. 664.)