



## **Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County**

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**Housing Element Web Page:** [www.hlcsmc.org/zoneforhomes](http://www.hlcsmc.org/zoneforhomes)

# **PLAN AND ZONE FOR HOMES**

## **Recommended Strategies for a Successful Housing Element**

*based on HLC's Housing Policy Platform & Endorsement Guidelines*

Cities and towns throughout San Mateo County, as well as the County itself, are currently updating the Housing Elements of their General Plans. A well-constructed Housing Element lays out a viable strategy to create more homes at all affordability levels. This process is a crucial one, because a well-crafted Housing Element provides guidance to the jurisdiction for many years at a time.

HLC encourages cities and the county to prioritize the following list of strategies and programs as city and county planning staff, planning commissioners, and elected officials develop, adopt, and implement their Housing Elements:

### **Identify Viable Sites for Development**

- Jurisdictions should identify sites for homes at all affordability levels, and provide ample sites for multifamily zoning.
- "Accessory Units" should be permissible by-right, but **should not** be considered an adequate replacement for identifying vacant or underutilized sites for other development.

### **Provide Financial Support for Affordable Development**

- Jurisdictions should commit to consideration of commercial linkage or jobs/housing linkage fees.
- Jurisdictions should consider the 20% housing set-aside required by redevelopment law to be a floor, not a ceiling.
- Jurisdictions should partner with the Housing Endowment And Regional Trust (HEART) to identify and secure dedicated sources of local and state revenue for housing.

### **Identify and Reduce Local Constraints to Home Development**

- Jurisdictions should reduce or waive development fees for affordable homes.
- Permit application and project approvals should be streamlined and standardized.
- Jurisdictions should reduce parking requirements for affordable developments, especially in locations near public transit.

### **Develop Mixed-Income Neighborhoods**

- Jurisdictions should require new development to meet inclusionary or mixed-income standards, and offer flexibility to developers as they meet those standards.
- Jurisdictions should identify—and where possible reserve—specific sites for affordable development as neighborhoods are built or redeveloped.

### **Plan for Vibrant, Sustainable, Communities That Meet Tomorrow's Needs**

- Jurisdictions should anticipate increased transit use, walking, and bicycling by using increased densities, mixed-use zoning and rezoning of commercial areas to allow for residential uses.
- Jurisdictions should anticipate and plan for the needs of a growing population of seniors.
- Jurisdictions should prioritize the reuse of land within close proximity of transportation corridors, and ensure that new development in these areas is highly accessible to transit.