



**ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

General Plan Annual Report and Housing Element Annual Report for 2019

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the General Plan

Government Code Section 65300 et seq. requires that each city and county in California prepare and adopt a comprehensive general plan following the guidelines provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to assist local governments in meeting this requirement. Each local general plan is a long-range policy document intended to guide physical, economic, and environmental growth. The County's plan, which has been approved by the Board of Supervisors, expresses the County's vision for the future and serves as the roadmap for achieving each unincorporated community's desired quality of life. It is an assessment of current and future needs, and the resources required to implement the established goals and policies. As the needs of the County change, the Planning Department – with extensive citizen input, and review and recommendation by the Planning Commission – makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to amend the General Plan to reflect the direction for the future.

Purpose of the General Plan Annual Report and Housing Element Annual Report

The intent of the General Plan Annual Report is to demonstrate the County's compliance with the requirements of Government Code Sections 65400 and 65700 which mandate that the County prepare an annual report on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report describes planning activities that were in process in 2019 or are anticipated in the short-term planning horizon to achieve full consistency between general plan policies and County development regulations, as well as recent state legislation. This document does not create or alter policy; it is a reporting document. The content is provided for informational purposes only, and is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Guidelines Section 15306.

The Housing Element Annual Report provides information on the status of the housing element of the County's general plan and progress in its implementation using forms and definitions adopted by the Department of Housing and Community Development (State HCD). A copy of the General Plan Annual Report and the attached Annual Progress Report (APR) forms must be sent to OPR and to State HCD. Providing a copy of the APR forms to State HCD fulfills a statutory requirement to report certain housing information, including the County's progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing, as defined in state law.

THE ALAMEDA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Structure of the County General Plan

The County's General Plan consists of several documents described in more detail below. Three Area Plans – the Eden Area General Plan, the Castro Valley General Plan, and the East County Area Plan – contain land use and circulation elements for their respective geographic areas, as well as area-specific goals, policies, and actions pertaining to open space, conservation, safety, and noise. Each Area Plan also contains a land use diagram which designates the type, distribution and general intensity of land uses allowed within the plan area. The Eden Area comprises the communities of Ashland, Cherryland,

Hayward Acres, San Lorenzo, and Fairview. The Castro Valley Area includes the Castro Valley urban area and the surrounding canyonlands. The remaining unincorporated area makes up the East County. The countywide Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, and Scenic Route Elements contain goals, policies, and actions that apply to the entire unincorporated area.

Compliance with State Law and the General Plan Guidelines

State law mandates that each city and county adopt a general plan containing at least seven “required” elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, and Noise. In addition, Senate Bill 1000 (2016) requires cities and counties that have disadvantaged or low-income communities, as defined in the legislation, to incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans either in a separate element or by integrating related policies and objectives throughout the other elements. This update must happen “upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.” Staff is in the process of assessing how to best address these requirements in the County’s general plan and it is anticipated that work will begin on an environmental justice element in late 2020.

Additional “optional” elements may be included at the discretion of the local jurisdiction. Each local jurisdiction is allowed broad discretion with regard to how its general plan is organized. The general plan does not need to be arranged in seven or eight distinct elements as long as the content necessary for each of the required elements is included in the general plan. The table below indicates how the topics that are to be addressed in each of the required elements are distributed in the County’s general plan documents.

County General Plan Documents	Date of Last Major Revision	State Required Elements							
		Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Safety	Noise	Envir. Justice
AREA PLANS									
Castro Valley General Plan	March 2012	X	X		X	X	X	X	
East County Area Plan	May 2002	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Eden Area General Plan	March 2010	X	X		X	X	X	X	
COUNTYWIDE ELEMENTS									
Housing Element	May 2015			X					
Conservation Element	January 1976				X				
Open Space Element	May 1973					X			
Safety Element	January 2013						X		
Noise Element	January 1976							X	
Environmental Justice Element	<i>To begin 2020</i>								X
Ashland & Cherryland Community Health & Wellness Element	December 2015	Optional Element							
Community Climate Action Plan	February 2014	Optional Element							
Scenic Route Element	May 1966	Optional Element							
Park and Recreation Element	June 1956	Optional Element							
(An “X” indicates that the County document addresses topics related to the state required element.)									

GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The County General Plan is implemented through a variety of means, for example:

- Planning Department staff reviewing applications for development within the unincorporated area consult the land use designation for the subject site on the land use diagram in the appropriate Area Plan, as well as applicable goals, policies and programs in all general plan elements to ensure the development is consistent with the vision established in the General Plan for each unincorporated community.
- Planning staff preparing specific plans and planning-related ordinances ensure these documents are consistent with the General Plan prior to approval by the Board of Supervisors.
- As appropriate, specific programs, such as the Cooling Our Communities program described below, are implemented to address particular general plan policies or programs.
- County staff from other departments and agencies may take on responsibility for implementing certain general plan policies and programs when their implementation falls outside the purview of the Planning Department.
- General Plan policies are taken into consideration in the design of county projects, such as Public Works Agency infrastructure projects.

Relationship between the General Plan and Specific Plans

A specific plan is a tool for implementing the general plan. It establishes a link between policies of the general plan and individual development proposals by providing standards for development within a defined area. While a local jurisdiction has some discretion with regard to the issues addressed in a specific plan, the plans must comply with Government Code Section 65450 et seq. These provisions require that a specific plan be consistent with the adopted general plan. The County has adopted several specific plans for designated areas within the Unincorporated County.

Adopted County Specific Plans		
SPECIFIC PLAN	YEAR OF LAST MAJOR REVISION	CORRESPONDING AREA PLAN
Ashland and Cherryland Business District	2015	Eden Area General Plan
Castro Valley Central Business District	1992	Castro Valley General Plan
Fairview Area	1997	Eden Area General Plan
Madison Avenue	2006	Castro Valley General Plan
San Lorenzo Village	2004	Eden Area General Plan
Little Valley	1997	East County Area Plan

Specific Plans Undergoing Revision

For the past few years, staff has been working with Fairview residents to revise the Fairview Area Specific Plan to address the community’s concerns. A consultant completed a draft revised plan which was released for public review in the fall of 2019. Final approval of the revised plan is expected in the coming months. A consultant will also begin work soon to revise and update the Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan to bring the specific plan into conformance with the Castro Valley General Plan. A revised specific plan is expected to be completed in approximately two years. The San Lorenzo Village Specific Plan will be next in line for an update after completion of the Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan.

Cooling Our Communities

Cooling Our Communities is a heat preparedness climate change adaptation program initiated by the County Planning Department, Public Health Department, and General Services Agency Office of Sustainability; and funded by the Coastal Conservancy Climate Ready Grant Program. Cooling Our Communities implements Policy J.6. of the Ashland Cherryland Community Health and Wellness Element, which supports increased investment in trees to reduce the impacts of extreme heat resulting from climate change, and Measure G-1 of the Community Climate Action Plan, which promotes expanding the urban forest to sequester carbon and reduce building energy consumption. The program focuses on the unincorporated communities of Ashland, Cherryland, and Hayward Acres. It began in the spring of 2019 and will conclude by the end of 2020.

The objectives of the program are to:

- educate residents in the target communities and support their ability to respond to health impacts associated with increased heat as a result of climate change;
- make free shade trees and free tree planting services available to increase shade, reduce energy bills and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and help alleviate urban heat impacts; and
- build community capacity to adapt and develop resilience in response to heat impacts associated with climate change.

The Community Development team from Resources for Community Engagement (RCD), a local Community Based Organization, was engaged to prepare and implement a Community Engagement Strategy for the program. RCD has deep ties within the Ashland, Cherryland, and Hayward Acres communities, utilizing existing programs and relationships to ensure that the program is tailored to the communities' needs and delivers co-benefits, including supporting RCD's broader efforts to develop resident led civic engagement to improve health, economic, educational, and other social indicators in the community.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

Government Code Section 65358(b) generally limits amendments of the mandatory elements of a local jurisdiction's general plan to four times per calendar year. Each amendment may include more than one change to the general plan; therefore, local jurisdictions may group together several proposals for changes to be considered at the same meeting no more than four times during the year.

Amendments Adopted in 2019

Bed & Breakfast Inns

On May 21, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved amendments to Policy 344 and Program 125 of the East County Area Plan to facilitate amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance to enhance opportunities for the development of bed and breakfast inns in the South Livermore Valley Plan Area.

Innovative and Unconventional Housing Types

On September 24, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved amendments to the Castro Valley General Plan and the countywide Housing Element, in conjunction with amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance, to permit and regulate the development of innovative or unconventional housing types, such as tiny homes, to expand the County's ability to address the homelessness crisis in the unincorporated

area. The general plan and zoning ordinance amendments facilitated implementation of a pilot program at First Presbyterian Church in Castro Valley which included the development of six tiny homes to house homeless members of the community on the church site.

ANTICIPATED GENERAL PLAN PROJECTS 2020-2023

Resource Conservation, Open Space, and Agriculture Elements (ROSA)

The County is in the process of revising its Resource Conservation and Open Space Elements; and is developing a new optional Agriculture Element to the General Plan. These combined countywide elements will be known collectively as ROSA and will supersede the existing Conservation, Open Space, Park and Recreation, and Scenic Route Elements. Staff will continue to work with the consultant to update previous draft documents. Revised drafts should be ready for distribution to the public in the fall of 2020, at which time community meetings will be scheduled. Adoption of ROSA is expected to take place in late 2021.

Housing Element Update

State law requires each local jurisdiction to revise its housing element every eight years. All cities and counties within a region must update their housing elements on the same eight-year cycle. The next cycle for the Bay Area will be from 2022-2030. County staff will begin working on revision of the County's Housing Element later this year in order to complete the final document by the January 2023 deadline. The Housing Element must include an inventory of sites available for residential development and an estimate of the number of additional housing units that could be constructed on each parcel, based on the zoning, general plan designation, and physical conditions on the site; to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) assigned to the County. Recent state legislation placed substantial restrictions on the sites that can be included in the site inventory in future housing element updates. These restrictions include limits on the reuse of inventory sites not developed in the previous housing element cycle and the use of non-vacant sites, and are likely to significantly impact the County's ability to identify adequate sites to meet its RHNA obligation given the limited amount of vacant land available within the County's Urban Growth Boundary. In addition, the state has indicated that all local jurisdictions should expect to be assigned much higher RHNA numbers for the coming housing element cycle. A more detailed explanation of the County's current RHNA and progress toward meeting it is provided in the "Housing Element Implementation" section beginning on page 7 of this report.

Safety Element Revisions

To comply with Senate Bill 379 (2016), the County must revise the Safety Element of its General Plan to address climate adaptation and resilience in the unincorporated area of the County. As prescribed by SB 379, the Safety Element amendment process will require preparation of a vulnerability assessment to identify the risks climate change poses to the unincorporated area; adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives to respond to the identified risks; and implementation measures to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives. These Safety Element revisions must be completed at the same time as the revised Housing Element. In addition, SB 1241 (2012) requires that the County update its Safety Element to address the risk for fire on lands classified as State Responsibility Area (SRA) or very high fire hazard severity zones with each Housing Element revision.

Environmental Justice Element

SB 1000 (2016) requires cities and counties that have disadvantaged or low-income communities, as defined in the legislation, to incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans either in a separate element or by integrating related policies and objectives throughout the other elements. This update must happen “upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.” At a minimum, the environmental justice element must address seven topics specified in the legislation:

- Reduce pollution exposure and improve air quality
- Promote equitable access to public facilities
- Promote equitable food access
- Promote equitable access to safe and sanitary homes
- Promote equitable access to physical activity
- Promote “civil” engagement in the public decision-making process
- Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities

Since fall of 2019, Planning Department staff has been working with District 3 and District 4 Board Offices, the Alameda County Public Health Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, ALL IN Alameda County, and County Public Health Department staff to assess how to best address these new requirements in the County’s General Plan. Potential options being considered include the preparation of a countywide, multi-jurisdictional environmental justice element in collaboration with cities in the County.

Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP)

The CCAP outlines a course of action to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated within the unincorporated areas of the County. Successful implementation of the CCAP has reduced GHG emissions to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and set the County on a path toward reducing emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050, as required by AB 32. In February 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) as an optional element of the County General Plan. General plan element status gives the goals of the CCAP equal standing with those of all other general plan documents. Staff has made significant progress in the implementation of several of the CCAP measures, and over the last few years began pursuing grant funding to revise the CCAP to align the County’s GHG emission reduction goals with new state goals and to ensure that the County can meet the revised goals.

HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Housing Element Reporting Requirements

State law requires the County to prepare an annual progress report (APR) on the status of the housing element of its general plan and progress in its implementation using forms and definitions adopted by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (State HCD). Since 2017, state legislation added several new requirements which are included in the attached 2019 report. These new requirements include capturing and reporting information at all stages of the permit process and the steps the County is taking to implement the Housing Element. The attached APR contains information regarding housing development applications submitted, new construction activity, entitlements, permits, completed units, and progress toward fulfilling regional housing need at all affordability levels. The APR also includes the status of program implementation. The County is required to report on commercial development bonuses, units rehabilitated (preserved or acquired), and sites identified or rezoned to accommodate shortfall housing needs, however, there is no information to report in these categories for 2019.

A copy of the attached report must be sent to OPR and State HCD. Providing a copy to State HCD fulfills a statutory requirement to report certain housing information, including the County's progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing, as defined in Government Code Sections 65584 and 65583(c)(3).

Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The attached report addresses the County's residential building activities in 2019 and progress toward meeting its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) goals, and describes the County's progress in implementing its Housing Program as described in the adopted Housing Element. The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the unincorporated area of Alameda County for the current housing element planning period of 2015-2023 is 1,769 new housing units, an average of 253 units per year. This need is further segmented into four broad income categories: very-low income (430 units), low income (227 units), moderate-income (295 units), and above-moderate income (817 units). The County's progress toward meeting these goals is identified in Table B of the attached APR and is also summarized in the table below. The RHNA is based on estimates produced by the State Department of Finance (DOF) of the level of residential construction necessary to accommodate projected population growth during the planning period and to make up for current deficiencies in housing supply for existing residents. DOF determines the housing need for each region in the state and the Council of Governments for each region allocates a share of the regional housing need to each city and county in the region. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for determining the RHNA for each local jurisdiction in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The APR lists the housing units for which building permits were issued from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, and compares the number of building permits issued to the unincorporated County's share of regional housing need by income level for the current housing element period. During 2019, the County issued building permits for a total of 89 units, including 25 single family residences, 18 units in two to four-unit buildings, 20 multifamily units in buildings with 5 or more units, 20 accessory dwelling units, and 6 tiny homes. The table below shows that the number of remaining dwelling units needed to achieve the 2015-2023 RHNA is 1,286 units or 73% of the total RHNA units.

Residential Units Permitted by Affordability Level 2015-2023

Building/Project Type	Total Units	Units by Income Level			
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate
Single Family Residences	31	6			25
Two – Four Unit Buildings	18				18
Multifamily (5 or more units)	20				20
ADUs/Manufactured Home	20		20		
Substantial Rehabilitation	0				
RHNA Credits, 2019	89	6	20	0	63
RHNA Credits, prior years	394	120	87	21	166
Total RHNA Credits, 2015-2023	483	126	107	21	229
RHNA	1,769	430	227	295	817
Remaining RHNA	1,286	304	120	274	588
Percent Met	27%	30%	47%	7%	28%
Percent Remaining	73%	70%	53%	93%	72%

Source: ABAG, *Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2015*; Alameda County Department of Public Works, Building Inspections Division for the number of dwelling units assumed to be constructed during the period January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019. Primary unit income categories based on a household of four members and the secondary units are based on a household of two members. All units’ income categories are based on four-person area median income, which is annually revised by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Table A2 of the attached APR lists three multi-family developments, totaling 298 units, which were issued entitlements by the Planning Department in 2019 but have not yet been issued building permits. A 79-unit affordable housing development on East 14th Street in Ashland was approved under SB 35 streamlining. The Village Green development on Hesperian Boulevard in San Lorenzo will include 163 units of market rate housing and Cherryland Place, at the corner of Mission Boulevard and Hampton Road in Cherryland, will provide 56 market rate units.

Table D of the APR describes the status of 30 implementation programs included in the housing element to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing. The County is required to list sites that have been identified or rezoned to accommodate the County’s shortfall housing needs in Table C of the attached APR. This includes no net loss of housing inventory, the unaccommodated need for adequate housing sites to address the unmet RHNA by income category. The County has no data to report in Table C, Table E, in which developments that received commercial development bonuses are required to be listed; nor in Table F, in which units that have been substantially rehabilitated, converted from non-affordable to affordable by acquisition, and preserved must be listed.

Affordability Determination

Housing affordability for each income category was determined using the Housing Affordability Calculator provided on the State HCD website (<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/index.shtml>). According to State HCD, a housing expense is generally considered affordable when less than 30 percent of a household’s gross income is used for housing. In addition to rent or mortgage payments, housing expense can include property taxes, private mortgage insurance, homeowner’s insurance, maintenance, and utilities. In Alameda County in 2019, a moderate income for a household of four was calculated to be \$134,050 per year (120% of the area median income

of \$111,700). Thirty percent of the gross monthly income for a household of four earning \$134,050 would be \$3,351. Thirty percent of the gross monthly income for a low income household of four earning \$98,550 per year would be \$2,464. The following table contains the 2019 income limits for Alameda County calculated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

County	Income Category	Number of Persons in Household							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Alameda County Area Median Income: \$111,700	Extremely Low	26050	29750	33450	37150	40150	43100	46100	49050
	Very Low Income	43400	49600	55800	61950	66950	71900	76850	81800
	Low Income	69000	78850	88700	98550	106450	114350	122250	130100
	Median Income	78200	89350	100550	111700	120650	129550	138500	147450
	Moderate Income	93850	107250	120650	134050	144750	155500	166200	176950

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Since 2016, the state legislature has passed several bills intended to reduce restrictions on the development of ADUs. As a result of the legislation, the Planning Department has seen a substantial increase in the number of inquiries and applications for ADUs throughout the unincorporated area. In 2016, only one ADU was approved in the unincorporated area; in 2018, eight ADUs received building permits; and in 2019, permits were approved for 20 ADUs.

ADUs offer benefits that address common development barriers such as affordability and provide housing units for singles, couples, small families, young professionals, and seniors. Due to their relatively low cost to develop and small size compared to other types of housing, ADUs are often affordable to very low or low income households. With interest in ADUs increasing into 2020, the Planning Department anticipates that ADUs will continue to add to the diversity of the County’s housing stock.

CONCLUSION

The County’s 2019 APR complies with the submission requirements in State law and is consistent with the guidelines set forth by State HCD regarding implementation of the Housing Element. The Planning Department will continue to track the County’s progress in implementing the major programs in the various elements of the Housing Element.