



EL DORADO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This Housing Element embodies El Dorado County's plan for addressing the housing needs of residents of unincorporated areas of the county through June 2013. The element was cooperatively prepared by the El Dorado County Development Services and Human Services Departments, with vital assistance from the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) must review and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors must independently approve this Housing Element. Once approved, the element becomes part of the County's General Plan.

This element is divided into five sections plus two appendices, as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Housing Assessment and Needs
- Section 3: Housing Constraints
- Section 4: Housing Resources and Opportunities
- Section 5: Housing Goals, Policies, and Implementation Program

Appendix A contains an evaluation of the previous Housing Element and Appendix B contains the residential land inventories.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Housing element law, enacted in 1969, mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. Specifically, the law states that counties and cities must prepare and implement housing elements that, along with federal and state programs, will help the state attain the following housing goal:

The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every Californian, including farmworkers, is a priority of the highest order.
(Government Code Section 65581[a])

The law recognizes that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required to contribute to the attainment of the state housing goal, provided such a determination is compatible with the state housing goal and regional housing needs.

The Legislature recognizes that in carrying out this responsibility, each local government also has the responsibility to consider economic, environmental, and fiscal factors; community goals set forth in its general plan; and to cooperate with other local governments and the state in addressing regional housing needs. Housing policy in the state rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and, in particular, local housing elements.

Pursuant to state law, each county governing body is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county. General plans are mandated to require seven elements, one of which is the housing element. Housing elements must be updated once every five years.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ELEMENT

State law (Government Code Section 65583) requires that housing elements include:

- A. **Housing Needs Assessment and Quantified Objectives:** California law requires that HCD project statewide housing needs and then allocate the statewide need to each region in the state. Housing and Community Development provided the regional data to SACOG, which distributed the Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) to cities and counties within the SACOG region.

El Dorado County must independently assess existing housing needs within the community through analysis of population characteristics, housing conditions, and special housing needs (e.g., disabled, elderly, homeless populations).

After the needs assessment is complete, the County must develop quantified objectives for new construction, rehabilitation, and conserved units by income category (i.e., very low, lower, moderate, and above moderate) to make sure that both the existing and the projected future housing needs are met, consistent with the County's share of the regional housing needs allocation.

- B. **Site Inventory Analysis:** The County must compile relevant information on the zoning, acres, density ranges, availability of services and infrastructure, and dwelling unit capacity of sites that are suitable for residential development within the planning period.
- C. **Governmental and Nongovernmental Constraints:** The County must identify and analyze impediments to the development of housing for all income levels.
- D. **Review of the Previous Housing Element:** The County must review the actual results of the goals, objectives, policies, and programs adopted in the previous housing element, and analyze the differences between what was projected and what was achieved.
- E. **Housing Goals and Objectives:** The County must develop housing programs and quantified objectives that meet local housing goals and fulfill HCD requirements.

BACKGROUND

The County's previous Housing Element was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on July 19, 2004, but not certified by HCD due to the finding that the County's Housing Element had not

addressed the impacts or included specific measures to mitigate the impacts of Measure Y, now Policy TC-Xa(4). The 2004 Housing Element addresses regional housing needs for the period 2003-2008, as allocated by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Pursuant to state law, the County is scheduled to adopt a new Housing Element by July 2008. The cities of South Lake Tahoe and Placerville are on the same schedule for completion of their updated Housing Elements.

Housing Responsibility in El Dorado County

Several County departments and approving bodies are responsible for ensuring implementation of the Housing Element. The El Dorado County Housing Authority, which is part of the Department of Human Services, provides housing assistance through a number of programs. The County Housing Authority also provides housing assistance to the residents of the cities of Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. The Planning Services Department reviews and applies County regulations to housing development proposals. The Building Services Department, Environmental Management Department, and Department of Transportation work with Planning Services to ensure that homes are built safely and in a manner consistent with applicable codes and regulations. Finally, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Zoning Administrator make decisions regarding the location and extent of housing, consistent with the General Plan and County Code.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS PLAN

The state initiates housing element cycles by calculating statewide housing needs. The Department of Housing and Community Development evaluates the overall need and distributes regional needs to Councils of Governments representing various regions (or counties) of the state. The Councils of Governments then allocate housing needs to jurisdictions that they represent. As noted above, El Dorado County is member of SACOG, which acts as the Council of Government for a six-county region (Sacramento, Yolo, Yuba, Placer, Sutter, and El Dorado Counties).

Consistent with state law (Government Code Section 65584), SACOG prepared and adopted a Regional Housing Needs Plan (RHNP) in 2007. The 2007 RHNP allocates, by jurisdiction, the “fair share” of the region’s projected housing needs by household income group through 2013. The RHNP also identifies and quantifies existing housing needs for each jurisdiction, including unincorporated El Dorado County. The 2007 RHNP replaces El Dorado County’s allocation as outlined in SACOG’s 2002 RHNP. As it developed regional needs, SACOG considered factors such as market demand for housing, employment opportunities, availability of suitable sites and public facilities, loss of existing affordable units, and special housing needs. The Department of Housing and Community Development provides guidelines for preparation of the plans, and ultimately certifies the plans as adequate.

The major goal of the RHNP is to assure a fair distribution of housing targets among cities and counties so that every community provides an opportunity for a mix of housing affordable to all of its economic segments. SACOG has distributed the unincorporated El Dorado County RHNA by “East Slope” (Tahoe National Forest Area and Lake Tahoe Basin) and West Slope.”

INCOME LEVELS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Throughout this element, housing affordability is addressed in terms of five income levels: extremely low, very low, low, moderate, and above moderate. These are defined as:

- Extremely Low: households with incomes that do not exceed 30 percent of the area median family income (MFI).
- Very Low: households with incomes that do not exceed 50 percent of the area median family income (MFI).
- Lower: households with incomes greater than 50 percent but no more than 80 percent of the MFI.
- Moderate: households with incomes greater than 80 percent but no more than 120 percent of the MFI.
- Above Moderate: households with incomes greater than 120 percent of the MFI.

Throughout this document, references to “low income” mean the extremely low, very low and lower income groups combined.

Because low-income households are severely limited in their ability to pay for housing, they typically need to rely on high-density or multifamily housing. In many cases, low-income households need subsidized housing due to the gap between what they can afford and the cost of market-rate housing. A detailed discussion of housing affordability is in Section 2 under “Housing Affordability.”

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Opportunities for residents to provide input on housing issues and to recommend strategies is critical to the development of appropriate and effective housing programs. In order to facilitate this process, 8 public workshops and one public hearing were held during the development of the Housing Element and input was solicited from all economic groups through outreach to individuals and organizations that play a key role in providing local housing opportunities and social services. To notice these meetings, the County published legal notices in county newspapers, sent notices to persons who indicated that they wanted to be noticed, and posted announcements on the County website, and at county offices, libraries, and post offices.

All of the workshops were to inform the community of State Housing Law requirements, to gather information on existing conditions, and to discuss local concerns. A presentation was made at each meeting detailing each of these items. One of these workshops was held in South Lake Tahoe to discuss housing issues of particular concern in the Lake Tahoe Basin. The other workshops were held in Placerville, Greenwood, El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, and FairPlay. Verbal comments were recorded at the meetings, and written comments were also received.

In March 2008, the draft housing goals and policies were released to the public and posted on the County website. Hearings to receive comments on the proposed goals and policies were held before the El Dorado County Planning Commission on March 27, 2008 and the Board of Supervisors on April 1, 2008.

All of the input received at the workshops and at the hearing has been considered and incorporated into the Housing Element, where appropriate.

Public outreach will continue throughout the completion and adoption of the element. At least two additional public hearings will be scheduled before the Board of Supervisors (one on the Draft Housing Element, and one to adopt the Housing Element following review by Sate HCD).

CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN

The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory elements of the El Dorado County General Plan that was last updated in 2004. The purpose of the Housing Element is to support and increase the supply of housing affordable to lower income households by providing guidance in the development of future plans, procedures, and programs and by removing governmental constraints to housing. To this end, the Housing Element has detailed goals, policies, and specific measures. However, under state law, the entire general plan is required to be “internally consistent” meaning that all elements of the plan have equal legal status and no policy within the General Plan can directly conflict with another. Without consistency, the General Plan cannot effectively serve as a guide to future development.

The Housing Element is closely related to development policies contained in the Land Use Element, which establishes the location, type, intensity and distribution of land uses throughout the city. The Land Use Element determines the number and type of housing units that can be constructed in the various land use districts. Areas designated for commercial and industrial uses create employment opportunities, which in turn, create demand for housing.

External factors affect the adequacy of housing, including the quality of public services, aesthetics and visual characteristics, and proximity to related land uses. For example, the location of housing determines the extent of school, park, library, police, fire and other services associated with housing. The Housing Element builds upon the other General Plan Elements and is consistent with the policies and proposals set forth by the Plan.