

City of Sonoma

# Housing Element Update 2009-2014

*Prepared by:*

*City of Sonoma*

*Karen Warner Associates*

*Metropolitan Planning Group*

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## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

*“Sonoma is a beautiful, environmentally friendly, and safe place, widely recognized as one of the most desirable cities in Northern California to live, visit, and do business. Ours is a diverse community where residents and their children can and want to remain”* (Vision Statement from Sonoma 2020 General Plan)

As set forth in the General Plan, the City Council’s vision for 2020 includes:

- *Innovative, creative and sustainably-designed development respects the availability of natural resources and enhances the scale, character, and natural setting of the community.*
- *The community’s history and its role as a cultural center are enhanced through public art, special events, and careful preservation of historic features.*
- *A vibrant, entrepreneurial economy is fueled largely by retention and incubation of locally-owned businesses that complement the small-town atmosphere and provide high paying jobs.*
- *Housing is available and affordable to the residents and the local workforce to support an economically diverse population.*
- *Creeks, trees, other natural features are valued and preserved, and open space and agricultural lands are protected—both in and around the city.*
- *Residents have access to a variety of high-quality recreational opportunities.*
- *Walking and bicycling are safe and the use of clean-fuel transit is popular. Traffic congestion is mitigated.*
- *Residents enjoy peace, quiet, and security, as well as efficient, high-quality public services.*
- *The City enjoys productive relationships with neighboring communities to effectively address regional issues, including planning, service provision and capital improvements.*

During public workshops in preparation of this Housing Element, several themes emerged: promoting

economic and social diversity, encouraging creative and innovative housing typologies, retaining architectural character, and a deep sense of responsibility for recognizing water constraints and other environmental impacts of development. Although focused on housing, the themes and directions that emerged from the community workshops were remarkably consistent with the overall General Plan vision statement.

Recently, the City has been made aware of serious potential constraints related to water supply in Sonoma that, unless resolved, could jeopardize the City’s ability to fully meet the targets for the additional housing units identified in this Housing Element. The Sonoma County Water Agency has informed the City that there is uncertainty in the Agency’s ability to provide water supply to its water contractors beyond its existing Russian River water diversion permit amount of 75,000 acre-feet per year (AFY). The Agency no longer intends to pursue a water supply project that would have allowed it to divert 100,000 AFY from the Russian River in order to meet commitments to its contractors, including the City of Sonoma, for projected demand. As a result of this change in direction on the part of the Water Agency, the City needs to revisit its strategy for meeting its projected long-term water needs. Until an updated strategy has been developed, there is uncertainty as to the City’s ability to meet projected water demand associated with General Plan buildout.

Another potentially serious constraint on the City’s ability to implement programs for affordable housing is the repeated raids by the State of California on local redevelopment funds as a means of mitigating the on-going State budget crisis. The Low-Moderate Housing fund of the City’s redevelopment program is the main source of revenue for the City’s affordable housing funds. The most recent taking of redevelopment funds will cost Sonoma approximately \$1.9 million and the City borrowed these funds from the Low-Moderate Income Housing Fund in order to make the required payment. Although these funds will be paid back in future years, this could harm the City’s ability to pursue affordable housing programs for several years.

## ROLE OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT

State law recognizes the vital role local governments play in the availability, adequacy and affordability of housing. Every jurisdiction in California is required to adopt a long-range General Plan to guide its physical development; the Housing Element is one of the seven mandated elements of the General Plan. Housing Element law mandates that local governments adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The law recognizes that in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain housing production. Housing Element statutes also require the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to review local housing elements for compliance with State law and to report their findings to the local government.

California's Housing Element law requires that each city and county develop local housing programs to meet their "fair share" of existing and future housing needs for all income groups. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for developing and assigning these "Regional Housing Need Allocations," or "RHNA", to Bay Area jurisdictions. Pursuant to the RHNA planning period, the Sonoma Housing Element is a five-year plan extending from 2009-2014. Because Housing Element updates are tied to the RHNA cycle, they are not always synchronized with major updates of the other elements of the General Plan, which tend to occur less frequently.

Sonoma's 2009-2014 Housing Element identifies strategies and programs that focus on:

- Providing a mix of housing types affordable to all income levels, consistent with community and regional needs.

- Improving housing affordability for both renters and homeowners in Sonoma.
- Maintaining and enhancing the existing housing stock and ensuring that new residential development is consistent with Sonoma's town character and with neighborhood quality.
- Reducing governmental constraints on the maintenance, improvement and development of housing while maintaining community character.
- Promoting equal housing opportunities for all residents, including Sonoma's special needs populations, so that residents can reside in the housing of their choice.
- Linking environmental and affordability incentives to ensure Sonoma grows in a responsible manner, in line with resource limitations such as water availability.

The Housing Element consists of the following:

- A summary of the City's existing and projected housing needs;
- An assessment of land, financial and administrative resources available to address Sonoma's housing needs;
- A Housing Plan to address the City's identified housing needs, including housing goals, policies, and programs; and
- A Technical Background Report consisting of a detailed housing needs assessment, an analysis of constraints to housing production and affordability, and an evaluation of the City's progress in implementing the housing programs established in the 2002 Housing Element.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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Sonoma has made a diligent effort to engage a cross section of the public in the Housing Element update process. During development of the draft Element, two public workshops were held, followed by joint Planning Commission and City Council study sessions open to the public. The workshops were noticed in advance via email to interested parties, notice on the city website, and direct letters to groups with an interest in housing issues and those representing special needs populations. Representatives from the Planning Commission, Design Review Board, La Luz farmworkers organization, and North Bay Housing Coalition were present at one or both public workshops.

The first workshop focused on presenting background information on the Housing Element process and the City's Housing Needs, and asked participants for feedback on their perception of Sonoma's housing and community strengths and weaknesses. Participants provided valuable feedback verbally and through an anonymous questionnaire. The second workshop, held six weeks later, focused on brainstorming and vetting policy ideas. Attendees divided into groups covering different topic areas and recorded their housing policy suggestions as other attendees in the topic group provided comments on each idea. The small topic groups then prepared a list of their top ideas, which were presented to all workshop attendees and voted upon.

Summaries of public comments received during the workshops are attached in Appendix A2. In the first session, public comments included the importance of preserving local character, the need to increase the rental supply, linking environmental and housing considerations, and the differing housing needs for specific special needs populations. At the second workshop, ideas that received support or were widely discussed included: a green housing ordinance, focusing density on the Broadway corridor, sweat equity housing, multifamily housing for disabled persons, a first time home buyer program, and supporting co-housing or shared, clustered housing types.

The results of the two public workshops formed the basis for the Community Consensus Report. This Consensus Report presents the policy ideas inspired by public comment, organized under the following five goals: Housing Production, Housing Affordability, Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, Removal of Governmental Constraints, and Equal Housing Opportunities/Special Needs. The Community Consensus Report was presented to a Joint City Council-Planning Commission session in March 2009 to garner feedback from Sonoma's decision-makers prior to drafting the Housing Element.

Letters received from the Sonoma County Housing Coalition and the Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless urged the City to take an active role in development of affordable housing, including units for extremely low income households.

This Housing Element Update is thus firmly rooted in public input, which provided policy direction as well as partnerships and ideas extending beyond this document. At the suggestion of public comment at the Joint Study Session, City staff decided to conduct a future survey of local businesses to determine where local employees live. Such information can help better target housing types to assist Sonoma workers in living in Sonoma. La Luz and North Bay Housing Coalition both expressed an interest in participating in potential alliances for housing issues in Sonoma. North Bay Housing provided further insight about specific housing needs of disabled populations and has explicitly expressed a desire to partner with the City in addressing these housing needs, as the organization manages small facilities in other communities around the Bay Area. The public workshops indicated that Sonoma residents encourage the City to take an active role in promoting alternative housing types such as cooperative housing and alternative building methods.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The 2009-2014 Housing Element is one of the seven elements of Sonoma’s comprehensive General Plan. The Plan consists of the following elements: Community Development, Local Economy, Environmental Resources, Circulation, Public Safety, Noise, and Housing. The six elements aside from the Housing Element were updated in 2006 when the City of Sonoma 2020 General Plan was completed.

The Housing Element builds upon the other General Plan Elements and is consistent with the policies set

forth in those elements. For example, the Community Development Element establishes base densities for the implementation of a 25 percent density bonus for development of affordable units, while the Housing Element sets forth specific criteria for granting density bonuses, such as household income levels and requirements for maintaining long-term affordability. Whenever any Element of the General Plan is amended in the future, the Housing Element will be reviewed and modified, if necessary, to ensure continued consistency between elements.

## HOUSING NEEDS SUMMARY

Surrounded by agricultural land, the City of Sonoma has used growth management tools to prevent urban sprawl and preserve the surrounding landscape. Most new residential development in Sonoma occurs as infill, including multi-family developments within and adjoining commercial districts and single-family development on larger parcels within and adjoining established low-density neighborhoods. The City is committed to providing housing for all segments of the population, as well as retaining its small town feel and agricultural heritage. This section presents a summary of Sonoma’s existing and future housing needs as identified in the Housing Element Technical Report (Appendix A1). That report provides a more detailed analysis of local demographic, household, and housing characteristics and trends in an effort to determine the nature and extent of specific housing needs in Sonoma.

**Table H-1: Existing Housing Needs**

<i>Housing Availability</i>		<i>Housing Affordability</i>	
Vacancy Rate <sup>1</sup>	6.3%	Overpaying Households	1,440 (38%)
		Renter	767 (46%)
		Owner	673 (31%)
<i>Housing Adequacy</i>		<i>Special Needs Households/ Persons</i>	
Overcrowded Households	58 (1%)	Households with Seniors	1,700 (40%)
Renter	38 (2%)	Disabled Persons	1,850 (22%)
Owner	20 (1%)	Female-Headed Families	371 (8%)
		Large Households	172 (4%)
		Homeless Persons <sup>2</sup>	9 (<1%)
		Agricultural Workers	36 (<1%)

Sources: 2000 Census unless otherwise noted

<sup>1</sup> State Department of Finance 2008 – Population and Housing Estimates

<sup>2</sup> 2007 Sonoma County Homeless Survey

**Note:**

Overpayment is defined as paying greater than 30% of gross income towards housing costs.

Overcrowding is defined as greater than 1.01 persons per room, excluding kitchens, bathrooms, and hallways.



## EXISTING HOUSING NEEDS

The following summary of existing housing needs is organized into four areas: housing availability, housing affordability, housing adequacy and special needs households. These needs are summarized in Table H-1.

### Housing Availability

Sonoma's 2008 housing stock consists of 5,218 housing units, of which 71 percent are single-family attached and detached units; 21 percent are multi-family apartment and condominium units, duplexes and triplexes; and 8 percent are mobile homes. The City's housing stock grew moderately between 2000 and 2008, with 12 percent total growth, the same as in the previous decade. Vacancies indicate the demand and availability of housing. According to 2008 State Department of Finance statistics, the City's overall vacancy rate was just 6.3 percent, slightly higher than the accepted standard of 5 percent vacancy for rentals and 3 percent ideal for ownership units. The recent economic downturn and the associated potential job losses may increase residential vacancies and slow the demand for ownership housing.

During the six month period from October 2008 to March 2009, a total of 49 homes were sold in Sonoma. About 80 percent, or 39 units were single-family homes, and 20 percent, or 10 units were condominiums. The median single-family home price was \$427,000, and the median priced condominium was \$360,000.

The rental market is comprised primarily of apartment units. Most of the apartment rental stock consists of one- and two-bedroom units, with approximate rent ranges of \$750-1,100 and \$1,000-1,500, respectively. Few three bedroom rental units are available, thus limiting the rental options for large family households. Three bedroom units command rents of \$1,500 and upwards. These rental ranges consider the City and the immediate surrounding area to the north.



### Housing Affordability

The level of overpayment for housing is commonly used as a measure of housing affordability. Overpayment is defined as spending more than 30 percent of gross household income on housing. By this standard, 46 percent of renters and 31 percent of homeowners in Sonoma overpaid for housing in 2000. While overpayment rates are similar to the Countywide average for homeowners, the rate of overpayment for the City's renter households is five percent above that of the County. Rental overpayment is particularly significant among the City's senior households, with 45 percent spending more than half their incomes on rent, considered a "severe" cost burden.

An assessment of 2009 market rents and sales prices in Sonoma reveals the following. Citywide median rents are well above the level affordable to very low income households (50% AMI), pricing many of the community's very low income occupations—such as housekeepers, waiters, childcare workers, and agricultural workers—out of the rental market. In contrast, most low income households (80% AMI) can afford the median apartment rent in Sonoma. Single-family home prices in Sonoma are beyond the reach of moderate income households (110% AMI), although with the decline in housing prices, the affordability gap has narrowed to under \$85,000 for the median priced two and three bedroom home (refer to Table 24 in Technical Report). Median condominium sales prices are not within the level of affordability to moderate income households, indicating downpayment assistance programs can be particularly effective in the current market. While home foreclosures are not as prevalent in Sonoma as in the more urban areas of the County, a growing number of residents are at-risk of defaulting on their

mortgages and potentially losing their homes, particularly as variable rate mortgages continue to reset through 2010. As of June 2010, 63 properties within the City were in some stage of foreclosure (including 16 units in preforeclosure).

## Housing Adequacy

Housing in Sonoma tends to be in relatively good condition. A general rule in the housing industry is that structures over 30 years typically begin to show signs of deterioration and require reinvestment to maintain/upgrade their quality. Unless properly maintained, homes older than 50 years often require major renovations to remain in good working order. Housing age is generally a good estimate of housing stock quality, although perhaps less so in a community like Sonoma that has a significant historic identity and strong historic preservation efforts. By 2010, approximately 3,000 housing units will have reached the 30 year age threshold, over half the City's housing stock. About 23 percent of the City's housing will reach the 50 year age threshold in 2010.

The level of household overcrowding is another indicator of housing adequacy and quality. Overcrowding occurs when a household is too large for a particular housing unit. When overcrowding happens, it tends to accelerate the deterioration of homes. The 2000 Census documented only 58 Sonoma households were overcrowded, of which 38 were renters and 20 owners. These overcrowding rates are relatively low, representing just 2 percent of renters and 1 percent of owners, indicating that overcrowding is not a significant issue in Sonoma.

## Special Needs Groups

Certain segments of the community may have particular difficulties in finding decent, affordable housing because of their special needs and circumstances. In Sonoma, these special needs groups include the elderly, disabled persons, female-headed families with children, large households, agricultural workers and the homeless. The types of housing issues faced by these groups vary widely. The data below is from the 2000 Census unless otherwise noted.

- **Seniors:** Seniors typically have special housing needs due to three concerns: limited/fixed income, higher health care costs, and physical limitations. Nearly 40 percent of Sonoma's

households (1,703) have one or more persons age 65 years and older, making seniors the most significant special needs group in the community. Approximately two-thirds of the City's elderly households are homeowners. Because of physical and/or other limitations, senior homeowners may have difficulty in performing regular home maintenance or repair activities. Elderly renters also have significant housing needs related to limited incomes, particularly relevant in Sonoma where half of elderly renters earn very low incomes. About two-thirds of Sonoma's elderly renter households overpay for housing.

- **Disabled Persons:** Physical and mental disabilities can hinder access to traditionally designed housing units (and other facilities) as well as potentially limit the ability to earn income. Disabilities refer to mental, physical, or health conditions that last over six months. The 2000 Census documented 1,857 persons with a disability in Sonoma, representing 20 percent of the population 16 years old and above; seniors comprise half of this disabled population. About 40 percent of working age disabled individuals in Sonoma are not employed. An estimated two percent of the general population is estimated to have a developmental disability, translating to approximately 200 individuals in Sonoma.
- **Female-Headed Families with Children:** Female-headed households with children require special consideration and assistance as a result of their greater need for affordable housing, accessible day care, health care, and other supportive services. Sonoma is home to 371 female-headed households, of which 177 are with children under 18 years of age (2000 Census). These households are particularly vulnerable because they must balance the needs of their children with work responsibilities. Approximately 15 percent of female-headed families with children under 18 live in poverty.

- **Large Households:** Large households are defined as those with five or more members and typically consist of mostly families with children. Lower-income large households often live in overcrowded conditions because of the income limitations and the limited supply of affordable housing units with three or more bedrooms. Sonoma is home to 172 large households, representing just four percent of total households in the City. Of these large households, 20 percent, or 34 households, are renters; none of Sonoma's large renter households are lower income. While Sonoma has an adequate supply of large rental units to address the needs of its large families, vacancies can be limited.
- **Homeless:** Homelessness continues to be one of most visible reminders of the pressing needs facing families and individuals in marginal economic, housing, and health conditions. This population consists of a wide range of persons and families suffering from domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, and joblessness, among a number of other conditions. The 2007 Sonoma County Survey identified 1,974 homeless persons in the County, and nine homeless persons in the City. The recently constructed City homeless/emergency shelter at the police station site, managed by the non-profit group Sonoma Overnight Shelter (SOS), is the primary resource for homeless persons. SOS provides temporary shelter and staff assists individuals in finding longer-term, transitional housing in the region.

## FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

Future housing needs refer to the share of the region’s housing need that has been allocated to a community. In brief, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) calculates future housing need based upon household growth forecasts, plus a certain amount of units needed to account for a normal and appropriate level of vacancies and the replacement of units that are normally lost to conversion or demolition. In allocating the region’s future housing needs to jurisdictions, ABAG is required to take the following factors into consideration:

- Water and sewer capacity
- Land suitable for urban development or conversion to residential use
- Protected open space – lands protected by state and federal government
- County policies to protect prime agricultural land
- Distribution of household growth
- Market demand for housing
- City-centered growth policies
- Loss of units in assisted housing developments
- High housing cost burdens
- Impact of universities and colleges on housing needs in a community

In 2008 ABAG developed its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) based on forecasts contained in Projections 2007: Forecasts for the San Francisco Bay Area to the Year 2035. ABAG’s allocation formula of the region’s projected housing growth is based on the following factors and weights:

- Household growth (45%)
- Existing employment (22.5%)
- Employment growth (22.5%)
- Household growth near existing transit (5%)
- Employment growth near existing transit (5%)

ABAG’s goals in the weighting of these factors include: 1) directing housing units to areas where local governments are planning growth; 2) planning for housing in tandem with jobs growth and

addressing existing jobs-housing imbalances; 3) directing housing to communities with transit infrastructure; and 4) minimizing housing growth in outlying areas, thereby reducing pressures on open space and agricultural lands.

As per ABAG’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation for the planning period of 2009-2014, Sonoma County has a future regional housing need of 13,650 units, of which 1,364 are in unincorporated areas in the County. The County has not divided its housing allocation among the five districts that comprise Sonoma County. However, as per the Permits and Resource Management Department in the County of Sonoma, Sonoma County’s housing site inventory identifies sites in the unincorporated area of Sonoma Valley as having a combined maximum development potential during this planning period of 131 units. These sites are located within the Valley’s unincorporated communities, as well as areas zoned for agriculture and rural residential uses located between Agua Caliente and Eldridge, and scattered parcels located north of Glen Ellen.

According to ABAG, Sonoma’s share of future regional housing needs is a total of 353 new units over the 2009-2014 planning period. These units are divided among affordability levels/income levels as follows:

Very Low-income:	73 (21%)
Low-income:	55 (16%)
Moderate-income:	69 (19%)
<u>Above Moderate-income:</u>	<u>156 (44%)</u>
<b>Total Need:</b>	<b>353</b>

*Note: An estimated half of Sonoma’s 73 very low income unit need is for extremely low income units (37 units).*

Through this Housing Element, the City is required to demonstrate the availability of adequate sites to accommodate these projected new units.

# HOUSING RESOURCES

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The following section presents the resources available for the development, rehabilitation and preservation of housing in Sonoma. The section begins with an overview of the availability of land resources, or residential sites, for future housing development in Sonoma and the adequacy of these sites to address the City's identified share of future housing needs. This section also presents the financial resources available

to support in the provision of affordable housing in the community, and specifically identifies funding amounts, such as the approximately \$1.2 million per year in housing set-aside funds generated by Sonoma's Community Development Agency. The final part of the section is an overview of energy conservation and green building resources available to the City and its residents.

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## AVAILABILITY OF SITES FOR HOUSING

ABAG has determined the projected housing need for its region for the 2009-2014 Housing Element cycle, and has allocated this housing need to each jurisdiction by income category. This Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) represents the minimum number of housing units each community is required to plan for by providing "adequate sites" through the general plan and zoning. An important component of the Housing Element is the identification of adequate sites for future housing development, and evaluation of the adequacy of these sites in fulfilling the City's share of regional housing needs (RHNA). Sonoma has a RHNA allocation of 353 units distributed among the following income groups: 73 very low income; 55 low income; 69 moderate income; and 156 above moderate income units.

The City plans to fulfill its share of regional housing needs using a combination of the following methods:

- Focused development on opportunity sites
- Development of secondary dwelling units
- Residential permits issued during the RHNA "gap period" (January 2007 – December 2008)

In aggregate, Sonoma's residential sites capacity from the above sources provides for 688 additional units, including sites suitable for development of 423 lower income units; 33 moderate income units; and 232 above moderate income units, reviewed in detail in the following narrative.

### General Plan Site Capacity

A major goal of Sonoma's 2020 General Plan is to provide a diversity of housing types available and affordable to residents and the local workforce. In furtherance of this goal, the Plan provides for densities in Sonoma's multi-family, commercial and mixed use districts of up to 20 units per acre, and establishes a Residential Housing Opportunity district with densities up to 25 units per acre. In addition to increasing densities, the Plan provides expanded areas for multi-family infill, including encouraging residential uses in the Town Center and along Broadway. Furthermore, within its Gateway Commercial, Commercial and Mixed Use districts, the City now requires new development to include a residential component of at least 50 percent of the total building area. Stand-alone residential development is permitted, as well as integrated residential/ commercial mixed use. In total, the 2020 General Plan provides for an increase in 486 new single family homes and 1,072 new multi-family units (including mixed use development) within the City and its sphere of influence.

The General Plan's Community Development Element and Local Economy Element establish various policies and strategies in support of housing development, including, but not limited to, the following:

#### *Community Development Element*

- 4.1 Promote innovative design and mixed uses through the Development Code.
- 4.2 Encourage a variety of unit types in residential projects.
- 4.3 Coordinate development on small contiguous lots to the extent possible.

#### *Local Economy Element*

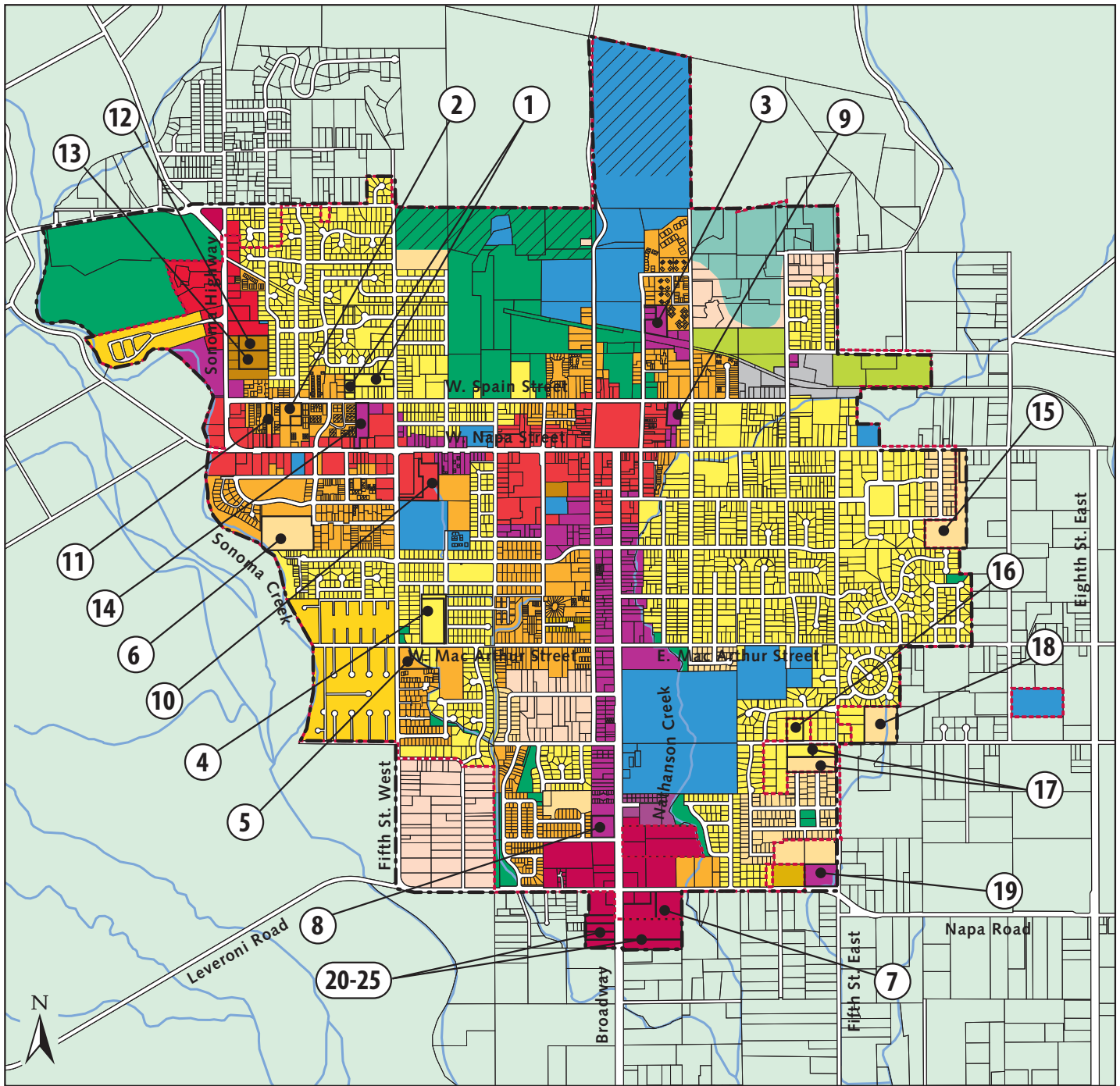
- 1.9 Encourage a residential and pedestrian presence in commercial centers through mixed use and multifamily development.

### **Residential Opportunity Sites**

A detailed opportunity sites analysis has been conducted to demonstrate with specific sites that an adequate inventory of vacant and underutilized land with appropriate General Plan and zoning designations is currently in place. The sites analysis is derived from the recently updated (2006) Sonoma General Plan, and groups sites by the nine planning areas identified in the City's Development Code. Table H-2 identifies 14 Opportunity Sites within the City's current jurisdictional boundary, whereas Table H-3 presents an additional ten sites located within Sonoma's Sphere of Influence. While the analysis of sites capacity with regard to fulfillment of RHNA goals is limited to those sites within the current City limits, sites in the Sphere of Influence immediately adjacent the City are also presented to depict a more complete picture of Sonoma's residential development capacity. Figure H-1 illustrates the residential Opportunity Sites both within the City and its Sphere of Influence, while Appendix A3 provides a more detailed discussion of each site's characteristics and suitability for development.

The methodology used to determine the realistic development capacity of each Opportunity Site was a combination of factors specific to the site, including zoning designation and accompanying development standards, lot size, development trends and other land constraints applicable to the site. In general, Low and Medium density sites were assumed to develop at 80 percent of maximum densities, whereas Mixed Use and Commercial sites were assumed to develop at the maximum permitted density of 20 units per acre. The City does have a record of approving projects at maximum allowable density. Carneros Village commercial condominium and live-work project was approved in a Mixed-Use district and its 30 residential units on 1.5 acres reach the district's maximum density. The project also included 12 commercial condominium spaces. Based on the affordable housing project currently being processed at Site #13 which is designated "Housing Opportunity" under the General Plan, and Site #12 which has a similar designation is assumed to develop at a comparable density.

Given land costs in Sonoma, housing for lower-income households will most likely be developed in high density residential and mixed-use areas where the maximum permitted density is the highest in the City at 20 to 25 units per acre. Additional densities can be achieved, if necessary, through use of the affordable housing density bonus, as provided for under State law.



Rural Residential		Mobile Home Park		Park	
Low Density Residential		Mixed Use		Hillside	
Sonoma Residential		Commercial		Agriculture	
Medium Density Residential		Gateway Commercial		Open Space Overlay	
High Density Residential		Wine Production		City Limits	
Housing Opportunity		Public Facility		Sphere of Influence/UGB	



## Inventory of Housing Sites





Table H-2: Housing Opportunities – City Limits

SITE NO.	Site Address	Gross Acres	Existing Use	Current GP Designation	Current Zoning	Max. Density	Realistic Density (DU/AC)	Realistic Development Potential (Units)	Income Categories		
									Very Low & Low	Mod	Above Mod.
<b>NORTHWEST PLANNING AREA</b>											
1	19347 Fifth Street West & 730 West Spain Street	3.11	Vacant; CDA owned	Low Density Residential	R-L	5	4	12			12
2	821 & 845 West Spain Street	2.02	Underutilized; developed with several older residential structures. Resident relocation required.	Medium Density Residential	R-M	11	9	18			18
<b>NORTHEAST PLANNING AREA</b>											
3	216, 226 & 254 First Street East	2.63	Underutilized; 0.5 acre vacant, 0.5 acre parking; main commercial building is vacant	Mixed Use	R-S	20	20	53			
<b>CENTRAL-WEST PLANNING AREA</b>											
4	No address assignment	4.1	Vacant	Sonoma Residential	R-S	8	8	33			33
5	19910 Fifth Street West	1.51	Underutilized; in redevelopment area; vacant field	Medium Density Residential	R-M	11	10	15			15
6	700 Curtin Lane	6.28	Underutilized; in redevelopment area; currently 1-2 units/6.28 acres; primarily agricultural	Sonoma Residential	R-S	8	8	50			50
<b>GATEWAY DISTRICT</b>											
7	45 & 69 Napa Road	3.53	Vacant	Gateway Commercial	C-G	20	20	71			71
<b>BROADWAY CORRIDOR</b>											
8	20269 Broadway	1.97	Vacant; CDA owned	Mixed Use	MX	20	20	39			39
<b>DOWNTOWN DISTRICT</b>											
9	165 East Spain Street	1.13	Underutilized; currently 1 small unit on large site; half of site is separated and vacant.	Mixed Use	MX	20	20	23			23
<b>WEST NAPA STREET/SONOMA HIGHWAY CORRIDOR</b>											

Table H-2: Housing Opportunities – City Limits

SITE NO.	Site Address	Gross Acres	Existing Use	Current GP Designation	Current Zoning	Max. Density	Realistic Density (DU/AC)	Realistic Development Potential (Units)	Income Categories			TOTAL OPPORTUNITY SITES	
									Very Low & Low	Mod	Above Mod.		
10	477 West Napa Street	3.02	Vacant	Commercial	C	20	20	60	60				
11	840 West Napa Street	1.01	Large lot contains a single-family home on the West Napa side but the opposite side, facing Spain St., is a vacant lot	Medium Density Residential & Commercial	R-M & C	11	10	10	10			10	
12	19320 & 19330 Sonoma Highway	2.52	Underutilized; Western part of site developed with several residential buildings. Resident relocation required.	Housing Opportunity	R-O	25	20	50	50				
13	19344 Sonoma Highway	2.07	Underutilized; Purchased by CDA; Currently developed with several mobile homes. Resident relocation required.	Housing Opportunity	R-O	25	20	41	41				
14	590 West Napa Street	2.04	Underutilized; has 1 home fronting West Napa St., most of lot is vacant; accessible from opposite block.	Mixed Use	MX	20	20	41	41				
									379	0	139	517	TOTAL OPPORTUNITY SITES
									128	69	156	353	Total RHNA
									29	33	93	155	Approved, Permitted since Jan 2007
									99	36	63	198	“NET RHNA”

Table H-3: Housing Opportunities Sites – Within Sphere of Influence

SITE NO.	Site Address	Gross Acres	Existing Use	Current GP Designation	Current Zoning	Max. Density	Realistic Density (DU/ AC)	Realistic Development Potential (Units)
<b>CENTRAL-EAST PLANNING AREA</b>								
15	885 East Napa Street	7.06	Underutilized	Sonoma Residential	R-S*	8	8	56
<b>SOUTHEAST PLANNING AREA</b>								
16	438 Denmark Street	1.66	Underutilized	Low Density Residential	R-L*	8	4	8
17	455-475 Denmark Street (3 parcels)	5.5	Underutilized	Low Density Residential & Sonoma Residential	R-L & R-S*	7.2	5	30
18	600 Denmark Street	4.89	Vacant	Sonoma Residential	R-S*	8	5	39
19	20455 Fifth Street East	2.88	Underutilized	Mixed Use	MX*	20	10	28
<b>GATEWAY DISTRICT</b>								
20	20535 Broadway	1	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	20
21	20549 Broadway	1	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	20
22	20559 Broadway	1	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	20
23	20563 Broadway	1	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	20
24	20564 Broadway	2.5	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	50
25	20540 Broadway	5	Underutilized	Gateway Commercial	C-G*	20	20	100
							<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>371</b>

\* Zoning designation that would apply to the property/site upon annexation to the City.

The following is a detailed description of the Opportunity Sites analyzed in the nine planning areas in Sonoma, as indicated in Tables H-2 and H-3.

## **A] Sites within Current Sonoma City Limits**

### ***Northwest Planning Area***

This area is located within the north-west sector of the city. The two sites identified within this area have General Plan land use designations for Low Density (5 du/acre) and Medium Density (11 du/acre) Residential.

Site No. 1 consists of six vacant parcels owned by the Sonoma Community Development Agency. Because of site constraints and surrounding low density uses, the site is not considered suitable for 100 percent affordable housing development, and therefore the CDA anticipates selling the site, while perhaps donating one of the parcels to Habitat for Humanity.

Site No. 2 is comprised of two parcels and has good frontage on West Spain Street, a collector street. With Medium Density Residential General Plan designation and R-M zoning, this 2.02 acre site, which is currently underutilized with a single-family unit, is considered a good candidate for redevelopment.

### ***Northeast Planning Area***

One site of 2.63 acres has been identified in the northeast planning area. With a Mixed-Use Designation, this site has a development potential of 53 units and is located with excellent proximity to the downtown. The site is comprised of three parcels under single ownership. Existing structures on the site includes two small flat-roofed single-story homes and vacant commercial building; all built in the early 1950's. The property owner has accrued 50 of 53 Growth Management Ordinance unit allocations in anticipation of development. If the property owner decides to pursue an affordable housing project, then, as provided for in the ordinance, a development application could be filed immediately.

### ***Central-West Planning Area***

Three sites totaling 11.89 acres are located within the Central-West Planning Area. The development potential of these sites is 100 units on properties expected to redevelop at densities of eight and 11 units per acre.

One of the parcels is vacant, one is occupied by a small house built in 1949 and the other has a historic house. Site constraints include a slightly awkward shape for one of the parcels and a historic structure on another. However, Sonoma has a long track record of developments that successfully deal with these types of constraints, including retention of historic structures on-site and relocation.

### ***Gateway District***

The Gateway District provides the most potential new units of all the Opportunity Areas identified, although six out of seven sites require annexation. A total of 301 units can be accommodated in this area on seven parcels zoned for Gateway Commercial development. This zoning district requires a residential component and allows up to 20 units per acre. Located at the southern entrance to Sonoma, this area is ideally suited to new residential development. The property currently within the city limits is vacant land. The area is close by the middle and high schools and is about one mile from the historic Sonoma square. New development and redevelopment in this area will make a positive contribution to the view into town at this gateway location.

### ***Broadway Corridor***

Located just north of the Gateway District, the Broadway Corridor is comprised of a mix of residential and commercial uses. The Sonoma CDA purchased a nearly two acre parcel in 2007 with the intention to partner with a non-profit developer to construct a 100 percent affordable project. The location is on the west side of Broadway less than a mile from Sonoma square. The site is vacant, square shaped and is a corner lot with excellent access. The City anticipates up to 39 units on this property under the allowable density of 20 units per acre.

### ***Downtown District***

Within the Downtown District, there is one opportunity site identified. This site is just over one acre and is located on East Spain Street. There is a small house on the property that is considered a historic resource, however it is not considered a constraint to the development of the property. The house can be accommodated on-site or relocated. The site can accommodate up to 23 units within the Mixed-Use zoning district. A development application for this site, currently under review, calls for a mixed-use project featuring 16 rental units.

### ***West Napa Street/Sonoma Highway Corridor***

On the five sites within this area, a total of 227 units can be accommodated. This is the second largest area in terms of number of units for the Opportunity Sites. The total area of these sites is 10.66 acres. Allowable densities range from 11 to 25 units per acre. The property located at 19344 Sonoma Highway (Site No. 24) was purchased by the Sonoma CDA in June 2008. The city is currently working with a non-profit housing developer on a 40 unit 100 percent affordable rental project for extremely low, very low and low income families.

## **B] Sites within Sphere of Influence Requiring Annexation**

### ***Central-East Planning Area***

One site within this area has been identified as an Opportunity Site. While 7.06 acres in size, the property has an unusual shape and would require annexation into the city and extension of utilities. In spite of this, the site is considered a suitable Opportunity Site because of its size and location adjacent to existing development with the city. Growth Management Ordinance unit allocations have been accrued for the property in anticipation of development. Annexation would be required.

### ***Southeast Planning Area***

Four sites within the southeast planning area have been identified as Opportunity Sites, all requiring annexation. The sites range in size from 1.66 to 5.5 acres. Three have Low Density and Sonoma Residential zoning which allow five and eight units per acre respectively. All of these sites have good proximity to nearby schools via bike/pedestrian paths. The fourth, which has an area of 2.88 acres, is located at the northwest corner of Fifth Street East and Napa Road. It would have a zoning designation of Mixed Use upon annexation, allowing a maximum of 20 units per acre.

### **Second Dwelling Units**

With an average of 3 to 4 second units processed annually, second units contribute in addressing Sonoma's regional housing needs. The City permits second residential units within the Rural Residential, Low Density Residential and Sonoma Residential districts by right, and requires no minimum lot size other than adherence to zoning district requirements pertaining to lot coverage and floor area.

While rental information specific to second units is not available, given that Sonoma's apartment rents are within the range of affordability to low income households, second units most likely rent for a comparable level, providing housing affordable to low income seniors, college students, and low income wage earners.

Based on a continued level of second unit development of three units per year, the City can reasonably anticipate 15 additional secondary dwelling units during the 2009-2014 planning period, helping to address the needs of lower income renters.

## Comparison of Site Inventory with RHNA

As presented earlier in the discussion of Future Housing Needs, Sonoma's new construction need (RHNA) for the 2009-2014 period is for 353 units. Housing units receiving building permits during the 2007-2008 RHNA "gap period" can be credited towards the RHNA. As documented in Table 32 in the Background Report (Appendix A1), 155 newly constructed units were issued residential permits or received planning entitlements during this period.

These units include 29 units for lower income households, 18 of which were constructed as part of the 2007 Wildflower sweat-equity project. Ten second units constructed or approved during the gap period were assumed to be in the low income category. Thirty-three units affordable to moderate income households and 93 affordable to those in the above moderate income were built or permitted during the "gap period". The Wildflower sweat equity project contained 18 units in the lower income categories and 16 in the moderate category. Eleven second units constructed or approved were assumed to be affordable to low income categories. Many of the condominium developments, such as Pursell or Giannis, and many of the planned developments, such as Willows Wild, contained units affordable to both moderate and above moderate income categories. Most single-family residences, and two planned developments, Maron Investments at 317 Second Street East and Ikeda at 881-887 First Street West, provided only units affordable to the above moderate category.

As shown in Table H-4, 96 of the units from the "gap period" have been constructed or have building permits issued. Fifty-nine "gap period" units have been approved by the planning department but do not yet have building permits issued; 47 of those are units affordable to above-moderate income levels. The 59 units that have received entitlements are spread across nine projects and aside from 3 second units include:

- MacArthur Planned Development: 26 units including 21 above moderate and 5 moderate units intended as "work-force" housing.
- Pursell Development: 9 above moderate and moderate condominiums.
- Giannis Property: 8 unit condominium development, 7 of which are above moderate units and 1 moderate income unit.
- Murray Condominiums: 6 units, including 5 above moderate and 1 moderate

- Ikeda Planned Development: 4 units, all above moderate.
- Maron Investments Property: a planned development with 3 units, all market rate.

Table H-4 compares Sonoma's RHNA for 353 new units with the City's aggregate residential sites inventory derived from the following:

- 96 units issued building permits in 2007-March 2009
- 59 units with project entitlements
- 15 second units based on past development trends
- 518 units in Opportunity Sites inventory

In terms of evaluating the adequacy of these sites to address the affordability targets established by the RHNA, Housing Element statutes now provide for use of "default densities" to assess site affordability. Based on its population, Sonoma falls within the default density of 20 units/acre, indicating this density standard is appropriate for the provision of sites affordable to very low and low income households. For moderate income households, the City has chosen a threshold of 10 units/acre to reflect a reasonable density with which moderate income development can be achieved. Sonoma has a history of producing affordable housing at more modest densities, such as Firehouse Village at 20.4 units/acre, Wildflower at 11.4 units/acre and the new Valley Oaks Homes at 20 units/acre (refer to Table 34 in the Background Report).

Allocating Sonoma's residential sites inventory based on these density thresholds, combined with permitted/entitled projects and second units, results in the provision of sites suitable for development of 379 units affordable to lower income households and 139 units for above moderate income households, for a total of 517 units.

In summary, the City has adequate sites designated to achieve its RHNA goals by affordability level. Sonoma's Growth Management limits have specifically been established at a level sufficient to accommodate the City's regional housing needs. The City will encourage and facilitate the production of affordable housing on Opportunity Sites through its inclusionary requirements, regulatory incentives, and direct financial assistance, as further described in the Housing Programs section of the Element.

**Table H-4: Comparison of Regional Housing Growth Need and Residential Sites**

Income Category	Building Permits or Under Construction (1/2007 – 3/2009)	Approved Projects	Second Units	Minimum Density Guidelines	Opportunity Sites Inventory (City limits only)	Total Unit Potential	Total RHNA
Very Low	--	--	--				73
Low	26	3	15	20 units/acre	379	423	55
Moderate	24	9	--	10 units/acre	--	33	69
Above Moderate	46	47	--	<10 units/acre	139	232	156
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>518</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>353</b>

**Availability of Infrastructure and Public Services**

An urbanized community, Sonoma has in place the necessary infrastructure to support additional residential development. All land designated for residential use is served by sewer and water lines, streets, storm drains, telephone, electrical and gas lines. To ensure the availability and adequacy of public facilities and services for future development, the City, along with other providers of public services (e.g., water and sewer), will continue to carry out regular infrastructure improvements and upgrading.

The City adopted a Growth Management Ordinance in 1980 based on a computer model developed by ABAG that examined various rates of growth against the City’s ability to maintain an appropriate level of services. Factors addressed in the model included water supply and infrastructure requirements, sewer capacities, police and fire service, street maintenance, capital improvements and City revenues. The evaluation indicated that an annual average of 100 new units would allow for manageable increases in service without exceeding the available water supply for at least 20 years. In 2005, the average rate of allowed development was reduced to 88 units, and in 2008 reduced to 65 units to reflect current and projected availability of water and sewer treatment capacity and the actual rate of development experienced, while maintaining sufficient development capacities to accommodate Sonoma’s fair share allocation.

Water supply is a significant potential constraint on growth in and around Sonoma. The City of Sonoma purchases most of its potable water from the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency). The Water Agency draws water from the Russian River in the

vicinity of Forestville. Transmission mains distribute this water to the City of Sonoma via the Sonoma Aqueduct, which travels north and south from Sonoma to Santa Rosa. The City’s contract with the Water Agency provides for a peak delivery rate of 6.3 million gallons per day (mgd), with an annual limit of 3,000 acre-feet on total water purchases by the City. However, studies show that the current delivery capacity the City can rely upon from the aqueduct is 3.45 mgd. Furthermore, as discussed below, the SCWA recently informed its contractors that there is uncertainty in the Agency’s ability to provide water supply to its water contractors beyond its existing Russian River water diversion permit amount of 75,000 acre-feet per year (AFY).

In order to meet its obligations to its water contractors, including the increase of Sonoma’s peak month delivery rate to 6.3 MGD, the SCWA had developed a plan to make use of water available from Lake Sonoma and increasing the water rights for diversion to its customers from currently authorized 75,000 AFA to 101,000 AFY. This plan, known as the Transmission Project, contemplated delivering additional water from Lake Sonoma to intake collectors in the Russian River either via Dry Creek or a pipeline. Another important component of the Transmission Project was the upgrade of the water delivery system, including improvements to the Sonoma Aqueduct. This aspect of the project was intended to not only increase delivery capacity, but also to provide greater safety and redundancy in the event of a breach. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, acting in their capacity as the governing board of the

SCWA, voted in 2009 to terminate the Transmission Project.

In light of its decision to cancel the Transmission Project, the SCWA has advised the City that in planning for future water supply, the City should not assume that the SCWA will be able to deliver the contracted entitlement of 3,000 AFY provided for under the Restructured Agreement for Water Supply. In May 2006, the SCWA Board of Directors adopted a water shortage allocation methodology to determine the effect of holding Agency deliveries to its customers to 75,000 AFY. The shortage allocation methodology was developed by John Nelson of John Olaf Nelson Water Resources Management and was approved by the Water Advisory Commission (WAC) prior to adoption. Under this methodology, the City of Sonoma would receive 2,644 AFY. To place this number in the perspective of water delivery to Sonoma in recent years, the average amount of water delivered by the SCWA annually from 2000 to 2008 has been 2,467 AFY. Most recently, in 2008, the City received 2,271 AFY from the SCWA in comparison to the 2,644 AFY that the City would receive based on the current shortage allocation methodology adopted by the SCWA. This represents 86% of the maximum delivery available to Sonoma under the current allocation system.

The SCWA supply is supplemented by a system of City-owned groundwater wells. These wells would provide a potable water source in the event that aqueduct deliveries are interrupted or are otherwise unable to meet demand. They also serve to help meet peak demands during the summer. Currently, Sonoma has four active wells, integrated in the City water system, that have been upgraded in accordance with Department of Health Services standards such that they can be used without restriction in meeting water supply needs. Based on extensive testing over a period of years, the maximum instantaneous rated capacity of these wells is estimated to be 250 acre-ft per year, with a peak month production rate of 0.85 mgd. City wells currently supply about 3% of annual water needs.

Due to the decision of the SCWA to cancel the Transmission Project, the City of Sonoma must revisit its strategy for meeting long-term water needs. Another factor which has changed the outlook with respect to long-term water demand was the decision of the City Council in 2005 to reduce the rate of allowed residential development under the Growth Management Ordinance to 65 units per year. This change pushes back the estimate of buildout under the 2020 General Plan to the year 2030. In light of these factors and assuming that the SCWA delivery

capacity is not increased beyond the current limitation of 2,644 AFA, the City's total water usage is projected to exceed SCWA deliveries from between 71 to 427 AFY over the next 20 years. In order to respond to changed conditions and meet projected demand, the City is updating its water strategy, to include the following:

- Updated development standards implementing enhanced water conservation measures.
- New water conservation programs and the expansion of existing programs.
- Conjunctive use.
- Increased well production.
- Recycled water offsets.

Unless an updated water supply strategy is successfully developed and implemented, the City's ability to meet the housing objectives identified in this Element will be significantly impaired.

Other relevant potential infrastructure constraints that were deemed significant in the 2020 General Plan EIR include the sewer system, police services, fire services, parks and recreation, and storm drainage capacity. Although the Housing Element planning period is significantly shorter than the 2020 General Plan, the findings are relatively applicable to residential development. The General Plan EIR finds that projected increases in sewage flows would exceed current permitted capacity of the treatment plant, necessitating improvements in treatment capacity and expansion of reclamation facilities, in order to prevent adverse environmental impacts of new development. Urban development could increase the rate and volume of drainage runoff within the community by increasing areas of impervious surface, which could result in localized flooding in some areas where existing storm drainage system may not be sufficient. Mitigations include: requiring development within the Sphere of Influence to document the adequacy of proposed storm drain improvements; requiring development projects to contribute to the cost of implementation of the Sonoma Area Master Drainage Plan; and requiring development within the Sphere of Influence to be designed and constructed consistent with the SCWA Flood Control Design Criteria.

Apart from the larger issues discussed above, there are no known site-specific environmental constraints that would substantially impact development on the identified Housing Opportunity sites. The sites were all evaluated for residential use as part of the Environmental Impact Report on the City's 2006



General Plan Update. The General Plan EIR is based on the concept of “tiering”, which means that as project proposals are made on specific sites, the need for additional environmental analysis will be determined. If a proposed project has the potential for impacts which exceed those discussed in the General Plan EIR, additional environmental analysis will be conducted at that time.

California Senate Bill 1087, effective January 2006, requires water and sewer providers to grant priority for service allocations to proposed developments that include units affordable to lower income households. Pursuant to these statutes, upon adoption of its Housing Element, Sonoma will immediately deliver the Element to the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) and the City of Sonoma Water Department.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Sonoma has access to a variety of existing and potential funding sources available for affordable housing activities. These include programs from local, state, federal and private resources. The following section describes the three ongoing housing funding sources currently used in Sonoma—redevelopment set-aside funds, CDBG funds, and Section 8 rental assistance. Table H-5 provides a more comprehensive inventory of potential funding sources.

### Redevelopment Housing Set-Aside

State law requires the Sonoma Community Development Agency (CDA) to set-aside a minimum of 20 percent of all tax increment revenue generated from the Redevelopment Project Area for affordable housing activities. The Agency's set-aside funds must be used for activities that increase, improve, or preserve the supply of affordable housing. Housing developed under this program must remain affordable to the targeted income group for at least 30 years for ownership housing and 55 years for rental housing.

The Sonoma CDA generates approximately \$1.2 million per year in housing set-aside funds. Of this amount, \$510,000 is pledged to repayment of debt service on tax allocation bonds and another \$150,000 is utilized for administration, leaving a net \$540,000 for affordable housing projects and programs. The State of California's recent taking of redevelopment funds will cost Sonoma approximately \$1.9 million and the City borrowed these funds from the Low-Moderate Income Housing Fund in order to make the required payment. These funds will be paid back in future years. As of May 2010, the CDA had a housing set-aside balance of \$900,000, which it intends to use as gap financing for development on CDA owned sites on Sonoma Highway and Broadway. In total, the Agency anticipates having \$4.8 million in housing set-aside funds available to support affordable housing during the five year Housing Element planning period (2009-2014).

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

The CDBG program provides funds for a variety of community development activities primarily benefiting low and moderate income households. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: acquisition and/or disposition of real estate or property, public facilities and improvements, relocation, rehabilitation and construction (under certain limitations) of housing, homeownership assistance, and social service activities.

As a small city, the City of Sonoma applies to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission on an annual basis for CDBG funds. The County, through their review procedures, evaluates applications from the County's participating small cities and determines which programs to fund and at what level. In past years, the City of Sonoma has generally received between \$60,000 to \$80,000 in CDBG funding from the County used to support a variety of public improvements, accessibility projects, social and neighborhood programs. In fiscal year 2009/2010, the City will receive \$90,000 in CDBG funds to support development of the 19344 Sonoma Highway affordable housing project.

### Section 8 Rental Assistance

The Section 8 or housing voucher program is a federal program that provides rental assistance to extremely low to very low-income persons in need of affordable housing. The Section 8 program offers a voucher that pays the difference between the payment standard (an exception to fair market rent) and what a tenant can afford to pay (e.g. 30% of their income). A voucher allows a tenant to choose housing that may cost above the payment standard, with the tenant paying the extra cost. The Sonoma County Housing Authority administers the Section 8 program for most communities in the County, including Sonoma.

**Table H-5: Financial Resources Available for Housing Activities**

Program Name	Description	Eligible Activities
<b>1. Federal Programs</b>		
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Sonoma applies to County for CDBG funding for housing and community development activities benefiting lower income households. City typically receives \$60,000-\$80,000 per year. In 2009/10, City is receiving \$90,000 in CDBG funds in support of affordable housing at 19344 Sonoma Highway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ Home Buyer Assistance</li> <li>✓ Economic Development</li> <li>✓ Homeless Assistance</li> <li>✓ Public Services</li> <li>✓ Public Facilities</li> </ul>
HOME	Funding used to support a variety of County housing programs that the City can access for specific projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New Construction</li> <li>✓ Acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ Home Buyer Assistance</li> <li>✓ Rental Assistance</li> </ul>
Section 8 Rental Assistance Program	Rental assistance payments to owners of private market rate units on behalf of very low income tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Rental Assistance</li> </ul>
Section 202	Grants to non-profit developers of supportive housing for the elderly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ New Construction</li> </ul>
Section 811	Grants to non-profit developers of supportive housing for persons with disabilities, including group homes, independent living facilities and intermediate care facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ New Construction</li> <li>✓ Rental Assistance</li> </ul>
<b>2. State Programs</b>		
Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	Tax credits are available to persons and corporations that invest in low-income rental housing. Proceeds from the sale are typically used to create housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Construction of Housing</li> <li>✓ Acquisition/Rehabilitation</li> </ul>
Multi-Family Housing Program (MHP)	Deferred payment loans to local governments and developers for new construction, rehabilitation and preservation of rental housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New Construction</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ Preservation</li> <li>✓ Conversion of nonresidential to rental</li> </ul>
Multi-Family Housing Program –Supportive Housing	Deferred payment loans for rental housing with supportive services for the disabled who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New Construction</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ Preservation</li> <li>✓ Conversion of nonresidential to rental</li> </ul>
Building Equity and Growth in Neighborhoods (BEGIN)	Grants to cities to provide downpayment assistance (up to \$30,000) to low and moderate income first-time homebuyers of new homes in projects with affordability enhanced by local regulatory incentives or barrier reductions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Homebuyer Assistance</li> </ul>
CalHome	Grants to cities and non-profit developers to offer homebuyer assistance, including downpayment assistance, rehabilitation, acquisition/ rehabilitation, and homebuyer counseling. Loans to developers for property acquisition, site development, predevelopment and construction period expenses for homeownership projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Predevelopment, site development, site acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ Acquisition/rehab</li> <li>✓ Downpayment assistance</li> <li>✓ Mortgage financing</li> <li>✓ Homebuyer counseling</li> </ul>
Transit-Oriented Development Program	Funding for housing and related infrastructure near transit stations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Capital improvements required for qualified housing developments</li> <li>✓ Capital improvements enhancing pedestrian or bike access from qualified housing development to nearest transit station</li> <li>✓ Land acquisition</li> </ul>

**Table H-5: Financial Resources Available for Housing Activities**

Program Name	Description	Eligible Activities
Affordable Housing Innovation Fund	Funding for pilot programs to demonstrate innovative, cost-saving ways to create or preserve affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Property acquisition for development or preservation of affordable housing</li> <li>✓ Matching funds for local Housing Trust Funds</li> <li>✓ Low Income Rental Construction</li> <li>✓ Downpayment Assistance</li> </ul>
Infill Incentive Grant Program	Funding of public infrastructure (water, sewer, traffic, parks, site clean-up, etc) to facilitate infill housing development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Development of parks and open space</li> <li>✓ Water, sewer, or other utility service improvements</li> <li>✓ Streets, roads, parking structures, transit linkages, transit shelters</li> <li>✓ Traffic mitigation features</li> <li>✓ Sidewalks and streetscape improvements</li> </ul>
CalHFA Residential Development Loan Program	Low interest, short term loans to local governments for affordable infill, owner-occupied housing developments. Links with CalHFA's Downpayment Assistance Program to provide subordinate loans to first-time buyers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Site acquisition</li> <li>✓ Pre-development costs</li> </ul>
CalHFA Homebuyer's Downpayment Assistance Program	CalHFA makes below market loans to first-time homebuyers of up to 3% of sales price. Program operates through participating lenders who originate loans for CalHFA. Funds available upon request to qualified borrowers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Homebuyer Assistance</li> </ul>
<b>3. Local Programs</b>		
Redevelopment Housing Fund	State law requires that at least 20% of Redevelopment Agency funds be set aside for a wide range of affordable housing activities governed by State law. The Sonoma CDA projects \$5.5 million in Housing Set-Aside funds will be available for housing activities during the 2009-2014 period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acquisition</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> <li>✓ New Construction</li> </ul>
<b>4. Private Resources/Financing Programs</b>		
Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae)	✓ Fixed rate mortgages issued by private mortgage insurers.	✓ Home Buyer Assistance
	✓ Mortgages that fund the purchase and rehabilitation of a home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Home Buyer Assistance</li> <li>✓ Rehabilitation</li> </ul>
	✓ Low Down-Payment Mortgages for Single-Family Homes in under-served low-income and minority cities.	✓ Home Buyer Assistance
Savings Association Mortgage Company Inc.	Pooling process to fund loans for affordable ownership and rental housing projects. Non-profit & for profit developers contact member institutions.	✓ New construction of rentals, cooperatives, self help housing, homeless shelters, and group homes
Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program	Direct Subsidies to non-profit and for profit developers and public agencies for affordable low-income ownership and rental projects.	✓ New Construction
Freddie Mac	Home Works-Provides first and second mortgages that include rehabilitation loan. City provides gap financing for rehabilitation component. Households earning up to 80% MFI qualify.	✓ Home Buyer Assistance combined with Rehabilitation

## ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES

Described below are several non-profit agencies active in providing affordable and special needs housing in Sonoma County. These agencies serve as resources to help the City in addressing its housing needs and in implementing many of the programs identified in the Housing Element.

### **Burbank Housing Development Corporation**

Burbank Housing is a local non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the supply of housing in Sonoma County, focusing on provision of quality affordable housing for low-income people of all ages, backgrounds and special needs. Burbank Housing is one of the largest developers in Sonoma County with a diverse client base. Burbank Housing's Development Division carries out various phases of housing development, acts as general contractor for mutual self-help housing developments and contracts with local building contractors for construction of rental housing. Their homes include rental properties, first-time ownership communities, and often include projects for special needs populations. This includes housing for farm workers, seniors, homeless and formerly homeless, emancipated foster youth and persons with disabilities. Burbank rental properties within the City of Sonoma encompass both new construction and acquisition/rehabilitation, and include Cabernet Apartments (senior rental, 1988), Firehouse Village (family rental, 2001), and Oak Ridge Senior Apartments (senior rental, 2008). Burbank's self-help division also sponsored Sonoma's 34 home Wildflower owner/builder project, completed in 2007.



*Wildflower owner/builder project at 404 Napa*

### **Affordable Housing Associates**

A Berkeley nonprofit affordable housing developer founded in 1993, Affordable Housing Associates (AHA) has the goal of increasing the supply of low-income housing by upgrading existing homes and building new ones, focusing on the creation of green, sustainable communities. AHA currently has about 23 completed projects in the Bay Area, totaling over 900 affordable units. AHA was recently selected by the City of Sonoma for development of a City-owned site at 19344 Sonoma Highway with a 40-unit affordable rental community for lower income families. They partnered with McCamant & Durrett Architects, known for cohousing design, on the proposal. In addition to development, AHA provides in-house property management services.



*Valley Oaks Home proposal at 19344 Sonoma Highway from Affordable Housing Associates.*

### **Community Housing Sonoma County**

Community Housing Sonoma County (formerly known as Community Housing Development Corporation of Santa Rosa) has created nearly 180 housing units for very low-income families and individuals in the County, with over 70 set aside as permanent supportive housing for persons living with disabilities. Permanent supportive housing is a model for ending the cycle of homelessness by addressing issues of health, employment, mental health, and substance abuse. It provides independent, affordable rental housing for people living with disabilities that have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness. In Rohnert Park, Community Housing Sonoma County is currently working with Burbank Housing Corporation, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS), and Sonoma County Department of Health to complete the County's first permanent supportive housing project for families.

## Sonoma Overnight Support

Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS) is a group of faith based and civic minded individuals who formed a non-profit corporation to support persons in need of shelter and support. It has existed since 1996, but its major activity is operating the emergency shelter owned by the City of Sonoma located at 151 First Street West adjacent to the Police Department. SOS operates this short-term emergency shelter and helps with coordinating transitional supportive services.



*The City of Sonoma's emergency shelter at 151 First Street West.*

## Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit, faith-based organization dedicated to building affordable housing and rehabilitating homes for lower income families. Habitat builds and repairs homes with the help of volunteers and partner families. Habitat homes are sold to partner families at no profit with affordable, no-interest loans. Volunteers, churches, businesses, and other groups provide most of the labor for homes, with homeowner partners contributing a minimum of 500 hours of sweat equity. Government agencies or individuals usually donate land for new homes or write down the cost of the land. Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County has grown from strictly a volunteer organization to become continuous builders of affordable housing with an executive director and permanent staff. They have completed several infill homes on Johnson Street in Sebastopol and the 10 home

Kali Subdivision in Santa Rosa, with a goal of completing 20 homes by 2010. Volunteers throughout the County come out two to three times a week to work on the houses, and are involved in selecting and mentoring homeowner partner families.

## Housing Land Trust of Sonoma County

The mission of the non-profit Housing Land Trust of Sonoma County (HLTSC) is to increase home ownership opportunities to low- and moderate-income families in Sonoma County while ensuring permanent housing affordability through the use of a land trust model. Under this model, the land trust organization owns real estate in order to provide benefits to the community, making land and housing available to residents who cannot otherwise afford them. HLTSC owns the land beneath the homes, which is then leased to the homeowners through a long-term, 99-year, renewable lease. Since their inception in 2002, HLTSC has provided land for development of 26 workforce units in Petaluma, partnered with Habitat for Humanity to develop 10 homes in Santa Rosa, and is currently providing land for housing of essential civic employees in Cloverdale.

## Eden Housing

A nonprofit affordable housing developer operating in the Bay Area, including Sonoma County, Eden's housing includes rental apartments, first-time homeowner opportunities, cooperatives, and supportive living environments for families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Eden has an affiliated property management company and includes provision of free onsite support services and programs for its residents. Eden seeks to serve: very low, low and moderate-income families; seniors; people living with physical, developmental disabilities or mental illness; the formerly homeless; and first-time homeowners.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

Sonoma's 2020 General Plan embodies the City's commitment to sustainability:

*The long-term health of the local and larger natural environment requires the current generation to put into place resource conservation and management practices that will be maintained by future generations. City operations and requirements for private development need to ensure that:*

- *Renewable resources such as groundwater, soil, and fish are not used faster than they can regenerate;*
- *Non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels are not consumed faster than renewable alternatives can be substituted for them;*
- *Pollution and waste are not emitted faster or in greater volumes than natural systems can absorb, recycle, or render them harmless.*

*The City can play an important role in achieving a sustainable Sonoma by adopting and promoting standards for green building and facility operation that conserve land, materials, water, and energy.*

Local governments are uniquely positioned to have a major impact on the environmental sustainability of a community due to their broad authority on local issues. The City of Sonoma has been proactive in promoting energy and resource conservation in new housing and in the retrofit of existing housing, as described in the following section. These City-sponsored initiatives are supplemented by a variety of programs offered by other agencies and organizations, as summarized below.

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### **Growth Management / Urban Growth Boundary**

The City adopted a Growth Management Ordinance in 1980, based on infrastructure limitations. As most recently amended in 2008, the ordinance allows for a maximum average rate of residential development of 65 units per year. This rate of development is intended to reflect constraints in water and sewer capacity. Residents approved an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in 2000 to protect the unique small-town character of the city and the agricultural land open space character of the surrounding areas. The UGB is a line beyond which urban development will not be allowed, except for public parks and public schools. Sonoma's UGB reflects a commitment to focus future growth within the city in order to prevent urban sprawl into agriculturally and environmentally sensitive areas surrounding the city. It concentrates future residential, commercial, and industrial growth in areas already served by urban services. The UGB complements General Plan policies such as promoting additional housing opportunities, emphasizing infill development, and supporting a thriving downtown center.

### **Green Building Program**

The Sonoma City Council adopted a new mandatory Green Building Ordinance in March 2009. The Green Building program is intended to increase the efficiency and conservation with which buildings use resources such as energy, water, and materials while reducing impacts on human health and the environment during the building's lifecycle through better design, construction, operation, maintenance, and construction waste removal. In developing the ordinance, the City made diligent efforts to utilize the efforts and works of other jurisdictions in developing a green building program to promote regulatory, uniformity, and consistency within the region to the extent possible.

The Ordinance affects new residential structures with a floor area of more than 500 square feet and new non-residential structures with a floor area of more than 5,000 square feet; retrofits of historic buildings are exempt from the Ordinance. For residential buildings, the Ordinance is based on Build It Green (BIG) New Home Construction Green Building Guidelines and Multi-family Green Building Guidelines. Residential project applicants are required to submit a completed BIG checklist as part of building plan submittal and demonstrate compliance with BIG rating systems, though are not required to

achieve official certification or rating through these standards. Applicants must utilize a Built It Green Certified GreenPoint Professional, GreenPoint Advisor or GreenPoint Rater to review plans and submit the appropriate verification. The City has produced specific checklists based on the appropriate rating system in order to facilitate understanding of what is to be required. It should be noted that when the State of California introduces its green building code in 2011, Sonoma's program may be superseded.

### **Local Energy Conservation Programs**

In 2009, Sonoma became the first city in the County to enable city businesses and city residents to access the newly established Sonoma County Energy Independence Loan Program, allowing property owners to borrow money to install a wide variety of improvements, including but not limited to solar and voltaic units, solar thermal devices and tankless water heaters. Also eligible are water efficiency technologies that help conserve water, such as low-flush toilets.

Sonoma's Green Building Ordinance, described above, rewards energy conservation measures. The City also has a Green Business program and a progressive waste recycling program. The City website advertises local resource conservation and sustainability programs.

### **Energy Conservation Programs Offered through Local Utilities**

In addition to green building, Sonoma promotes energy conservation by advertising utility rebate programs and energy audits available through Pacific Gas and Electric, particularly connected to housing rehabilitation programs. Lower-income households are also eligible for State sponsored energy and weatherization programs.

#### ***Pacific Gas & Electric (www.pge.com)***

Pacific Gas & Electric provides both natural gas and electricity to residential consumers in Sonoma. The company provides a variety of energy conservation services for residents and PG&E also participates in several other energy assistance programs for lower-income households, which help qualified homeowners and renters conserve energy and control electricity costs. These include the following:

- **The California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program** - Provides a 20 percent monthly discount on gas and electric rates to income qualified households, certain non-profits, facilities housing agricultural employees, homeless shelters, hospices and other qualified non-profit group living facilities.
- **The Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help (REACH) Program** - Provides one-time emergency energy assistance to low income customers who have no other way to pay their energy bill. REACH aims to assist those who are in jeopardy of losing their electricity services, particularly the elderly, disabled, sick, working poor, and the unemployed, who experience severe hardships and are unable to pay for their necessary energy needs. Customers who have experienced an uncontrollable or unforeseen hardship may receive an energy credit up to \$200.
- **The Balanced Payment Plan (BPP)** - Designed to eliminate big swings in a customer's monthly payments by averaging energy costs over the year. On enrollment, PG&E averages the amount of energy used by the household in the past year to derive the monthly BPP amount. PG&E checks the household's account every four months to make sure that its estimated average is on target. If the household's energy use has increased or decreased dramatically, PG&E will change the amount of monthly payment so that the household does not overpay or underpay too much over the course of a year.
- **The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant** - Funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, it provides two basic types of services. Eligible low-income persons, via local governmental and nonprofit organizations, can receive financial assistance to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings, and/or have their dwellings weatherized to make them more energy efficient. This is accomplished through these three program components:
  - The Weatherization Program provides free weatherization services to improve



the energy efficiency of homes, including attic insulation, weather-stripping, minor home repairs, and related energy conservation measures.

- The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides financial assistance to eligible households to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings.
  - The Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) provides payments for weather-related or energy-related emergencies.
- **The Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program** - PG&E's rate reduction program for large households of three or more people with low- to middle-income. It enables low income large households to receive a Tier 3 (131 percent to 200 percent of baseline) electric rate reduction on their PG&E bill every month.
- **Medical Baseline Allowance Program** - PG&E offers additional quantities of energy at the lowest (baseline) price for residential customers that have special medical or heating/cooling needs.

In addition, PG&E launched a campaign to hand out one million compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) as part of Energy Star's "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign in October 2007. PG&E is also educating its customers on how to work directly with manufacturers and retailers to discount the bulbs at the point of sale and are working with state and local governments to promote fluorescent lamp recycling through the [California Take-It-Back Partnership](#).

## Water Conservation Programs

In addition to the Green Building Ordinance, Sonoma has been actively pursuing water conservation measures. Most water in the city is purchased from the County Water Agency, with City wells augmenting that supply during periods of peak use. Residential uses account for the majority of water demand in Sonoma. With respect to future development, water supply is a significant potential constraint on growth in and around the City. Conservation is a key element of the City's strategy to meet projected water demand.

At the direction of the City Council, the City created a Water Action Plan in 2008. Water shortages made it essential the City take steps to improve water conservation, upgrade its water supply infrastructure, increase the local supply of water through new wells, and protect the quality and sustainability of its groundwater resources. The City developed a water strategy, including conservation, imported supply groundwater supply and management, re-use, system management and infrastructure upgrades, and demand limitations. The Water Supply Action Plan contains a variety of planning and improvement actions. It includes implementing updated conservation standards for new development, and implementing new conservation programs and efficiency requirements, both expected to be completed in 2009.

Sonoma also has a water efficient landscape ordinance "to assist the City in achieving water conservation through proper plant selection, installation, and maintenance practices" through use of the following xeriscape principles: appropriate planning and design; limiting turf to locations where it provides functional benefits; efficient irrigation systems; the use of soil amendments to improve the structural characteristics of the soil; the use of mulches, where appropriate; the use of drought-tolerant plants; and appropriate and timely maintenance. Irrigation systems are limited by an allowable annual water budget and cannot operate during peak hours. The Ordinance applies to new developments and replacement landscaping for commercial, mixed-use, and multifamily development, whereas individual private yards are exempted. The City's Design Review Commission reviews landscape plans for compliance with the Ordinance. As required by State law, the ordinance is being revised to incorporate updated water conservation standards.

The City of Sonoma, in partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency, offers several other programs and incentives, including rebates, to help reduce water use.

#### **Residential Programs:**

- **Ultra Low-Flow Toilet Rebate** – Provides rebates of \$100 per toilet for replacing non-water conserving toilets.
- **WaterSmart Home Program** – Provides free home water use evaluation and water saving recommendations.
- **Water Conservation Fixtures** – Provides free, high-quality showerheads, faucet aerators, hose nozzles and dye tabs, available at City Hall.
- **Residential Clothes Washer Rebate** – Offers rebates for certain efficient residential clothes washers. The rebate amounts and qualifying models can be viewed at [www.conservationrebates.com](http://www.conservationrebates.com).
- **Demonstration Gardens** – Residents can visit a local demonstration garden, located in Nathanson Creek Park and at the Sonoma Community Center, to view examples of low water use landscaping. Plant lists for the two low water-use gardens are available.
- **Cash for Grass Rebate** – The City will pay residents for removing turf and planting low water-use plants.

#### **Commercial Programs:**

- **Business Toilet Rebate** – Offers rebates of \$260 for replacing non-water conserving toilets at businesses.
- **Business Water-Use Evaluations** – Provides water-use evaluation and recommendations Programs are listed at [www.sonomabea.org](http://www.sonomabea.org).
- **Large Landscape Water Assessment Program** – Businesses with large landscaped areas can get a water use assessment to reduce water use.
- **Landscape Incentives for Business** – Rebates are provided for completing recommendations in the Large Landscape Water Assessment Program.

The Water Division of the Public Works Department and the City Engineer's Office maintains information on its [webpage](#) on current water conservation measures.

(<http://www.sonomacity.org/default.aspx?PageId=338>)

The City is developing options to expand water conservation incentive programs for existing residential and commercial users and to increase water efficiency requirements for new development. This direction is reflected and supported by policies and implementation measures in the Housing Element.

# HOUSING PLAN

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Sonoma's Housing Plan for the 2009-2014 period has been developed in response to community and decision-maker input; identified housing needs, resources and constraints; and experience gained from implementation of the existing Housing Element. The Housing Plan sets forth goals, policies and programs to address the following themes:

- **Ensuring diversity:** Providing a variety of housing types affordable to all income levels, allowing those who work in Sonoma to also live here.
- **Improving housing affordability:** Encouraging a range of affordable housing options for both renters and homeowners.
- **Preserving housing assets:** Maintaining the condition and affordability of existing housing and ensuring development is consistent with Sonoma's town and neighborhood context.
- **Reducing governmental constraints:** Facilitating the provision of housing, and encouraging innovation in design, ownership and living arrangements.
- **Promoting equal housing opportunities:** Ensuring residents can reside in the housing of their choice, including Sonoma's special needs populations.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Ensuring Sonoma grows in a responsible manner, in line with resource limitations such as water availability.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

The following presents Sonoma’s Housing Element goals and policies which will guide the City’s actions pertaining to housing during the planning period.

### HOUSING DIVERSITY

**Goal 1.0: Provide a mix of housing types affordable to all income levels, allowing those who work in Sonoma to also live in the community.**

**Policy 1.1:** Encourage diversity in the type, size, price and tenure of residential development in Sonoma, while maintaining quality of life.

**Policy 1.2:** Facilitate the development of affordable housing through site assembly, financial assistance, and regulatory incentives. Proactively seek out new models and approaches in the provision of affordable housing.

**Policy 1.3:** Ensure the Growth Management Ordinance provides sufficient annual unit allocations to meet Sonoma’s regional housing growth needs (RHNA).

**Policy 1.4:** Encourage the sustainable use of land and promote affordability by encouraging development at the higher end of the density range within the Medium Density, High Density, Housing Opportunity, and Mixed Use land use designations.

**Policy 1.5:** Continue to provide opportunities for the integration of housing in commercial districts and the adaptive reuse of non-residential structures.

**Policy 1.6:** Utilize inclusionary zoning as a tool to integrate affordable units within market rate developments, and increase the availability of affordable housing throughout the community.

**Policy 1.7:** Support collaborative partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide greater access to affordable housing funds.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

### **Goal 2.0: Improve housing affordability for both renters and homeowners in Sonoma.**

**Policy 2.1:** Pursue acquisition of existing market-rate apartment units, and convert to long-term affordable housing for very low and low income renters.

**Policy 2.2:** Support the provision of rental assistance by the Sonoma County Housing Authority to extremely low and very low income households.

**Policy 2.3:** Encourage the provision of financial assistance to low and moderate income first-time homebuyers through local, County and State programs.

**Policy 2.4:** Promote the availability of early mortgage counseling for homeowners at-risk of foreclosure.

## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

### **Goal 3.0: Maintain and enhance the existing housing stock and ensure that new residential development is consistent with Sonoma's town character and neighborhood quality.**

**Policy 3.1:** Maintain sustainable neighborhoods with quality housing, infrastructure and open space that fosters neighborhood character and the health of residents.

**Policy 3.2:** Encourage property owners to maintain rental and ownership units in sound condition through code enforcement and housing rehabilitation programs.

**Policy 3.3:** Support efforts to identify and preserve important examples of historic or architecturally significant residences.

**Policy 3.4:** Require the rehabilitation or remodeling of older cottages and bungalows to conform to the scale of the immediate neighborhood and retain the architectural character and integrity of the original structure.

**Policy 3.5:** Regulate the conversion of existing apartment complexes to condominium ownership, and only permit when the citywide vacancy rate for rental units warrants.

**Policy 3.6:** Support the preservation of mobile-home parks as an important source of affordable housing.

**Policy 3.7:** Ensure the continued availability and affordability of income-restricted housing for lower and moderate income households.

**Policy 3.8:** Preserve Sonoma's existing housing stock by regulating the use of residences for vacation rentals.

## REMOVE GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

### **GOAL 4.0: Reduce governmental constraints on the maintenance, improvement and development of housing while maintaining community character.**

**Policy 4.1:** Provide regulatory incentives and concessions to offset the costs of affordable housing development while protecting quality of life goals.

**Policy 4.2:** Incentivize the development of affordable housing through growth management prioritization.

**Policy 4.3:** Revise the Development Code to specify provisions for transitional housing, supportive housing, emergency shelters, and community care facilities.

**Policy 4.4:** Support flexibility and variety in site planning, housing design, ownership, and living arrangements, including co-housing, shared housing, and live/work housing through the Development Code.

**Policy 4.5:** Provide for the infill of modestly priced rental housing by encouraging secondary dwelling units on single-family zoned lots.

**Policy 4.6:** Provide fee waivers to facilitate production of affordable housing.

**Policy 4.7:** Provide reduced parking standards for affordable and special needs housing.

## **EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Goal 5.0: Promote equal housing opportunities for all residents, including Sonoma’s special needs populations, so that residents can reside in the housing of their choice.**

**Policy 5.1:** Support the provision of fair housing services and tenant/landlord mediation to Sonoma residents.

**Policy 5.2:** Support development and maintenance of affordable senior rental and ownership housing and supportive services to facilitate maximum independence and the ability of seniors to remain in their homes or within the greater Sonoma community.

**Policy 5.3:** Continue to address the special needs of persons with disabilities through provision of supportive housing, accessibility grants, zoning for group housing, universal design, and procedures for reasonable accommodation.

**Policy 5.4:** Work cooperatively with the County and other applicable organizations to address valley-wide special housing needs, such as housing for agricultural workers and the homeless, and including transitional housing and emergency shelters.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**Goal 6.0: Promote environmental sustainability through support of existing and new development which minimizes reliance on natural resources.**

**Policy 6.1:** Preserve open space, watersheds, environmental habitats and agricultural lands, while accommodating new growth in compact forms in a manner that de-emphasizes the automobile.

**Policy 6.2:** Implement Sonoma’s Green Building Ordinance to ensure new development is energy and water efficient, and consider establishing additional incentives to achieve energy and water conservation efficiencies higher than those required by the Ordinance. Revise and/or revisit the ordinance as necessary to reflect the introduction of a State-wide green building code.

**Policy 6.3:** Promote the use of sustainable construction techniques and environmentally sensitive design for all housing, to include best practices in water conservation, Low-impact drainage, and greenhouse gas reduction.

**Policy 6.4:** Promote the use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy, cogeneration, and non-fossil fuels.

**Policy 6.5:** Incorporate transportation alternatives such as walking, bicycling and, where possible, transit, into the design of new development.

**Policy 6.6:** Ensure sufficient water resources to serve existing and future residents provided for under Sonoma’s 2020 General Plan: 1) take proactive steps to improve water conservation; 2) upgrade water supply infrastructure; 3) increase the local supply of water through new wells; 4) protect the quality and sustainability of groundwater resources; 5) investigate alternative water supply options.

## HOUSING PROGRAMS

The goals and policies contained in Sonoma’s Housing Element are implemented through a series of housing programs. The housing programs described on the following pages include existing programs, as well as new programs developed to address identified needs. Sonoma’s overall program strategy for addressing its housing needs has been defined according to the following themes previously described in the introduction to the Housing Plan:

- Ensuring diversity
- Improving housing affordability
- Preserving housing assets
- Reducing governmental constraints
- Promoting equal housing opportunities
- Environmental sustainability

The Housing Program Summary Table H-6 located at the end of this section specifies the following for each program: 2009-2014 program objective; funding source(s); agency responsible for implementation; and implementation time frame. Overall quantified objectives for new construction, rehabilitation and conservation are presented in Table H-7.

The City encourages the residents to think in a holistic manner and to look through the many programs outlined in this section while considering their options when applying for upgrades, additions or renovations in projects. These new upgrades or renovations proposed at sites should be encouraged to include plans for sustainability, accessibility for seniors and rehabilitation.

Housing Element statutes now require an analysis of the needs of extremely low income (<30% AMI) households, and programs to assist in the creation of housing for this population. The Sonoma Housing Element sets forth several programs which help to address the needs of extremely low income households, including: Land Assembly and Write-Down (Program #2); Alternative Housing Models (Program #5); Second Dwelling Units (Program #6); Multi-family Acquisition/Rehab with Affordability Covenants (Program #8); Section 8 Rental Assistance (Program #9); Mobile Home Park Rent Stabilization (Program #13); Preservation of Assisted Rental Housing (Program #15); Zoning Text Amendments (for SROs, transitional and supportive housing, emergency shelters, community care facilities – Program #22)); and Homeless Services and Shelter (Program #26)

## HOUSING DIVERSITY

### 1. Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

The purpose of Sonoma’s inclusionary housing requirement is to ensure a component of affordable housing is provided as part of residential development. The City’s inclusionary ordinance pertains to projects with five or more units, and requires 20 percent of the project’s units to be provided at an affordable housing cost to at least moderate (120% AMI) income households. Within the Sonoma Residential District, which generally applies to properties at least 3 acres in size, at least one-half of the inclusionary units must be affordable to low (80% AMI) income households. Sonoma’s inclusionary program has been highly successful, having integrated long-term affordable units within over twenty market rate developments.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue implementation of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to facilitate development of low and moderate income rental and ownership units.*



## 2. Land Assembly and Write-Down

The Sonoma Community Development Agency (CDA) has actively acquired sites utilizing the Agency's 20 percent housing set-aside fund and written down the cost to facilitate the development of affordable housing. A variety of affordable projects have been completed on CDA-owned sites, including ownership, rental and senior rental projects. The CDA currently owns the following two sites which it intends to provide to private developers for development of affordable housing during the planning period:

- **19344 Sonoma Highway:** Two acre parcel designated a "Housing Opportunity" site in the General Plan. The City has entered into a development agreement with a non-profit for development of 42 affordable rental units, including 5-10 units affordable to extremely low income households, with the balance affordable to households earning very low incomes.
- **20269 Broadway ("Four Corners Site"):** Two acre vacant parcel designated for Mixed Use in the General Plan. Approximately 39 units can be accommodated.

*2009-2014 Objective: Work closely with selected developer of Sonoma Highway site to facilitate development process, with a goal of completing construction in 2011. Issue an RFP for the Four Corners site by 2011, with a goal of completing development by 2013. Continue to actively seek sites for purchase by the CDA for affordable housing.*

## 3. Partnerships with Affordable Housing Developers

In today's housing market, creative approaches are required to finance and build affordable and special needs housing. Sonoma has partnered with several different nonprofit developers in the provision of affordable ownership and rental housing. Nonprofits active in the Sonoma area include: Burbank Housing Corporation; Community Housing Sonoma County; Affordable Housing Associates; Habitat for Humanity; Community Land Trust of Sonoma County; and Eden Housing, among others. The City participates in the Sonoma County Housing Coalition, providing an ongoing opportunity for coordination with local housing non-profits.

To specifically address the housing needs of farmworkers, the City will coordinate with the County's farmworker housing program, as well as non-profits such as Burbank Housing Development Corporation, California Human Development Corporation, and Sonoma County Housing Coalition, to promote the construction of farmworker housing. The City will assist by partnering with the County and/or other organizations to support applications for funding to the State's Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program. *2009-2014 Objective: Continue to partner with affordable housing providers through provision of land write-downs, regulatory incentives and/or direct assistance. By 2010, contact the Community Land Trust of Sonoma County and Habitat for Humanity to discuss available housing sites and opportunities for infill development. Annually meet with County representatives to discuss farmworker housing needs and potential applications for funding.*

## 4. Adaptive Reuse

The conversion of outmoded buildings can provide the opportunity for new residential uses within a community. As a housing strategy, adaptive reuse can introduce housing into non-residential areas, restore buildings to a useful purpose, and provide live/work space at a reasonable cost. Sonoma encourages the adaptive reuse of historic structures, permitting uses not otherwise allowed through the base zone as well as allowing for increased residential densities. Examples of conversion of commercial structures to residential use in Sonoma include the old Boys and Girls Club, and the old Bowl Center.

While Sonoma has a successful adaptive reuse ordinance (Chapter 19.42), it is currently limited to either officially designated historic structures, or structures with potential historic value located within the Historic Overlay zone. Extending adaptive reuse provisions to non-historical buildings could provide expanded opportunities for housing, as well as facilitate revitalization of vacated commercial properties.

*2009-2014 Objective: By 2011, evaluate expansion of the current adaptive reuse ordinance to encompass non-historic structures.*

## 5. Alternative Housing Models

Sonoma recognizes the changing housing needs of its population, including a growing number of non-family households, aging seniors in need of supportive services, and single-parent families in need of childcare and other services. To address such needs, the City can support the provision of non-traditional and innovative housing types to meet the unique needs of residents, including co-housing, shared housing, and assisted living for seniors, among others.

Co-housing is an innovative type of collaborative housing originated in Denmark in the 1960s. Co-housing communities consist of individually owned, private homes clustered around common facilities and amenities in a walkable environment. Common features may include a community garden, recreational areas, and a common house where day care and meals can be shared. The communities are managed by the residents who have chosen to live in a close-knit neighborhood. There are no zoning constraints to provision of co-housing communities in Sonoma.

Given the economic downturn, shared housing living situations are becoming more common. Homeowners are taking in renters, and renters are advertising for roommates to share in housing costs. Bringing in a tenant can be particularly helpful to Sonoma's elderly homeowners to provide the necessary support to allow them to remain in their homes. The City supports these types of shared living situations.

Assisted living facilities are designed for elderly individuals needing assistance with certain activities of daily living - such as eating, bathing, and transportation - but desiring to live as independently as possible. Such facilities bridge the gap between independent living and nursing homes. With 15 percent of Sonoma's population over the age of 75, assisted living can help meet the housing and supportive service needs of Sonoma's more frail senior residents. Sonoma's Development Code provides reduced parking standards for senior residential care facilities, although such facilities are currently limited to the RM zone district.

*2009-2014 Objective: Facilitate the development of alternative housing models suited to the community's housing needs through the provision of flexible zoning regulations, financial assistance, and/or other incentives. By 2010, evaluate the expansion of senior residential care facilities to additional zone districts.*

## 6. Second Dwelling Units

A second unit is a self-contained living unit with cooking, eating, sleeping, and full sanitation facilities, either attached to or detached from the primary residential unit on a single lot. Second units offer several benefits. First, they typically rent for less than apartments of comparable size, and can offer affordable rental options for seniors, college students and single persons. Second, the primary homeowner receives supplementary income by renting out their second unit, which can help many modest income and elderly homeowners remain in or afford their homes.

In compliance with AB 1866 (effective July 2003), Sonoma has developed a ministerial approval process for second units. The City now permits second units within the Rural Residential, Low Density Residential and Sonoma Residential districts by right, and within the Medium and High Density districts with a use permit. On the average, 3 to 4 second units are processed annually.

*2009-2014 Objective: Facilitate the construction of second units by making information available to the public on the City's website and at the City Hall public counter.*

## 7. Affordable Housing Funding Sources

Successful implementation of Sonoma's programs for development of affordable and special needs housing will depend on the leverage of local funds with a variety of federal, State, County, and private sources. The Financial Resources section of the Housing Element identifies the primary affordable housing funding programs available to Sonoma. In addition to applying for those funds directly available to municipalities, the City plays an important role in supporting developers to secure outside funds. City involvement may involve review of financial pro-forma analyses; provision of demographic, market and land use information; review and comment on funding applications; and City Council actions in support of the project and application. Many "third-party" grants may also require some form of local financial commitment.

*2009-2014 Objective: Actively pursue federal, State, county and private funding sources for affordable housing as a means of leveraging local funds and maximizing assistance. Support developers in securing outside funding sources.*

## **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

### **8. Multifamily Acquisition and Rehabilitation with Affordability Covenants**

Initiation of a multifamily acquisition and rehabilitation program can assist Sonoma both in stabilizing rents for lower income tenants and in upgrading older apartment properties. Under this program, the Community Development Agency acquires or assists in the acquisition of a multi-family property and then works with a development partner to coordinate the rehabilitation, maintenance and management of the project as long-term affordable housing. As an example, in 2002, the Sonoma CDA acquired and rehabilitated Sonoma's 34 unit Village Green (phase II) senior apartments. Opportunities for acquisition must be carefully evaluated, however. Existing residents who do not qualify for affordable housing must be relocated, which can be time-consuming and expensive. In addition, not all housing development that may be available for acquisition are designed to accommodate the types of households that the City is prioritizing for assistance (e.g., families and seniors.)

*2009-2014 Objective: Allocate housing set-aside funds towards the acquisition and rehabilitation of suitable multi-family properties and preservation as long term affordable housing. Contact non-profit housing providers regarding the City's interest in working in partnership to acquire and rehabilitate target properties.*

### **9. Section 8 Rental Assistance**

The Section 8 Rental Assistance Program extends rental subsidies to very low-income households, including families, seniors, and the disabled. The Section 8 Program offers a voucher that pays the difference between the current fair market rent (FMR) and what a tenant can afford to pay (i.e. 30% of household income). The voucher allows a tenant to choose housing that cost above the payment standard, provided the tenant pays the extra cost. Given the significant gap between market rents and what very low income households can afford to pay for housing, Section 8 plays a critical role in allowing such households to remain in the community, and is a key program to address the needs of extremely low and very low income households.

*2009-2014 Objective: Through the County Housing Authority, the City will continue to provide Section 8 rental assistance to extremely low to very low-income residents. The City will encourage landlords to register units with the Housing Authority, and provide a handout for rental property owners for distribution in conjunction with business license applications and renewals.*

### **10. Homebuyer Assistance Programs**

#### **10a. First-Time Homebuyer Program**

The Sonoma Community Development Agency has in the past provided downpayment assistance to first-time homebuyers in conjunction with selected affordable housing developments. Assistance has been structured where the Agency provides qualified applicants 15 percent of the purchase price, and the applicant provides a 5 percent downpayment, with a conventional loan secured for the remaining 80 percent of the purchase price. In addition to project-specific homebuyer assistance and subject to funding availability, the City is also interested in providing homeownership assistance on a citywide basis, providing preference to those who live and/or work in the Sonoma Valley.

*2009-2014 Objective: By 2010, evaluate establishment of a Citywide downpayment assistance program in light of available resources and other affordable housing priorities. Continue to provide project-based homebuyer assistance on Agency assisted affordable housing developments.*

## 10b. Mortgage Credit Certificate

The Sonoma County Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) program provides qualified first time homebuyers with a federal income tax credit of up to 20 percent of the annual interest paid on the homebuyer's mortgage. This enables homebuyers to have more disposable income available to qualify for a mortgage loan and make the monthly mortgage payments. The value of the MCC must be taken into consideration by the mortgage lender in underwriting the loan and may be used to adjust the borrower's federal income tax withholding. The MCC program has covenant restrictions to ensure the affordability of the participating homes for a period of 15 years.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to participate in the MCC program through the County, and assist in promoting in conjunction with all Sonoma's housing programs on the City's website.*

## 10c. Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives

Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHCs) are nonprofit business corporations in which residents share ownership of a building. LEHCs offer ownership opportunities to low and moderate income households while limiting the return from resale that they can receive from the housing. The corporation owns the property and issues a lease to its members, giving each the right to occupy a specific unit in the building.

Two primary types of financing are needed by cooperative members: blanket mortgages and share loans. The corporation obtains a blanket mortgage for the initial costs of developing or acquiring the property. It is the responsibility of the cooperative corporation and is repaid as part of the members' monthly charge. Members can obtain share loans for financing their units. When a member moves, the new purchaser may need to obtain a share loan to finance the increased value of the selling member's unit.

*2009-2014 Objective: Invite outside experts to present educational information to City staff, City Council, and community groups on limited equity cooperatives models. Utilize limited equity co-ops as a tool to facilitate affordable homeownership.*

## 11. Foreclosure Prevention

While home foreclosures are not as prevalent in Sonoma as in the more urban areas of the County, many residents are at-risk of defaulting on their mortgages and potentially losing their homes, particularly as variable rate mortgages continue to adjust upwards. In May 2010, 61 residential properties in the City were identified in some stage of foreclosure: 16 in pre-foreclosure, 23 that were bank-owned, and 22 that were in foreclosure auction. Several agencies in Sonoma County provide foreclosure intervention counseling services, including Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Catholic Charities, and Acorn Housing. The City will play an active role in promoting the services of these and other agencies to provide residents with the education and resources to help reduce foreclosures.

*2009-2014 Objective: Promote available foreclosure counseling services through the City website, counter, and through referrals.*

## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

### 12. Housing Rehabilitation Program

As a participating city in the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, City of Sonoma residents are eligible to participate in the Sonoma County Community Development Commission's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. This program offers low interest loans to low income (80% AMI) owner-occupant households, and multi-family property owners with a majority of low income tenants. Loans of up to \$50,000 are available for single-family homes, \$24,000 for mobile homes, and \$25,000 per unit for multi-family rental properties. For owner-occupants whose monthly housing expenses exceed 30 percent of income, loan payments may be deferred until the end of the 20-year loan period, or upon sale of the home. There is currently no waiting list for the program, and applicants apply directly through the County.

*2009-2014 Objective: Advertise the availability of the Housing Rehabilitation Program on the City's website and through handouts available at the City Hall public counter and Sonoma Community Center as well as through the local real estate community. Seek to assist a total of 20 lower income households during the planning period.*

### 13. Mobile Home Park Rent Stabilization and Conversion Ordinance

With three mobile home parks and over 400 coaches, mobile homes represent an important source of affordable housing in Sonoma. As a means of preserving the affordability of its mobile home parks - which are primarily occupied by senior citizens - the City has implemented a mobile home park rent control ordinance since 1993. This ordinance limits rent increases to a maximum of 80 percent of the increase in the consumer price index, but no greater than 5 percent in a 12 month period. The ordinance ensures stable rents for those residents of the mobile home parks who are not on long-term leases (in excess of 12 months). Park owners are permitted to charge a new base rent for a mobile home space whenever a coach-in-place sale or lawful space vacancy occurs. The City's Mobile Home Park Rent Review Board reviews requests for rental increases that exceed a CPI-based increase that is allowed for annually.

As a means of protecting its three parks for long-term mobile home park use, the City has established permanent mobile home General Plan and zoning designations. In 2004, the City Council adopted Chapter 9.92 of the Municipal Code further regulating mobile home park conversions, setting forth a series of tenant protections and establishing the required findings prior to allowance of any closure, including findings that available mobile home spaces exist in the County to accommodate displaced mobile homes; that adequate options are available to park residents; and that adequate relocation costs are provided.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to enforce the mobile home park rent stabilization and conversion ordinances to preserve the affordability and long term use of mobile home parks in Sonoma.*

### 14. Condominium Conversion Ordinance

Apartment projects and mobile home parks proposed for conversion to condominium ownership are subject to Sonoma's Condominium Conversion regulations (Section 19.65.030 of the Development Code). These regulations set forth a series of tenant protections including tenant noticing, relocation provisions, and right of first purchase. Applicants seeking approval for conversion are required to provide an assessment of the current vacancy rate of multi-family rental housing in the City, and in the case of mobile home parks, a mobile home park conversion impact report is required to be approved by City Council. The mobile home park resident conversion ordinance may need to be modified in light of recent court decisions addressing similar ordinances.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to provide tenant protections through implementation of the City's condominium and mobile home park conversion regulations. Monitor changes in state law applicable legal decisions and update the ordinances as necessary.*

### 15. Preservation of Assisted Rental Housing

As of 2009, Sonoma has a total of 104 assisted rent-restricted units in four developments, with an additional 80 affordable inclusionary and density bonus rental units integrated within 18 market rate projects. While none of these units are considered at high risk of conversion to market rents, one project is theoretically eligible for conversion in 2018: the seven unit Cabernet Apartments. This project was financed through a variety of sources, including Sonoma CDA funds, CDBG funds, CalHFA funds, and Burbank Housing Corporation Funds. The use restrictions on the CalHFA funds expire in 2018, although use restrictions on the other funding sources extend further out. Cabernet Apartments are owned and operated by the non-profit Burbank Housing, and are thus considered at very low risk of conversion. Discussions with Burbank Housing indicate they have been successful in maintaining affordability on similar projects where use restrictions have expired.

*2009-2014 Objective: Facilitate long-term preservation of Cabernet Apartments through the following actions:*

- ✓ *Meet with Burbank Housing one year prior to the CalHFA expiration date to evaluate the potential impact of the expiring CalHFA loan on project rents.*
- ✓ *To the extent affordability will be impacted, work with Burbank to restructure existing financing and/or secure supplementary financing to extend affordability controls.*

## **16. Affordable Housing Monitoring and Administrative Procedures Review**

As a means of assessing its progress towards addressing its regional housing needs, the City annually reviews the housing affordability for all units built, including those built in the housing market without the use of subsidies or incentives. This provides the City with ongoing information which can be used to evaluate the combined effects of the Growth Management Ordinance and market conditions on the production of affordable housing.

Sonoma is currently undertaking an in-depth evaluation of its administrative programs and processes related to affordable housing monitoring and program administration. The outcome of this evaluation will be to identify and implement methods for improving and streamlining the delivery of housing services.

*2009-2014 Objective: In conjunction with the annual Housing Element progress report, monitor housing production and progress towards attainment of the City's RHNA by affordability category. Complete the review of administrative procedures and monitoring related to affordable housing in 2009, and implement recommendations in 2010.*

## **17. Design Guidelines and Design Review**

Sonoma uses design review to ensure development embodies excellence in architectural design and complements the scale, character and rich history of the community. The Development Code establishes design guidelines for each of the town's thirteen planning areas, addressing site plan elements, building types and materials, and provides the foundation for all design reviews in Sonoma. The design guidelines work in concert with the Code's development standards, although unlike development standards which are mandatory, design guidelines are applied with flexibility to foster creativity, and strict adherence is not required for project approval. Sonoma's Design Review Commission (DRC) reviews all residential projects, except for single-family homes and duplexes located outside the Historic zone. Usually only one to two meetings are necessary to receive approval.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to implement design review to ensure maintenance of Sonoma's architectural character and quality of the built environment as the town continues to grow.*

## REMOVING GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

### 18. Growth Management Ordinance – Exception for Affordable Housing

Sonoma's Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) was established adopted by City Council in 1980 to manage increases in service and infrastructure demand from development consistent with available water supplies and sewer treatment capacities. The GMO currently limits development within the City to an average of 65 units per year, a level determined after extensive study of infrastructure capacities. (Between 2000-2008, actual residential development in Sonoma has averaged 59 units per year). Furthermore, the current 65 unit per year GMO limit was established at a level sufficient to accommodate Sonoma's regional housing needs, defined as 353 units for the 2007 to 2014 period, or an average of 51 units per year.

The GMO exempts the following types of development from the allocation process in that a qualifying development may apply for a building permit or planning approval, as applicable, at any time:

- ✓ Applications in which at least 60 percent of the proposed units qualify as deed-restricted affordable housing, and which involve City participation in planning, financing or development, as determined by City Council on a case-by-case basis. (To date, the City has approved all requests for GMO exemptions for projects with an affordable housing component).
- ✓ Inclusionary units provided at the very low or low income level
- ✓ Density bonus units
- ✓ Second units

The GMO is adopted by ordinance and thus the City Council is not subject to the limitations of a voter approved initiative in making appropriate changes to the ordinance.

*2009-2014 Objective: Annually review the Growth Management Ordinance in conjunction with the monitoring of affordable housing produced (refer to Program #16), and modify as necessary to ensure adequate incentives are provided for the development of affordable housing and fulfillment of regional housing needs in the current and future housing element cycles. Establish a system to track unused and forfeited allocations. Amend the ordinance to establish procedures and criteria addressing unused and forfeited allocations.*

### 19. Building and Impact Fee Reimbursements

The Sonoma Community Development Agency (CDA) pays low and moderate income housing funds into the City General Fund to pay for, on a case-by-case basis, some or all of a developer's building permit fees for units that have affordability covenants. Units subject to the City's inclusionary requirements are eligible for fee reimbursements, thereby reducing the ordinance's economic impact. Affordable projects typically receive fee reductions ranging from \$1,800 to \$2,400 per unit.

*2009-2014 Objective: Allocate at least \$25,000 annually in Agency housing set-aside funds towards the affordable housing fee reduction program.*

### 20. Parking Incentives and Modified Standards

Residential parking requirements play a significant role in project design and achievable densities, and can greatly impact the cost of development. Sonoma offers reductions in its residential parking standards as a means of facilitating the development of affordable and special needs housing, as well as mixed use, live-work and pedestrian-oriented housing. The City has established reduced parking standards for senior housing and live-work developments, and allows reduced parking for mixed-use developments based on a determination by the Planning Commission. Parking reductions are also offered as an incentive for developments to provide increased pedestrian-oriented open space. Furthermore, the Planning Commission is permitted to grant exceptions to parking standards of up to 30 percent in response to environmental features and site conditions, historic development patterns, and to promote creativity in site planning and development. Affordable housing projects are eligible for reduced parking under the City's density bonus ordinance.

While Sonoma currently provides flexibility in its parking standards to encourage housing which offers a particular community benefit, such as serving a special needs population or providing live-work units, the City could provide greater certainty to developers by incorporating refined multi-family parking standards within the Code. As discussed in the Governmental Constraints section of the Housing Element Background Report, the current multi-family parking standards of 1.5 spaces regardless of the number of bedrooms could potentially serve as a disincentive to the provision of studio and one-bedroom units. To better facilitate the provision of a variety of housing types and sizes, the City will re-evaluate its residential parking requirements and refine as appropriate.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to provide options for reduced parking as an incentive for development of affordable, special needs, mixed use, live-work, and pedestrian oriented housing. By 2011, re-evaluate multi-family parking standards and modify as appropriate.*

## 21. Affordable Housing Density Bonus

Pursuant to current state density bonus law (*Govt Code section 65915*), applicants of residential projects of five or more units may apply for a density bonus and additional incentive(s) if the project provides for one of the following:

- ✓ 10 percent of the total units for lower income households; or
- ✓ 5 percent of the total units for very low income households; or
- ✓ A senior citizen housing development or mobilehome park that limits residency based on age requirements for housing for older persons; or
- ✓ 10 percent of the total dwelling units in a condominium for moderate income households.

The amount of density bonus varies according to the amount by which the percentage of affordable housing units exceeds the established minimum percentage, but generally ranges from 20-35 percent above the specified General Plan density. In addition to the density bonus, eligible projects may receive 1-3 additional development incentives, depending on the proportion of affordable units and level of income targeting. The following development incentives may be requested:

- ✓ Reduced site development standards or design requirements.
- ✓ Approval of mixed-use zoning in conjunction with the housing project.
- ✓ Other regulatory incentives or concessions proposed by the applicant or the City that would result in identifiable cost reductions.

Applicants are also eligible to utilize the State's alternative parking ratio (inclusive of handicapped and guest spaces) of 1 space for 0-1 bedroom units, 2 spaces for 2-3 bedroom units, and 2.5 spaces for 4+ bedrooms.

Sonoma has approved density bonuses for several affordable housing projects in the past, including Firehouse Village and Maysonnave Apartments. Subsequent to adoption of its Development Code, SB 1818 made significant changes to State density bonus law which now need to be incorporated into the Code. In addition, the City's density bonus ordinance needs to clarify that provision of required inclusionary units qualifies for a density bonus.

*2009-2014 Objective: Update Chapter 19.44 of the Development Code by 2010 to reflect current State density bonus provisions and clarify the relationship between local inclusionary requirements and eligibility for density bonus eligibility. Advertise on Sonoma's website, and promote in conjunction with discussions with development applicants.*



## 22. Zoning Text Amendments

As part of the Governmental Constraints analysis for the Housing Element update and pursuant to new requirements under SB 2, several revisions to the Sonoma Development Code have been identified as appropriate to better facilitate the provision of a variety of housing types. These Code revisions include:

- ✓ Develop a definition of “family” which is inclusive and non-discriminatory, and incorporate into the Development Code.
- ✓ Create a “community care facility” use category and definition and distinguish from residential care homes; list community care facilities with 6 or fewer occupants as permitted in residential zone districts; designate zone districts where care facilities with 7 or more occupants will be permitted or conditionally permitted.
- ✓ Establish a single room occupancy (SRO) definition and use category in the Development Code and identify zones in which SROs will be permitted by right and/or with a use permit. Establish development standards for SROs.
- ✓ Create a supportive housing use category and definition. Utilize the same standards and permitting procedures to regulate supportive housing and transitional housing as other residential uses of the same type in the same residential zone district.
- ✓ Identify emergency shelters as a use permitted in the Public (P) zone district by-right without any discretionary action required. Emergency shelters will be subject to the same development and management standards as other uses permitted in the P zone. However, the City will develop written, objective standards to regulate the following, as permitted under SB 2:
  - ◆ The maximum number of beds or persons permitted to be served nightly;
  - ◆ Off-street parking;
  - ◆ The size and location of exterior and interior onsite waiting and client intake areas;
  - ◆ The provision of onsite management;
  - ◆ The proximity of other emergency shelters;
  - ◆ The length of stay;
  - ◆ Lighting;
  - ◆ Security during hours that the emergency shelter is in operation.
- ✓ Establish a definition for agricultural employee housing and use category in the Development Code. Utilize the same processing procedures to regulate agricultural employee housing as other agriculture uses within the Agriculture zone district, and for agricultural employee housing with six or fewer workers, regulate as a single-family use, consistent with H&S Code 17021.5-6.

*2009-2014 Objective: Amend the Zoning Ordinance in 2010 to make explicit provisions for a variety of special needs housing. Develop objective standards to regulate emergency shelters as provided for under Senate Bill 2.*

## EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

### 23. Fair Housing Program

Fair Housing of Sonoma County (FHOSC) is the designated provider of fair housing and tenant-landlord information throughout the County. FHOSC provides fair housing investigation and coordinates referral services to assist individuals who may have been the victims of discrimination. They maintain a fair housing hotline (707)579-5033 and provide bi-lingual in-person counseling at their offices in Santa Rosa. Fair housing education and outreach includes publication and distribution of *A Handbook for Landlords & Tenants*, and presentations to community groups and housing providers on fair housing issues.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to promote fair housing practices, and refer fair housing complaints to Fair Housing of Sonoma County. As a means of furthering fair housing education and outreach in the local community, the City will advertise the fair housing program through placement of fair housing services brochures at the public counter, the Sonoma Community Center and on the City’s website.*

### 24. Universal Design

The goal of universal design is to accommodate a wide range of abilities including children, aging populations, and persons with disabilities by providing features in residential construction that enhance accessibility. Examples of universal design features include:

- ✓ Entrances without steps that make it easier for persons of all ages to enter the home
- ✓ Wider doorways that enhance interior circulation and accommodate strollers and wheelchairs
- ✓ Lever door handles that are easier to use, especially by parents with an infant or a person with arthritis
- ✓ Light switches and electrical outlets that are located at a height more convenient and accessible to the elderly

Universal design features cost less when incorporated into homes at the time of construction rather than retrofitted at a later date. The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has prepared a Model Universal Design Local Ordinance for use by jurisdictions.

*2009-2014 Objective: Develop a Universal Design Principals brochure by 2010, and provide to residential development applicants.*

## 25. Reasonable Accommodation Procedures

It is the policy of the City of Sonoma to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities seeking fair access to housing in the application of its zoning and building laws. Depending on the nature and extent of a requested accessibility modification, the City would accommodate such requests either through a building permit, an administrative adjustment, or a zoning exception.<sup>1</sup> While Sonoma has not identified any constraints on the development, maintenance or improvement of housing for persons with disabilities, the City does not have in place specific procedures for requesting a reasonable accommodation. As a means of facilitating such requests and removing constraints for persons with disabilities, the City will develop specific written reasonable accommodation procedures.

*2009-2014 Objective: By 2010, develop written procedures for reasonable accommodation requests with respect to zoning, permit processing, and building codes. Procedures will specify who may request an accommodation, time frame for decision-making, and modification provisions.*

## 26. Homeless Services and Shelter

In cooperation with community groups, the City constructed an emergency shelter in 2008 on Police Station property. The shelter accommodates nine individuals at maximum capacity, and is managed by the non-profit Sonoma Overnight Support. The maximum stay is three weeks during which time residents are provided with supportive services and housing referrals to assist in regaining self-sufficiency.

The City participates in the Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless and the County's Continuum of Care as a means coordinating a regional approach to issues of homelessness. The City also provides referrals, and as available, funding support to area homeless service providers.

*2009-2014 Objective: Continue to operate the Sonoma Homeless shelter, support area homeless service providers, and participate in regional efforts to address homelessness.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## 27. Green Building Program

“Green buildings” are structures that are designed, renovated, re-used or operated in a manner that enhances resource efficiency and sustainability. These structures reduce water consumption, improve energy efficiency and lessen a building's overall environmental impact. Sonoma has taken a number of significant actions towards becoming a green and sustainable city, including:

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning Commission is authorized to grant exceptions to the Development Code of up to 30 percent of the dimensional standards (i.e. distance between structures, building area and coverage, setbacks, structure heights, landscape and paving requirements) and parking standards.

- ✓ Adoption of an Urban Growth Boundary to prevent urban sprawl;
- ✓ Establishment of a Community Services and Environment Commission;
- ✓ Adoption of a local Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2008);
- ✓ Participation in the Sonoma County Energy Independent Loan Program, providing funds to property owners to install energy efficiency and water conservation improvements (2009);
- ✓ Adoption of a Green Building Ordinance (2009).

The City's Green Building Ordinance, adopted in March 2009, requires new residential structures with more than 500 square feet to submit a completed Build It Green (BIG) checklist as part of building plan submittal and demonstrate compliance with BIG Green Building Guidelines; non-residential structures with more than 5,000 square feet are subject to LEED<sup>2</sup> green building standards. As a means of encouraging projects to achieve energy efficiencies higher than those required by Sonoma's Green Building Ordinance, the City is evaluating various incentives, such as a reimbursements in City planning and building fees.

*2009-2014 Objective: Provide outreach and education to developers, architects and residents to provide information on how to incorporate sustainability in project design, as well as in existing structures. By 2011, evaluate incorporation of incentives into the Green Building Ordinance to achieve higher levels of energy efficiency, or other changes that might be necessary to reflect the pending State green building standards .*

## 28. Energy Conservation Initiatives

In 2008, the California Public Utilities Commission allocated over \$100 million to GRID Alternatives to administer the Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes Program. This new program provides substantial incentives to help qualifying low income homeowners residing in deed-restricted affordable housing throughout the State to install solar electric systems. GRID Alternatives provides complete administrative management of the program, including client outreach and education, system planning, obtaining building permits, preparing rebate and utility paperwork, and providing system warranties. Sonoma's affordable homeownership projects, such as Wildflower Development, as well as many of the City's for-sale inclusionary units are likely eligible for assistance under the Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes Program.

In April 2010, Sonoma became the first city in Sonoma County to enable city businesses and city residents to access the newly established Sonoma County Energy Independence Loan Program. Property owners are able to borrow money to install a wide variety of improvements, including but not limited to solar and voltaic units, solar thermal devices and tankless water heaters. Also eligible are water efficiency technologies that help conserve water, such as low-flush toilets. Information is available on the newly-established website at [www.sonomacountyenergy.org](http://www.sonomacountyenergy.org).

*2009-2014 Objective: Contact GRID Alternatives in 2010 regarding program participation, and provide a list of potentially eligible affordable homes. Advertise the Energy Independence Loan Program to residents and businesses.*

## 29. Sonoma Water Action Plan and Conservation Incentives

In response to the challenges associated with meeting projected water demand, the City has developed a broad strategy for meeting projected water needs through development of a Water Action Plan (December 2008). The Action Plan encompasses the following six components:

- ✓ Conservation;
- ✓ Imported water;
- ✓ Wells/groundwater management;
- ✓ Recycled water;
- ✓ Water management and infrastructure;
- ✓ Water demand.

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<sup>2</sup> LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) refers to the green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

A series of specific action steps with time frames for completion are set forth to move the City forwards in addressing each of the Plan's six components. For example, in 2009 the Action Plan calls for the City to implement updated water conservation measures for new development; implement new conservation programs and efficiency requirements; and investigate standards and incentives for graywater systems and rain harvesting.

The City's website advertises the following water conservation programs and incentives available to residents:

- ✓ Ultra Low-Flow Toilet Rebate - Rebates of \$100 per toilet for replacing non-water conserving toilets.
- ✓ WaterSmart Home Program - Free home water use evaluation and water saving recommendations.
- ✓ Water Conservation Fixtures - Free, high-quality showerheads, faucet aerators, hose nozzles and dye tabs available at City Hall. Clothes Washer Rebate - \$75 rebates available from the City and an additional \$75 available from PG&E.

*2009-2014 Objective: Implement the conservation and improvement measures called for in the Water Action Plan. Conduct periodic reviews of the Plan and modify as necessary to ensure adequate water supply to meet Sonoma's regional housing needs (RHNA). Advertise available water conservation programs and incentives.*

### **30. Water and Sewer Priority for Affordable Housing**

The City will notify all public water and sewer providers of their responsibility under State law to grant priority for service allocations to developments that include units affordable to lower income households. Within 60 days of adoption of the updated Housing Element, the City will distribute the Element to providers, along with a summary of its regional housing needs allocation.

*2009-2014 Objective: Distribute Housing Element to water and sewer providers within 60 days of Element adoption.*

### **31. Flood Hazards: Safety, Conservation and Land Use Element Review**

Pursuant AB 162, jurisdictions are required to amend the safety and conservation elements of the General Plan to include analysis and policies regarding flood hazard and management information upon the next update of the housing element after January 2009. Jurisdictions are also required to annually review the land use element for those areas subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by FEMA or the State DWR. Any amendments to the safety, conservation or land use elements will require review of the housing element and amendment as necessary to ensure internal consistency.

*2009-2014 Objective: By 2011, review, and amend as necessary, the Safety, Conservation and Land Use elements to address flood hazard requirements under AB 162. Review the Housing Element to ensure internal consistency.*

**Table H-6: Housing Programs Implementation Summary**

Housing Program	Program Goal	2009-2014 Objective(s)	Funding Source	Responsible Agency/ Department	Time Frame
<b>HOUSING DIVERSITY</b>					
<b>H-1. Inclusionary Housing Ordinance</b>	Integrate affordable units within market rate development.	Achieve 10 low-income and 30 moderate-income inclusionary units over 5-year period.	General	Planning	Achieve 40 affordable units by 2014.
<b>H-2 Land Assembly and Write-Down</b>	Facilitate development of affordable housing.	81 extremely low, very low and low income family rental units.	Set-aside funds	Planning; CDA	2011- Complete construction on Sonoma Hwy site. 2013- Complete construction on Four Corners site.
<b>H-3 Partnerships with Affordable housing Developers</b>	Continue to build partnerships with affordable housing providers.	Contact additional non profits to discuss available housing sites and opportunities for development.	Set-aside funds	Planning	Contact non-profits by 2010.
<b>H-4 Adaptive Reuse</b>	Introduce housing into non-residential areas, restore buildings, and provide live/work space.	Evaluate expansion of the current adaptive reuse ordinance to encompass non-historic structures.	General	Planning	Evaluate expansion of the ordinance by 2011.
<b>H-5 Alternative Housing Models</b>	Support the provision of non-traditional, innovative housing types to meet unique needs.	Offer flexible zoning and incentives to foster alternative housing types. Evaluate expansion of senior residential care facilities to additional zone districts.	General	Planning	Evaluate expansion of senior residential care by 2010.
<b>H-6 Second Dwelling Units</b>	Provide additional sites for rental housing in existing neighborhoods.	Implement City’s current ordinance, and make information available to the public via the City website and at City Hall.	General	Planning	Make information available by 2010.
<b>H-7 Affordable Housing Funding Sources</b>	Leverage local funds to maximize assistance.	Actively pursue variety of funding sources for affordable housing. Support developers in securing outside funding.	Federal, State, County and private	Planning; CDA	Annually as RFPs are issued.
<b>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY</b>					
<b>H-8 Multifamily Acquisition and Rehabilitation with Affordability Covenants</b>	Stabilize rents for lower income tenants and upgrade older apartment properties.	Allocate housing set-aside funds toward acquisition and rehabilitation of multi-family properties. Contact non-profits regarding participation.	Set-aside funds	Planning; CDA	Allocate set-aside funds and contact non-profit providers by 2010.

**Table H-6: Housing Programs Implementation Summary**

<b>Housing Program</b>	<b>Program Goal</b>	<b>2009-2014 Objective(s)</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/ Department</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<b>H-9 Section 8 Rental Assistance</b>	Assist extremely low and very low-income households with rental payments.	Encourage landlords to register units with Housing Authority; prepare handout for rental property owners.	HUD Section 8	Planning; County Housing Authority	Prepare and disseminate property owner handout by 2010.
<b>H-10A First Time Homebuyer Program</b>	Expand home-ownership opportunities to low and moderate income households.	Continue to provide project-based ownership assistance on CDA projects. Evaluate establishing Citywide Downpayment assistance program.	Set-aside funds	Planning; CDA	Evaluate establishing Citywide program by 2010.
<b>H-10B Mortgage Credit Certificate</b>	Expand home-ownership opportunities to low and moderate income households.	Promote program in conjunction with the real estate community. Advertise through brochures and on City's website.	County	Planning Sonoma County	Ongoing advertisement of program
<b>H-10C Limited Equity Cooperatives</b>	Expand home-ownership opportunities to low and moderate income households.	Utilize limited equity co-ops as tool to facilitate affordable homeownership. Invite experts to present information on co-ops to Council, staff and community.	Set-aside funds	Planning; CDA	Invite experts on co-ops by 2010.
<b>H-11 Foreclosure Prevention</b>	Prevent home foreclosures.	Promote foreclosure counseling via City newsletter, website and referrals. Initiate early contact with households delinquent on mortgage payments.	Set-aside funds	Planning; CDA	Initiate foreclosure outreach in 2009
<b>HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION</b>					
<b>H-12 Housing Rehabilitation Program</b>	Maintain quality of housing stock.	Advertise availability of program on website and via handouts. Seek to assist 20 lower income households.	CDBG	Planning; Sonoma County	Assist 20 households by 2014.
<b>H-13 Mobile Home Park Rent Stabilization and Conversion Ordinance</b>	Maintain mobile home parks as important source of affordable housing.	Enforce mobile home park rent stabilization and conversion ordinances.	General	Planning	Ongoing
<b>H-14 Condominium Conversion Ordinance</b>	Provide protections for tenants in apartments and mobile homes proposed for conversion.	Implement condominium and mobile home park conversion regulations.	General	Planning	Ongoing

**Table H-6: Housing Programs Implementation Summary**

<b>Housing Program</b>	<b>Program Goal</b>	<b>2009-2014 Objective(s)</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/ Department</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<b>H-15 Preservation of Assisted Rental Housing</b>	Preserve Cabernet Apartments as affordable housing.	Monitor conversions on the horizon.	CDA	Planning; CDA	Meet with Burbank Housing Corp. by 2017.
<b>H-16 Affordable Housing Monitoring and Administrative Procedures Review</b>	Improve and streamline the delivery of affordable housing services.	Annually monitor housing production and progress towards RHNA. Evaluate administrative procedures and affordable housing monitoring.	General	Planning; City Manager	Implement recommended changes to administrative procedures by 2010.
<b>H-17 Design Guidelines and Design Review</b>	Ensure excellence in architectural and community design.	Continue to implement Sonoma’s design review process.	General	Planning; Design Review Commission (DRC)	Ongoing
<b>REMOVING GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS</b>					
<b>H-18 Growth Management Ordinance-Exception for Affordable Housing</b>	Ensure growth management policies do not hinder affordable housing production or attainment of regional housing needs.	Annually review effects of GMO on production of affordable housing and modify as necessary to provide adequate incentives consistent with Sonoma’s current and future regional housing needs.	General	Planning	Annually in conjunction with Housing Element review.
<b>H-19 Building and Impact Fee Reimbursements</b>	Reduce the costs of developing affordable housing.	Allocate \$25,000 annually in Agency housing set-aside funds toward fee reduction program.	Set-aside funds	CDA	Annual budget allocation.
<b>H-20 Parking Incentives and Modified Standards</b>	Incentivize development of affordable, special needs, mixed use, live-work, and pedestrian oriented housing.	Provide parking reductions on affordable projects, and other projects which meet community goals Re-evaluate multi-family parking standards and modify as appropriate.	General	Planning; CDA	Ongoing incentives. Re-evaluate standards by 2011.
<b>REMOVING GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS</b>					
<b>H-21 Affordable Housing Density Bonus</b>	Provide density and other incentive to facilitate affordable housing development.	Incorporate changes in State density bonus law into the Code. Advertise on website, and promote in discussions with developers.	General	Planning	Revise Code and advertise program by 2010.
<b>H-22 Zoning Text Amendments</b>	Provide appropriate zoning to facilitate a variety of special needs housing.	Amend Development Code to make explicit provisions for special needs housing. Develop standards for emergency shelters.	General	Planning	Complete Code revisions in 2010.
<b>EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS</b>					

**Table H-6: Housing Programs Implementation Summary**

<b>Housing Program</b>	<b>Program Goal</b>	<b>2009-2014 Objective(s)</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/ Department</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<b>H-23 Fair Housing Program</b>	Promote fair housing practices and prevent housing discrimination.	Refer fair housing complaints to Fair Housing of Sonoma County. Disseminate fair housing information.	General	Planning; City Manager	Disseminate fair housing brochure and web advertising in 2010.
<b>H-24 Universal Design</b>	Increase accessibility in housing through Universal Design	Develop Universal Design Principals brochure, and inform residential development applicants.	General	Planning	Develop brochure by 2010.
<b>H-25 Reasonable Accommodation Procedures</b>	Ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.	Develop written, specific procedures with respect to zoning, permit processing and building codes.	General	Planning	Adopt procedures by 2010.
<b>H-26 Homeless Services and Shelter</b>	Assist the homeless and persons at-risk of homelessness in obtaining shelter and services.	Maintain Sonoma homeless shelter and support other providers and regional efforts.	General	Planning; City Manager	Ongoing.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>					
<b>H-27 Green Building Program</b>	Provide outreach on and enhance the City's Green Building programs.	Provide outreach and education on incorporating sustainability in project design. By 2010, evaluate added incentives to achieve higher levels of efficiency.	General	Planning	By 2010, evaluate additional Green Building incentives.
<b>H-28 Energy Conservation Initiatives</b>	Promote the installation of solar systems and water efficient technologies.	Connect eligible affordable homes with GRID Alternatives. Advertise the Energy Independence Loan Program to residents and businesses.	General	Planning; City Manager	Contact GRID Alternatives in 2010. Conduct outreach on Energy Independence Program in 2010.
<b>H-29 Sonoma Water Action Plan</b>	Ensure projected water needs are met.	Implement the conservation and improvement measures called for in the Water Action Plan. Conduct periodic reviews and modify as necessary to ensure adequate water supply to meet Sonoma's regional housing needs (RHNA). Advertise available water conservation programs.	General	Planning	Review Water Action Plan on an annual basis. Update website as new water conservation programs become available.
<b>H-30 Water and Sewer Priority for Affordable Housing</b>	Coordinate housing efforts with water and sewer providers	Distribute adopted 2009-2014 Housing Element to water and sewer providers, emphasizing requirements to prioritize allocations to	General	Planning	Distribute Element in 2009, within 60 days of adoption.



**Table H-6: Housing Programs Implementation Summary**

Housing Program	Program Goal	2009-2014 Objective(s)	Funding Source	Responsible Agency/ Department	Time Frame
		affordable housing.			
<b>H-31 Flood Hazards: Safety, Conservation and Land Use Element Review</b>	Ensure flood hazards are accounted for in designating future sites for housing development.	Review, and amend as necessary, the Safety, Conservation and Land Use Elements to address flood hazards, and review the Housing Element for internal consistency.	General	Planning	2011

**Table H-7: Summary of Quantified Objectives**

<b>TOTAL UNITS TO BE CONSTRUCTED (RHNA)</b>	
	<b>353 Units</b>
	36 Extremely Low
	37 Very Low
	55 Low
	69 Moderate
	156 Above Moderate
<i>(Direct assistance to 79 lower income units (Program #2) and achievement of 40 low and moderate income units through inclusionary (Program # 1))</i>	
<b>TOTAL UNITS TO BE REHABILITATED</b>	
	<b>20 Units</b>
	10 Very Low
	10 Low
<b>TOTAL UNITS TO BE PRESERVED</b>	
	<b>407 Units</b>
	10 Very Low (At-Risk: Cabernet Apartments)
	400 Low (Mobile home spaces)



City of Sonoma

# Housing Element Update 2009-2014

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## Appendices



APPENDIX A<sub>I</sub>  
**Housing Element Background Report**  
City of Sonoma

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# HOUSING ELEMENT BACKGROUND REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

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This Housing Element Background Report provides the detailed background and technical information used in developing the Element's goals, policies, and programs for the 2009-2014 planning period. The Housing Element itself focuses on housing strategy and solutions, while the Background Report explores housing issues underpinning the policy agenda. This Technical Report consists of the following sections:

- Housing Needs Assessment, which describes and analyzes Sonoma's population, household, and housing characteristics and trends;
- Housing Constraints, which assesses potential governmental, infrastructure, market, and other constraints to the development and affordability of housing; and
- Housing Accomplishments, which evaluates the City's progress in implementing the housing programs established in the 2003 Housing Element.

## Data Sources

Preparation of the Housing Element relied on a variety of data sources. Data from the 2000 Census on population and housing is somewhat dated, but remains the most comprehensive and widely accepted source of information. In addition, several data sources were used to update that information, including:

- Population and demographic data is updated by the State Department of Finance;
- Housing market information, such as home sales, rents, and vacancies, is updated through newspaper and internet rent surveys and DataQuick sales transactions;
- Public and non-profit agencies are consulted for data on special needs groups, the services available to them, and gaps in the system;
- Major Employers are provided by the City of Sonoma;
- Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Projections 2007 and ABAG's Regional Housing Needs Determination (May 15, 2008) provides demographic projections and information on future housing needs;
- Comparative data for income levels of various groups is provided by the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000; and
- Information on Sonoma's development standards are derived from the City's Zoning Ordinance.

## Definition of Terms

Throughout this Housing Element, a variety of technical terms are used in describing and quantifying conditions and objectives. The definitions of these terms follow:

- *Affordable Housing* -- Housing which costs no more than 30 percent of a low-, very low-, or extremely-low income household's gross monthly income. For rental housing, the residents can pay up to 30 percent of gross income on rent plus tenant-paid utilities. For homeownership, residents can pay up to 30 percent on the combination of mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and Homeowners' dues. For moderate income households, affordable homeownership housing is defined as that which costs no more than 35 percent of household gross monthly income.
- *Area Median Income (AMI)* -- The income figure representing the middle point of all Sonoma County household incomes. Fifty percent of households earn more than or equal to this figure and 50 percent earn less than or equal to this figure. The AMI varies according to the size of the household. For the Year 2009, the AMI for a four-person household in Sonoma County was \$80,200 and for a three-person household, the AMI was \$72,200. In general, the four-person AMI is used as the standard.
- *Extremely Low Income Households (ELI)* -- Households earning not more than 30 percent of the Sonoma County AMI.
- *Very Low Income Households (VLI)* -- Households earning between 31 and 50 percent of the Sonoma County AMI.
- *Low Income Households* -- Households earning between 51 and 80 percent of the Sonoma County AMI.
- *Moderate Income Households* -- Households earning 81 to 120 percent of the Sonoma County AMI.
- *Above Moderate Income Households* -- Households earning not less than 120 percent of the Sonoma County AMI.

# HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section of the Housing Element discusses the characteristics of the City’s population and housing stock as a means of better understanding the nature and extent of unmet housing needs. The Housing Needs Assessment is comprised of the following components: Demographic Profile; Household Characteristics; Housing Stock Characteristics; and Regional Housing Needs.

## Demographic Profile

The type and amount of housing needed in a community are largely determined by population growth and various demographic variables. Factors such as age, race/ethnicity, occupation, and income level combine to influence the type of housing needed and the ability to afford housing. This section addresses population, age, race/ethnicity and employment of Sonoma’s residents.

### Population Trends

Sonoma’s current population (2009 Department of Finance) is 10,078. As Sonoma has become more built out, population growth has slowed over the past two decades, and is projected by ABAG to slow even further in the future. The City’s population grew 12 percent during the 1990s, and nine percent during 2000-2008, and is projected to grow by only five percent between 2010-2020, and three percent during 2020-2030. Between 2000 and 2008, Sonoma’s Sphere of Influence experienced a 16 percent increase in population, compared to the nine percent within the City limits.

Many cities in Sonoma County saw brisk growth in the 1990s, and a few grew significantly between 2000 and 2008. ABAG predicts an overall slowdown in population growth in Sonoma County in the next decade, to about a 5 percent population growth rate in the County from 2010 to 2020.

**Table 1: Regional Population Growth Trends**

Jurisdiction	Population			Percent Change			
				Historical		Projected	
				1990-2000	2000-2008	2010-2020	2020-2030
Cotati	5,714	6,471	7,532	13%	16%	8%	5%
Petaluma	43,184	54,548	57,418	26%	5%	6%	5%
Rohnert Park	36,326	42,236	43,062	16%	2%	2%	3%
Santa Rosa	113,313	147,595	159,981	30%	8%	7%	5%
Sebastopol	7,004	7,774	7,714	11%	-1%	2%	4%
<b>Sonoma</b>	<b>8,121</b>	<b>9,128</b>	<b>9,943</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Sonoma + SOI		9,754	11,300		16%	6%	3%
Sonoma County	388,222	458,614	484,470	18%	6%	5%	4%

SOI = Sphere of Influence (co-terminus with Urban Growth Boundary)

Sources: 1990, 2000 Census, State Department of Finance 2008 - Population and Housing Estimates. ABAG Projections 2007.

## Age Characteristics

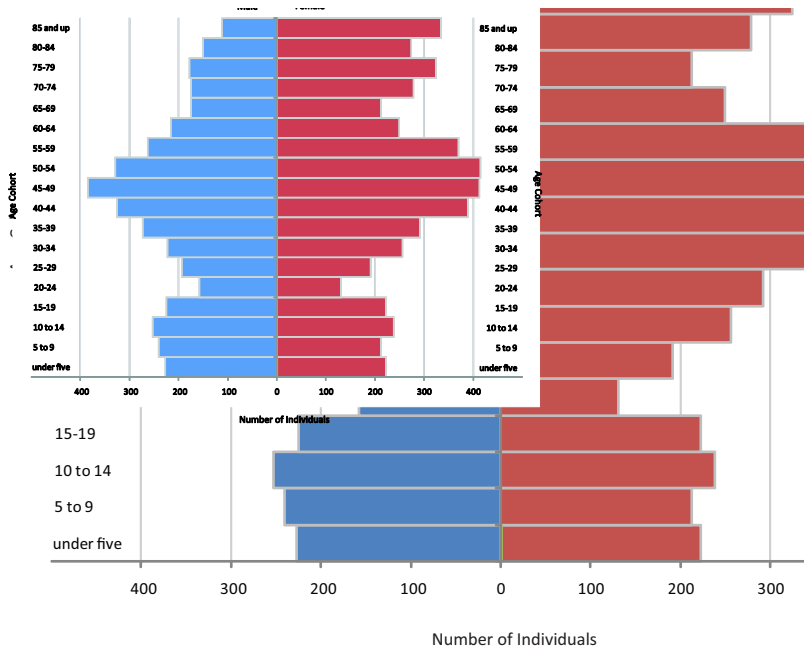
Sonoma's population is shifting toward a higher average age. Between 1990 and 2000, the Census reports a rise in the median age from 45 to 47 years. This is compared to a County median age of 38 years. It appears there is an aging in place of young adults. There is a sizable middle age population, and fewer family households. The 85 years and older age cohort grew from 279 to 446 between 1990-2000, but overall senior population, 75 and older, did not change much in that decade.

**Table 2: Age Characteristics and Trends**

Age Groups	1990		2000		Sonoma County % (2000)
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	
Preschool Age (Ages 0-4)	431	5%	450	5%	6%
School Age (5-17)	1,042	13%	1,244	14%	18%
College Age (18-24)	444	5%	438	5%	9%
Young Adults (25-44)	2,164	27%	2,142	23%	29%
Middle Age (45-64)	1,567	19%	2,641	29%	25%
Senior Adults (65+)	2,473	30%	2,213	24%	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,121</b>		<b>9,128</b>		
Median	44.8		46.8		37.5

Source: 2000 Census

**Table 3: Age-Gender Pyramid, City of Sonoma 2000**



Source: 2000 Census

## Race and Ethnicity

The Bay Area has been gradually changing in the racial and ethnic composition of its population. These changes have implications for housing needs to the extent that different groups may have different household characteristics, income levels, and cultural background that affect their need and preferences for housing.

**Table 4: Racial Composition, 2000**

	City	County	State
White	89%	75%	47%
Hispanic or Latino	7%	17%	32%
African American	0%	1%	6%
Native American	0%	1%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	3%	11%
Other/Two or more races	2%	3%	3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Sonoma has seen long-term changes in racial and ethnic composition; however Sonoma's ethnic makeup has changed little between the last two available Census surveys. In 2000, 89 percent of the population was white and 7 percent Hispanic, compared to 75 percent white and 17 percent Hispanic for the County.

Serving the Sonoma area, the Sonoma Valley Unified school district has more racial and ethnic diversity than the City population. An examination of recent enrollment data indicates students of Hispanic descent make up a significant portion of the student population. In academic year 2007/08, approximately 50 percent of students were White and 45 percent Hispanic, with other groups each making up less than 2 percent of enrolled students.<sup>1</sup>

## Employment Market

Evaluation of the types of jobs held by community residents provides insight into potential earning power and the segment of the housing market into which they fall. Information on how a community's employment base is growing and changing can help identify potential housing demand changes in the future.

The State Employment Development Department estimates that as of February 2009, 4,800 Sonoma residents are in the labor force, with 6.7 percent unemployment, compared to a County unemployment rate of 9.1 percent, and Statewide rate of 8.4 percent. Local, regional, and national employment trends were significantly in flux at the time the estimates were taken. Sonoma had a 4.1 percent unemployment rate in the 2000 Census.

**Table 5: Employment Profile**

Occupations of Residents	2000	
	Persons	Percent
Managerial / Professional	1,995	46.2%
Sales & Office	1,155	26.8%
Service Occupations	568	13.2%
Production/ Transportation/ Materials Moving	255	5.9%
Construction/ Extraction/ Maintenance	331	7.7%

<sup>1</sup> Data compiled from the Education Data Partnership website (<http://www.ed-dat.k12.ca.us/>)

Table 5 presents the occupation of Sonoma residents as of the 2000 Census. Sonoma's largest occupation types were managerial/professional (46 percent), sales and office (27 percent), and service occupations (13 percent). About 40 percent of the labor force has a college degree or higher and 93 percent has a high school degree (Table 6). Table 7 identifies the major employers in Sonoma. Many of the top employers are in the hospitality and tourism industry, including three hotels and a winery. Sonoma Valley Hospital, Sonoma Valley Unified School District, and Sonoma Market are also major employers in the City. There are about 8,850 total jobs in Sonoma city limits, reported by 2005 ABAG estimates. According to the 2000 Census, about 81 percent of Sonoma jobs were in the retail and service industries, and are projected to remain nearly the same, 79 percent, through 2010. The wine industry in the Sonoma Valley draws tourists and supports tourism in the City.

Farming, Forestry, Fishing	13	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,317</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In terms of the balance between jobs and housing, Sonoma has a high ratio of jobs to employed residents, indicating it is an employment center. Jobs/housing balance is defined as the ratio of number of jobs to number of housing units in a given area. Although the term "jobs/housing" balance is still often used, the more precise relationship is between jobs and the number of employed residents (because some households have no workers, while other have multiple workers). Jobs and housing are considered to be balanced when there are an equal number of employed residents and jobs within a given area, with a ratio of approximately 1.0. Balancing jobs and housing should result in a reduction in commuting as well as achieving a number of other related goals, including reduced traffic congestion on major highways and arterials, improved regional air quality conditions, and an enhanced community economic base. The balance between jobs and housing is an important consideration in establishing housing production and affordability goals. Based on ABAG estimates for 2005, Sonoma has a jobs-employed resident's ratio of 1.6. As shown in Table 8, Sonoma jobs/housing ratio tilts more heavily toward jobs than do most of the surrounding communities.

**Table 6: Education Level**

Education Level	City of Sonoma	Sonoma County
<High School	8%	15%
High School	19%	20%
Some College	27%	27%
Associate Degree	7%	9%
College Degree +	39%	29%

For Population 25 years and older.

**Table 7: Major Employers (Sonoma and Sonoma Valley)**

	Total	FT	PT	On Call
Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn <sup>1</sup>	500	no breakdown		NA
Sonoma Valley Hospital	459	194	86	179
Sonoma Valley Unified School District <sup>2</sup>	281	no breakdown		NA
The Lodge at Sonoma	240	151	89	NA
Sonoma Market/Glen Ellen Village Market <sup>3</sup>	200	no breakdown		NA
MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa	133	80	53	NA
Sebastiani Winery	124	no breakdown		NA

1. Business just outside City limits

2. Employees associated with the four SVUSD school within City limits only.

3. Includes employees associated with smaller market in Glen Ellen, outside City limits

**Table 8: Jobs to Employed Residents Ratio, 2005**

City	Jobs/Employed Residents Ratio
Cotati	0.6
Petaluma	1.1
Rohnert Park	0.7
Santa Rosa	1.0
Sebastopol	1.4
<b>Sonoma</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Sonoma County'	0.9

Source: ABAG Projections, 2005

Approximately one-quarter of Sonoma residents commuted 45 minutes or more to work, compared to just 15 percent of residents Countywide with 45+ minute commutes. The average travel time to work for Sonoma residents was 25 minutes. Public input during the Housing Element update process demonstrates a general concern that service workers supporting Sonoma’s retail and tourism economy cannot afford to live in the community in which they work. Table 9 illustrates which types of occupations fall into specific income categories, giving an idea of the wages earned by various professions in the region, relative to the area median income.

**Table 9: Average Wage Data for Select Occupations, 2008 Santa Rosa-Petaluma MSA**

<b>Extremely Low Income Occupations (&lt;\$23,350)</b>	
Waiters and Waitresses	Pharmacy Aides
Dishwashers	Fast Food Cooks
Hand Packers/Packagers	Housekeepers
Production Helpers	Coffee Shop Workers
Home Health Aides	Baggage Porters
<b>Very Low Income Occupations (\$23,350-\$38,900)</b>	
Security Guards	Farmworkers
Concierges	Painting Workers
Child Care Workers	School Bus Drivers
Cashiers	Social Worker
Travel Agents	Floral Designers
<b>Low Income Occupations (\$38,900-\$61,500)</b>	
Lodging Managers	Welders
Loan Counselors	Postal Service Mail Carriers
Construction Laborers	Elementary School Teachers
Fire Fighters	Machinists
Chefs and Head Cooks	Refuse Material Collectors
<b>Median Income Occupations (\$61,500-\$93,400)</b>	
Agricultural Managers	Cartographers
Budget Analysts	Civil Engineers
Architects	Psychologists
Real Estate Sales Agents	Chemists
Loan Officers	Physical Therapists

# Household Characteristics

## Household Type

According to the 2000 Census, Sonoma is home to 4,373 households, of which 54 percent are families. Families are comprised of married couple families with or without children as well as other family types, such as female-headed households with children. The relative proportion of family households in Sonoma declined between 1990 and 2000, and is well below that of the County (66%). In contrast, at 39 percent, single person households are far more prevalent in Sonoma than the County (26%), reflecting the community's large senior citizen population. The average household size in Sonoma is 2.04 persons, compared to 2.61 in the County, consistent with the City's characteristics of having fewer families and more seniors.

**Table 10: Household Characteristics**

Household Type	1990	2000		Sonoma County % (2000)	
	Number	Percent	Number		Percent
<b>Households</b>	3,818		4,373		
Families	2,168	57%	2,362	54%	
With Children	842	22%	923	21%	
Without Children	1,326	35%	1,439	33%	
Singles	1,456	38%	1,716	39%	
Other	194	5%	295	7%	
Average Household Size	2.10		2.04		2.61

Sources: 1990, 2000 Census.

## Household Income

Household income is the most important factor affecting housing opportunity, determining a household's ability to balance housing costs with other basic necessities of life. Income levels can vary considerably among households, based on tenure, household type, location of residence, and/or race/ethnicity, among other factors.

### Income Definitions

The State and Federal government classify household income into several groupings based upon the relationship to the County adjusted median income (AMI), adjusted for household size. The State of California utilizes the income groups presented in Table 11. However, federal housing programs utilize slightly different income groupings and definitions, with the highest income category generally ending at less than 95 percent AMI. For purposes of the Housing Element, the State income definitions are used throughout, except for the data that have been compiled by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is specifically noted.

Table 11 illustrates the proportions of households in Sonoma that fall into the four income categories. Approximately 40 percent of Sonoma's households are lower income, including 11 percent extremely low income, 10 percent very low income, and 18 percent low income.

**Table 11: Household Income Levels, 2000**

Income Level	2000	
	Households	Percent
Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	481	11%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	417	10%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	783	18%
Moderate Income and above (>80% AMI)	2,661	61%
Total	4,342	100%

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000  
<http://socsd.huduser.org/chas/reports>



Based on projections from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) for the year 2005, the mean household income of Sonoma residents was \$80,000. As seen in Table 12, household income in Sonoma was comparable to that in Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, but well below that in Petaluma. The 2005 Countywide mean household income was \$82,600, approximately 10 percent above that of the City of Sonoma.

**Table 12: Regional Household Incomes, 2005**

City	Mean Household Income (2005)
Cotati	\$79,300
Petaluma	\$93,700
Rohnert Park	\$79,700
Santa Rosa	\$82,400
Sebastopol	\$68,400
<b>Sonoma</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
Sonoma County	\$82,600

Source: ABAG Projections, 2005

### Income by Household Tenure

Table 13 shows the income level of Sonoma residents by household tenure. A significantly higher percentage of renter households (18%) were extremely low income (<30% AMI) compared to residents who owned their homes (6%). Rates of very low and low income households were approximately even between renters and owners, around 10 percent and 18 percent, respectively. The higher incidence of extremely low income renter households is of significance as market rents in Sonoma exceed the level of affordability for extremely low income households. The median income of Sonoma's renter households in 2000 was \$42,843, compared to \$56,389 for homeowners.

**Table 13: Income by Owner/Renter Tenure, 2000**

Income Level	Renters		Owners		Total %
	Households	%	Households	%	
Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	309	18%	172	6%	11%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	158	9%	259	10%	10%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	319	19%	464	17%	18%
Moderate Income and above (>80% AMI)	893	53%	1,768	66%	61%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,663</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000 - <http://socds.huduser.org/chas/reports>

### Income by Household Type

Table 14 shows the income level of Sonoma residents by some specific household attributes- elderly households, small families, and large families. Large family households were overwhelmingly at the moderate income level and above, as were small family household to a lesser extent. The evaluation of elderly households reveals that 20 percent of the 1,703 elderly households in Sonoma are at the extremely low income level, meaning they earn less than 30 percent of the county median income. Another 18 percent of elderly households are at the very low income level and 22 percent at the low income level. Overall, about 60 percent of all senior households in Sonoma are at low income levels or below.

**Table 14: Income Level by Household Type, 2000**

Income Level	Elderly	Small Family	Large Family	Other
Extremely Low Income (<30% AMI)	339	29	0	113
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	309	54	0	54
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	380	249	4	150
Moderate Income and above (>80% AMI)	675	1,245	172	569
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>1,577</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>886</b>

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000 - <http://socds.huduser.org/chas/reports>

## Special Needs

State law recognizes that certain households have more difficulty in finding decent and affordable housing due to special circumstances. Special needs populations include the elderly, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, large households, homeless persons and farmworkers. Table 15 summarizes the special needs populations in Sonoma. Each of these population groups, as well as their housing needs, is described below in greater detail. While varying significantly in housing needs, overall, special needs populations comprise a significant portion of Sonoma’s population.

**Table 15: Special Needs Groups**

Special Needs Groups	Persons	Households	Percent*
Seniors (65+)	2,164		24%
With a disability	857		(40%)
Senior Households**		1,703	39%
Renter		555	(33%)
Owner		1,148	(67%)
Seniors living alone		941	22%
Persons with Disability	1,857		20%
Female-headed Households		371	8%
With related children		177	(48%)
Large Households**		172	4%
Renter		34	(20%)
Owner		138	(80%)
Farmworkers***	36		0.4%
<b>Total Persons or Household</b>	<b>9,123</b>	<b>4,373</b>	

Source: 2000 Census (unless otherwise noted).

\* Numbers in ( ) reflect the % of the special needs group, and not the % of the City Population / Households. For example, of the City’s large households, 20% are renters and 80% are owners.

\*\* Source: <http://socds.huduser.org/scripts/odbic.exe/chas/index.htm>

\*\*\* Persons employed in Farming, Forestry or Fishing Occupations

### Seniors

Seniors often have special housing needs due to limited income, higher health care costs, and physical limitations. Senior households are defined as households with one or more persons over the age of 65 years. The 2000 Census counted 1,700 senior households, comprising 40 percent of Sonoma households. About 60 percent of those senior households are lower income. Over half the City’s senior households live alone, encompassing 940 seniors. One-third of Sonoma’s seniors are renters, and two-thirds of these renters overpay for housing (over 30% of income spent on rent). The City and its Community Development Agency have actively supported the development of affordable rental housing for seniors, including the following six projects: Village Green (34 units); Sonoma Creek Apartments (34 units); Cabernet Apartments (7 units); Donahue Apartments (10 units); Setzer Apartments (8 units); and Sonoma Hills (20 Units). Because of physical and/or other limitations, senior homeowners may have difficulty in performing regular home maintenance or repair activities. Many elderly homeowners can continue to live in their own homes, especially if structural modifications are made to help them cope with physical limitations, however there will nevertheless be an increasing demand for specialized care facilities for the elderly as Sonoma’s senior population ages.

Demographic data indicates a need for assisting senior renters. Senior homeowners face the problem of maintaining their homes and are often on fixed incomes, however it is senior renters who tend to experience the greatest housing needs due to fixed incomes and rising rents. Public input during preparation of this Housing Element Update emphasized the need for additional senior rental housing. There were also many qualitative comments about the diversity of senior housing needs- such as how many seniors prefer housing aimed at “active seniors” or co-housing solutions for seniors, for those who do not require convalescent care.

## Persons with Disabilities

While counted without much detail in the U.S. Census, this group is incredibly diverse in their housing needs. It can include the developmentally disabled, mentally ill, or mobility impaired. Physical and mental disabilities can hinder access to traditionally designed housing units and other facilities, as well as potentially limit the ability to earn income. Overall, 1,850 persons are disabled in Sonoma, or 20 percent of the population. Seniors comprise half of the disabled population. About 40 percent of working age disabled individuals in Sonoma are not employed.

**Table 16: Types of Disabilities, Persons Five Years and Older, City of Sonoma, 2000**

Type of Disability	Age Group						Total	
	5-15 years		16-64 years		65 years and over			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sensory	2	5.1%	116	7.5%	321	19.40%	439	13.50%
Physical	0	0%	356	22.9%	607	36.70%	963	29.60%
Mental	30	76.9%	170	10.9%	211	12.70%	411	12.60%
Self-Care	7	17.9%	49	3.1%	149	9.00%	205	6.30%
Go-Outside-Home	-	-	196	12.6%	368	22.20%	564	17.30%
Employment	-	-	670	43%	-	-	670	20.60%
Total Disabilities	39	100 %	1,557	100%	1,656	100.00%	3,252	100.00%

Source: 2000 Census

### Developmentally Disabled

The Developmentally Disabled are a separate population identified by the State of California, with differing housing needs from others with disabilities. The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Act ensures that “patterns and conditions of everyday life which are as close as possible to the norms and patterns of the mainstream of society” are available to these individuals. Furthermore, the *Olmstead v. L.C and E.W.* United States Supreme Court case required an “Integration Mandate” that “States are required to place persons with mental disabilities in community settings rather than institutions...when determined to be appropriate.” Despite these laws, people with developmental disabilities are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing that is inclusive in the local community.

A developmental disability is defined by the State as “a lifelong disability caused by a mental and/or physical impairment manifested prior to the age of 18 and are expected to be lifelong.” The conditions included under this definition include:

- Mental Retardation,
- Epilepsy,
- Autism, and/or
- Cerebral Palsy, and
- “Other Conditions needing services similar to a person with mental retardation.”

(Source: Background Report, 2008, Developmental Disabilities Board Area 5)

North Bay Housing Coalition partners with local agencies in providing housing with supportive services for people with developmental disabilities. They estimate that about 2 percent of the general population is typically considered developmentally disabled. For Sonoma, that would be about 200 individuals. Indeed, North Bay Regional Center currently serves 197 individuals with developmental disabilities in Sonoma. There is some overlap between the developmentally disabled population and the mentally and physically disabled populations.

Individuals with developmental disabilities are often independent and can live in their own apartments or homes with little support. Others who have more severe disabilities may require 24 hour assistance in homes that can accommodate their needs as individuals. The housing need for the individuals in Sonoma with developmental disabilities roughly translates to 50-60 units, derived from Sonoma's age breakdown as applied to its estimated developmental disabled population. As the younger individuals approach adulthood, they will need independent or assisted living; and similarly, as adults age, they too will need assisted living.

Both the Federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act impose an affirmative duty on local governments to make reasonable accommodations (i.e. modifications or exceptions) in their zoning and other land use regulations when such accommodations may be necessary to afford disabled persons an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. For example, it may be a reasonable accommodation to allow covered ramps in the setbacks of properties that have already been developed in order to accommodate residents with mobility impairments.

The City does not require special building codes or onerous project review to construct, improve, or convert housing for persons with disabilities. Community care facilities with six or fewer persons are permitted with a use permit in two residential zoning districts.

### **Female Headed Households**

Single-parent households typically have a special need for such services as childcare and health care, among others. Female-headed households with children in particular tend to have lower incomes, which limits their housing options and access to supportive services. The Census reports 371 female-headed households in Sonoma, 177 of which have children. Of the 2,400 families in Sonoma, 48 have incomes below the poverty level. About 36, or 75%, of those families below the poverty level are female headed households, and 27 female headed households below the poverty level have children under 18.

Due to lower incomes, female-headed households often have more difficulties finding adequate, affordable housing than families with two adults. Also, female-headed households with small children may need to pay for childcare, which further reduces disposable income. This special needs group would benefit generally from expanded affordable housing opportunities. More specifically, the need for dependent care also makes it important that housing for female-headed families be located near childcare facilities, schools, youth services, medical facilities, or senior services.

### **Large Households**

Large households are defined as households with five or more members. These households are typically identified as a group with special housing needs based on the limited availability of adequately sized, affordable housing units. The shortage of large units is especially evident among rental units. Large households often live in overcrowded conditions, due to both the lack of large enough units, and insufficient income to afford available units of adequate size.

Sonoma is home to 172 large households, representing just four percent of total households in the City. Of these large households, 20 percent, or 34 households, are renters. Based on the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) prepared by HUD, none of Sonoma's large renter households are lower income.

The Census identifies approximately 400 rental units (including apartments, townhomes and single-family rentals) in Sonoma with three or more bedrooms, in general, the appropriate sized units for a large household with five or more members. In comparison, the City has just 34 large renter households, indicating that Sonoma has an adequate supply of large rental units, and confirmed by the community's low rate of household overcrowding. However, the availability of vacant three bedroom units for rent is extremely limited, as indicated by the market rent survey conducted for the Housing Element.

### **Farmworkers**

Agricultural workers are a significant special needs population in the greater Sonoma County area, playing an important role in the region's wine industry. Within the City of Sonoma and its sphere of influence, however, ABAG estimates there are just 80 agricultural and natural resource jobs, representing one percent of total employment. With just 25 acres of agricultural zoning within the City and no farms of significant size, the City's farmworker population is predominately non-migratory, and as such, their housing needs are best addressed through year-round affordable rental and ownership housing. The City of Sonoma recently assisted in development of the 34 unit Wildflower sweat-equity homeownership project which included units specifically designated for occupancy by farmworkers. With 6,200 farm-related jobs in Sonoma County, the City acknowledges the important role farmworkers play in the regional economy, and is committed to assisting in the provision of housing for this special needs group. Farmworkers and day laborers are an essential component of the region's agriculture industry. Farmers and farmworkers are the keystone of the larger food sector which includes the industries that provide farmers with supplies and equipment, and the industries which process, transport and distribute products to consumers. Sonoma is located in the heart of the world's premier wine producing region. Grapes are the primary cash crop in the County. Grapevines account for a significant portion of the regional agricultural economy and the region's overall financial stability. Even within the City, there are approximately 13 acres used for wine production. Of course the City's tourism and hospitality establishments related to the wine industry are also major components of the local economy.

On a regional scale, there is a clear mismatch between housing costs and low farm worker wages, contributing to overcrowding and homelessness. Farmworker households are often comprised of extended family members or single male workers and as a result many farmworker households tend to have difficulties securing safe, decent and affordable housing. Far too often farmworkers are forced to occupy substandard homes or live in overcrowded situations. Additionally, farmworker households:

- Tend to have high rates of poverty;
- Live disproportionately in housing which is in the poorest condition;
- Have very high rates of overcrowding;
- Have low homeownership rates; and
- Are predominately members of minority groups.

The USDA's 2002 Census of Agriculture counted 15,467 hired farm workers in Sonoma County. About 60 percent of Sonoma County farmworkers are seasonal, working less than 150 days per year. Of seasonal farmworkers, about 75 percent worked for larger farms with ten or more workers. The USDA documents 401 farms with greater than ten workers and 977 farms with fewer than ten workers in Sonoma County. Workers were slightly more likely to be permanent employees at the smaller farms compared to larger farms.

La Luz/Vineyard Worker Services, in addition to community service, education, and advocacy programs, has a program to provide seasonal housing for vineyard workers in the valley. The program's mission is to assist the farm worker community in the Sonoma Valley with finding safe, clean housing and help them meet basic human needs. The Vineyard Worker Services program operates two seasonal migrant worker camps during grape harvest season in the Sonoma Valley, and have partnered with Burbank Housing Corporation on a permanent farmworker housing project where 25 of the 80 rental units are set aside for agricultural workers and their families. The California Human Development Corporation (CHDC) has a program offering temporary housing assistance for eligible farmworkers, intended to provide transitional housing needs and short-term assistance as farmworkers move from agricultural labor to more stable year-round employment. Assistance provided through this program includes support services for hotel vouchers, rent, mortgage, deposits, utility bills, and other related shelter needs.

According to the Sonoma County 2009-2014 Housing Element, there are a total of 254 farmworker family housing units in the unincorporated County, including 110 rental units within four developments, and 144 units within seven ownership developments. In addition, there are 883 agricultural employee units and beds in the unincorporated County. Despite these farmworker housing resources, the County indicates that reports of overcrowded homes, apartments and motels are common, indicating an unmet need for affordable housing for farmworkers.

Policy 5.4 of the Housing Element speaks to the City working cooperatively with the County and other local organizations to address regional farmworker housing needs. In addition, Housing Element Program #22 identifies zoning changes the City will make to better accommodate agricultural employee units.

## Homeless Persons

Homelessness is a visible reminder of the pressing needs facing families and individuals in marginal economic, housing, and health conditions. This population consists of a wide range of persons and families suffering from domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, and joblessness among a number of other conditions.

A 2007 Sonoma County Survey counted 1,974 homeless individuals in the County and 9 within the City. At the County level, one half of homeless individuals were in shelters, with another 15 percent temporarily housed, leaving 35 percent unsheltered. There were 177 homeless families, or 505 family members. It is estimated that about one quarter of the County's homeless population is chronically homeless.

In cooperation with community groups and citizen committees, in 2008 the City constructed an emergency shelter at 151 First Street West on Police Station property and developed accompanying support programs. The well-designed shelter holds nine individuals (three families) at maximum capacity. The maximum stay is three weeks, although staff at the shelter indicates that usually it's not long enough to find available space in longer term transitional housing in the area. The Sonoma emergency shelter typically operates at 60 to 70 percent capacity, though during busy times there can be a waiting list. The City contracts with the non-profit Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS) to run the shelter.

Long term transitional shelters are found in other communities in the County. Table 17 lists emergency and transitional shelters elsewhere in the region. SOS refers homeless individuals to these resources.

### Table 17: Emergency/Transitional Shelters in Sonoma area

#### S.O.S./Sonoma Overnight Support

Description: Emergency Shelter, information and referral, counseling, food

#### Catholic Charities, Santa Rosa

Description: Shelter, comprehensive services for 28 families for 30-90 days

#### Community Support Network/Opportunity House, Santa Rosa

Description: 60-Day Emergency Shelter for mentally ill with transitional housing counseling, outreach services, Spanish/English translation, crisis intervention

#### Cold Weather Shelter, Russian River Area

Description: Single adults

#### COTS (Committee on the Shelterless) Family Shelter, Petaluma

Description: Comprehensive program with case management, licensed childcare program 2 months maximum stay

#### Mary Isaak Center/COTS, Petaluma

#### Redwood Gospel Mission, Santa Rosa

Description: Homeless shelter for men, meals, clothing, showers, 14 day initial stay, job-search residence program follow up

#### Rose Women & Children's Emergency Shelter, Santa Rosa

Description: 30-day stay, overnight shelter only, children (boys under 11) welcome

#### Samuel L Jones Shelter, Santa Rosa

Description: 130-bed adult emergency shelter with comprehensive life skills services.

#### Dr. James E. Coffee House/ Social Advocates for Youth, Santa Rosa

Description: emergency shelter for runaway or homeless teens aged 12-17, crisis mediation provided on a 24-hour basis for youth & their families, outreach to homeless youth and drop-in services, food, clothes, toiletries

#### Sloan House Women's Emergency Shelter, Santa Rosa

Description: 30 day shelter for single homeless women and homeless mothers with small children

#### Spare Room, Healdsburg

Description: overnight temporary or emergency shelter for single parent families, single women, single men, and couples

#### Wallace House, Cloverdale

Description: overnight shelter, transitional housing

#### YWCA Safe House, Santa Rosa

Description: emergency shelter for women & children fleeing domestic violence

## Housing Stock Characteristics

This section of the Housing Element addresses various housing characteristics and conditions that affect the well-being of City residents. Housing factors evaluated include the following: housing stock and growth, tenure and vacancy rates, age and condition, housing costs, and affordability, among others.

### Housing Growth

In 2008, the State Department of Finance estimated 5,218 housing units in Sonoma. Between 1990 and 2000, the City's housing stock increased by 507 units to 4,671 housing units.

**Table 18: Regional Housing Growth Trends**

City	1990	2000	2008	% Growth (1990-2000)	% Growth (2000-2008)
Cotati	2,433	2,858	3,087	17%	8%
Petaluma	16,546	20,304	21,943	23%	8%
Rohnert Park	13,915	15,808	16,544	14%	5%
Santa Rosa	47,726	57,578	64,238	21%	12%
Sebastopol	2,942	3,321	3,380	13%	2%
<b>Sonoma</b>	<b>4,164</b>	<b>4,671</b>	<b>5,218</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Sonoma County	161,062	183,153	197,907	14%	8%

*Source: Census 1990, 2000. State Department of Finance 2008 Population and Housing Estimates*

Table 18 compares Sonoma's housing growth since 1990 with nearby communities and the County. Sonoma's housing stock grew 12 percent between 1990-2000 and 2000-2008. This reveals increased production more recently, however a generally stable growth rate compared to the County and other communities. This may be attributed to well-established growth management mechanisms in place, although most of the surrounding communities have growth management ordinances as well. Most surrounding cities' housing growth rates were high in the 1990s and then dropped off dramatically between 2000-2008. For example, Sebastopol's housing stock grew 13 percent in the 1990s and then only two percent between 2000-2008. The County's housing stock grew by 14 percent in the 1990s and 8 percent between 2000-2008. Of the comparison cities used in Table 18 to pick up on regional growth trends, the City of Sonoma stands alone in maintaining a stable rate of housing growth since 2000.

### Housing Type and Tenure

Table 19 presents the mix of housing types in Sonoma. Of the City's approximately 5,200 housing units in 2008, 71 percent are single-family units, including single-family detached homes (57%), and single-family attached units consisting of townhome style units (14%). Multi-family units comprise 21 percent of Sonoma's housing, including duplexes, triplexes, apartments and condominiums. Sonoma also has three mobile home parks with approximately 400 mobile home units, comprising eight percent of the City's housing.



**Table 19: Housing Type**

Housing Type	2000		2008	
	No. of Units	% of Total	No. of Units	% of Total
Single-Family	3,289	69%	3,709	71%
Detached	2,627	55%	2,957	57%
Attached	662	14%	752	14%
Multi Family	1,007	21%	1072	21%
2-4 Units	439	9%	480	9%
5+ Units	568	12%	592	11%
Mobile Homes/ Other	444	9%	437	8%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4,740</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5,218</b>	<b>100%</b>
Vacancy Rate	5.90%		5.70%	

Source: Census 2000. State Department of Finance 2008 - Population and Housing Estimates

Note- The 2000 Census includes other units such as RV, Boat, Van etc within Mobile Home category

Housing tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owned, rented or is vacant. Tenure is an important indicator of the housing climate of a community, reflecting the relative cost of housing opportunities, and the ability of residents to afford housing. Tenure also influences residential mobility, with owner units generally evidencing lower turnover rates than rental housing. According to the 2000 Census, 62 percent of households were homeowners, a slight increase from 1990, and similar to the rate of homeownership in the County.

**Table 20: Housing Tenure**

Occupied Housing Units	1990		2000		Sonoma County % (2000)
	Units	Percent	Units	Percent	
Renter	1,479	39%	1,667	38%	36%
Owner	2,339	61%	2,706	62%	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,818</b>		<b>4,373</b>		

Source: 1990, 2000 Census.

## Housing Age and Condition

The age of a community's housing stock can provide a general indicator of overall housing conditions. In general, housing units over 30 years in age are likely to exhibit signs of rehabilitation needs, such as new roofing, foundation work, and new plumbing. Table 21 displays the age of Sonoma's housing stock, and indicates that by 2010, approximately 3,000 housing units will have reached the 30 year age threshold, over half the City's housing.

Sonoma homes tend to be in relatively good condition, and problems with property maintenance and housing deterioration have not been a significant issue. High property values, a strong sense of neighborhood pride, and an emphasis on historic preservation have all contributed to well maintained neighborhoods. Nonetheless, given the community's aging housing stock, combined with a growing senior population who may face difficulties maintaining their homes, both code enforcement and housing rehabilitation assistance are an

**Table 21: Year Housing Built**

Years Structure Built	Number of total units	% of Total Units
2000 - 2008	582	11%
1990 - 2000	653	13%
1980 - 1989	1,034	20%
1970 - 1979	1,116	21%
1960 - 1969	666	13%
1950 - 1959	562	11%
1940 - 1949	301	6%
1939 or earlier	300	6%
<b>Total Number of Units</b>	<b>5,214</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2000 Census

important component of the City’s overall housing program. In terms of developing a general estimate of the number of units in need of rehabilitation in Sonoma, the City used the following approach. Using 30 years as the benchmark when residential structures begin requiring major systems replacement or repair, units built prior to 1980 can be considered as potential candidates for rehabilitation needs. Of Sonoma’s approximately 3,000 pre-1980 units, an estimated five percent, or 150 units, may require some degree of rehabilitation over the Housing Element planning period. Discussions with County housing rehabilitation staff indicate the majority of households receiving assistance under their program reside in mobile home units. No units have been identified as needing replacement.

## Housing Costs and Affordability

Housing affordability is a concern in Sonoma and the City continues to play an active role in addressing housing affordability issues. The following section provides current market information on rents and housing sales prices in Sonoma, and compares these costs with the amount households of different income levels can afford to pay for housing.

## Sales and Rental Survey

Table 22 provides information on all sales of existing and new single-family homes and condominiums within Sonoma from October 2008 to March 2009. Given the volatility of the real estate market in recent months, this represents the most recent six months of sales data. A total of 39 single-family home sales were recorded during this period, with three bedroom units comprising 70 percent of all homes sold. Median sales prices ranged from \$410,000 (one-bedroom) to \$545,000 (four-bedroom), with prices varying based on location. Most homes were well over thirty years in age, 1972 being the average year built. Unit sizes are modest, averaging 1,625 square feet. The overall median home price in Sonoma was \$435,000.

Nearly 20 percent of units sold during this period were condominiums. The median price for a condominium is \$334,000, ranging from \$239,000-\$575,000. Condominium units tend to have two to four bedrooms. With slightly smaller unit sizes, condominiums tend to provide less expensive ownership opportunities in Sonoma.

While home foreclosures are not as prevalent in Sonoma as in the more urban areas of the County, many residents are at-risk of defaulting on their mortgages and potentially losing their homes. The impact of home foreclosures on housing sales may grow through 2010. In February 2009, 29 properties within the City of Sonoma were in some stage of foreclosure.

**Table 22: Home and Condominium Sales Prices, October 2008-March 2009**

# Bedrooms	Units Sold	Price Range	Median Price	Avg. Unit Size	Average Parcel Size	Avg. Year Built
<b>Single-Family Homes</b>						
2	6	\$260,000-\$550,000	\$410,000	1,280 s.f.	7,800 s.f.	1943
3	27	\$311,000-\$1,658,000	\$435,000	1,675 s.f.	6,400 s.f.	1978
4	6	\$382,000-\$590,000	\$545,000	1,830 s.f.	6,900 s.f.	1970
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$260,000-\$1,658,000</b>	<b>\$435,000</b>	<b>1,625 s.f.</b>	<b>6,700 s.f.</b>	<b>1972</b>
<b>Condominiums</b>						
<b>2-4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$239,000-\$575,000</b>	<b>\$334,000</b>	<b>1,410 s.f.</b>	<b>N/a</b>	<b>1978</b>

Source: DataQuick On-Line Real Estate Database: 10/1/08-3/31/09.

Current rental housing costs in Sonoma were obtained through a rent survey compiled from the internet and property manager interviews. In spite of the overall real estate market downturn, rental rates in Sonoma do not tend to be greatly affected. The February and April 2009 survey of rental properties in Sonoma found average rents of \$750 for studios, \$1,050 for one-bedroom units and \$1,350 for two-bedroom units. No three-bedroom units were advertised as available for rent. A March 2009 interview with a local property management company confirmed these averages with the following rental ranges: \$750-1,100 for one-bedrooms, \$1,000-1,500 for two-bedrooms, and \$1,500 and up for three bedrooms.

**Table 23: Survey of Vacant Rental Units, Sonoma area, 2009**

Unit Type and Bedrooms	Rental Range	Average Rent
<i>Apartments &amp; Houses</i>		
studio	\$600-\$950	\$750
1	\$725-\$1,300	\$1,050
2	\$1,095-\$1,600	\$1,350

Source: [www.sonomanews.com](http://www.sonomanews.com), [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com), Sonoma Property Management

With three mobile home parks and over 400 coaches, mobile homes represent an important source of affordable housing in Sonoma. As a means of preserving the affordability of its mobile home parks, primarily occupied by seniors, the City has implemented a mobile home park rent control ordinance since 1993. This ordinance limits rent increases to a maximum of 80percent of the increase in the consumer price index, but no greater than 5 percent in a 12 month period. The ordinance ensures stable rents for those residents of the mobile home parks who are not on long-term leases (in excess of 12 months). Park owners are permitted to charge a new base rent for a mobile home space whenever a coach-in-place sale or lawful space vacancy occurs.

The three rent-controlled parks vary in rental structure: DeAnza Moon Valley’s 247 spaces have a median rent of \$694; Pueblo Serena’s 49 spaces have a median rent of \$392; and Rancho de Sonoma’s 100 spaces have a median rent of \$382. The overall median rent in 2008 was \$613. Conversion of rent-controlled parks to condominiums or market rate parks is a major threat to the affordable housing stock of Sonoma, since mobile home parks are a significant portion of that supply. Market rate mobile home rent spaces in the Sonoma area (no market rate parks are located within the City limits) vary widely. A survey of vacant spaces in January 2009, showed a range from \$257-\$800, with an average of \$550 monthly rent for a mobile home space.

## Housing Affordability

Housing affordability can be inferred by comparing the cost of renting or owning a home in Sonoma with the maximum affordable housing costs to households which earn different income levels. This information can provide a picture of who can afford what size and type of housing in Sonoma, as well as the type of households that would likely experience housing problems such as overcrowding or overpayment. California Health and Safety Code<sup>2</sup> defines affordable owner and rental housing costs as follows:

### *Affordable Ownership Housing Cost – moderate income*

- Housing costs consist of mortgage debt service, homeowner association dues, insurance, utility allowance and property taxes.
- Affordable costs are up to 35 percent of the defined household income.
- Affordable costs for moderate income households are based on standard of 110 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) for a household size equal to one more person than the number of bedrooms in the unit.

### *Affordable Renter Housing Cost*

<sup>2</sup> Health and Safety Code Section 50052.5 establishes affordable housing cost, and Section 50053 - affordable rents.

- Housing costs include rent plus utilities paid for by the tenant.
- Affordable rent is up to 30 percent of the defined household income.
- Affordable rents are based on a standard of 50 percent of AMI for very low income households; 80 percent of AMI for low income households; and 120 percent AMI for moderate income households for a household size equal to one more person than the number of bedrooms in the unit.

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts annual household income surveys nationwide, including Sonoma County, to determine the maximum affordable payments of different households and their eligibility for federal housing assistance. The 2009 Income Limits for a four-person household in Sonoma County is \$80,200.

Based on the definitions of income and affordable housing cost, Table 24 presents the maximum affordable purchase price for moderate income households (110% AMI), and compares this with market sales prices for single-family homes and condominiums. Median single-family home prices in Sonoma are well beyond the level of affordability for moderate income households. For example, the maximum affordable purchase price for a moderate income four person household is \$367,000, whereas the median priced three bedroom home in Sonoma is \$435,000, an affordability gap of \$68,000.

Condominiums, however, are affordable to households earning moderate incomes. As shown in Table 24, the maximum affordable purchase price for a three person household is \$327,000, whereas the median priced two-bedroom condominium in Sonoma sells for \$315,000.

Table 25 presents the maximum affordable rents for very low, low and moderate income households by household size, and compares with median apartment rents in Sonoma. As the table indicates, citywide median rents are just barely within reach of very low income households, and are generally affordable to low income and moderate income households.

**Table 25: 2009 Maximum Affordable Rents, Sonoma County**

**Table 24: 2009 Maximum Affordable Housing Cost (Moderate Income), Sonoma County**

<b>Moderate Income</b>	<b>1 Bedroom</b>	<b>2 Bedroom</b>	<b>3 Bedroom</b>	<b>4 Bedroom</b>
<b>Affordable Housing Cost</b>	<b>(2 persons)</b>	<b>(3 persons)</b>	<b>(4 persons)</b>	<b>(5 persons)</b>
Moderate Income Threshold (110% County Median)	\$70,565	\$79,420	\$88,200	\$95,260
Max. Income Towards Housing Cost @ 35% Income	\$24,697	\$27,797	\$30,870	\$33,341
Less Ongoing Expenses:				
Utilities	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Property Taxes (1%)	\$2,800	\$3,200	\$3,600	\$4,000
Insurance/Common Area Expense	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Annual Income Available for Mortgage	\$18,700	\$21,400	\$24,100	\$26,100
Monthly Income Available for Mortgage	\$1,550	\$1,780	\$2,010	\$2,175
Supportable Mortgage @ 6.0% interest	\$260,000	\$297,000	\$334,000	\$363,000
Homebuyer Downpayment (10%)	\$26,000	\$30,000	\$33,000	\$36,000
<b>Maximum Affordable Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$286,000</b>	<b>\$327,000</b>	<b>\$367,000</b>	<b>\$399,000</b>
<b>Sonoma Median Single-Family Price</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$410,000</b>	<b>\$435,000</b>	<b>\$545,000</b>
<b>Sonoma Median Condominium Price</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$315,000</b>	<b>\$334,000</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Source: Karen Warner Associates

Income Level**	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
	(1 person)	(2 person)	(3 person)	(4 person)
Very Low Income				
(50% AMI)	\$702	\$802	\$903	\$1,003
Low Income				
(80% AMI)	\$1,123	\$1,283	\$1,444	\$1,604
Moderate Income				
(120% AMI)	\$1,685	\$1,925	\$2,166	\$2,406
<b>Sonoma Average Rents</b>		<b>\$750 - \$1,100</b>	<b>\$1,000 - \$1,500</b>	<b>\$1,500 &amp; up</b>

Source: Metropolitan Planning Group  
Average rents based on realtor interviews

### Assisted Rental Housing At-Risk of Conversion

This section presents an inventory of all assisted rental housing in Sonoma; evaluates those units “at-risk” of conversion during the ten year, 2009-2019 planning period; and proposes programs to preserve or replace at-risk units. Rent restricted housing in Sonoma consists of both publicly subsidized affordable housing, and deed-restricted rental units provided through Sonoma’s inclusionary housing and density bonus programs. Table 26 presents a complete inventory of all subsidized and restricted rental housing projects in the City. A total of 104 subsidized rental units are provided in four developments, with an additional 80 affordable inclusionary and density bonus rental units integrated within 18 market rate projects.

**Table 26: Inventory of Assisted and Restricted Affordable Rental Units**

No	Name of Development	Year Built	Address	Number of Affordable Units	Target Group	Funding Source(s)	Expiration Date/Resale Restrictions
<b>Subsidized Units</b>							
1	Village Green II	1983	650 Fourth St.	34	Senior	CDBG, FmHA 515, Section 8	Perpetuity
2	Sonoma Creek Apartments	1987	703-841 Oregon St.	34	Senior	HUD/202, CDBG, CDA	Perpetuity
3	Cabernet Apartments	1988	510-550 Seventh St. West	7	Senior	CDBG, CDA Funds/Burbank Housing Funds, CHFA	2018
4	Firehouse Village	2001	560-620 Second St. West	29	Family	Density Bonus, GMO Exempt, CDA, CDBG, Tax Credits	Perpetuity
<b>Inclusionary and Density Bonus Units</b>							
5	Balma/Germano Apartments	1992	571 Oregon St.	2	Family	Density Bonus	2022
6	Maysonnave Apts I (Donahue Apts)	1996	270 First St. East	10	Senior	Bonus Density; GMO Exempt	2025
7	Maysonnave Apts II (Setzer Apts)	1996	673 First St. West	8	Senior	Density Bonus	2025
8	Sonoma Hills – Griffin	1996	405 W. MacArthur St.	20	Senior	Inclusionary	2025
9	Lynch Mixed Use Project	2002	135 West Napa St.	1	Family	Inclusionary	2047
10	London Mixed Use Project (Sonoma Centro)	2003	19230 Sonoma Highway	1	Family	Inclusionary	2048
11	Remembrance (Chiotti/Setzer Subdivision)	2003	745-765 E. Napa St.	5	Family	Inclusionary	2058
12	MacArthur Village Subdivision	2003	281/291 E. MacArthur St.	2	Family	Inclusionary	2033
13	Vintage Sonoma (Sonoma Valley Oaks)	2003	Jones St., Engler St., Brockman Lane	10	Family	Inclusionary	2033
14	Tarassa (Eastside Estates III)	2003	442-462 Saunders Drive	9	Family	Inclusionary	2033
15	West MacArthur Village PUD (Fichtenberg/Gamber)	2004	293/295 W. MacArthur St., 910/912 Amedeo Ct.	4	Family	Inclusionary	2037
16	McKenna Mixed Use Project (Fichtenberg)	2004	1254 Broadway	2	Family	Inclusionary	2037
17	Bel Terreno (Campobello Estates)	2005	471/473 San Lorenzo Court	2	Family	Inclusionary	2035
18	Harvest Lane (Starr Ranch)	2005	1337/1349 Jones	2	Family	Inclusionary	2035
19	Chiappellone Apartments	2006	1143 Broadway	1	Family	Inclusionary	2061
<b>Second Units (Income &amp; Rent Restricted)</b>							
20	Troy Lane Subdivision	2001	497 Troy Lane	1	Second Unit	Inclusionary	2031
21	Remembrance (Chiotti/Setzer Subdivision)	2003	744/764 William Cunningham Ave.	2	Second Unit	Inclusionary	2058
22	Vintage Sonoma (Sonoma Valley Oaks)	2003	402 Engler St.	1	Second Unit	Inclusionary	2033

## At-Risk Projects

This section evaluates those lower income rental projects in Sonoma at-risk of converting to market-rate uses prior to June 30, 2019. As illustrated in Table 26, the majority of Sonoma’s affordable rental projects carry long-term use restrictions, with several projects restricted in perpetuity. Just one project is potentially eligible for conversion prior to 2019: the seven unit Cabernet Apartments. These garden apartments were built in 1988, and are restricted to occupancy by very low income seniors age 62 and above. The project was financed through a variety of sources, including Sonoma Community Development Agency funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, CalHFA funds, and Burbank Housing Corporation Funds. The use restrictions on the CalHFA funds expire in 2018, although use restrictions on the other funding sources extend out further. Cabernet Apartments are owned and operated by the non-profit Burbank Housing, and are thus considered at very low risk of conversion. Discussions with Burbank Housing indicate they have been successful in maintaining affordability on similar projects where use restrictions have expired.



**Cabernet Apartments**

## Preservation and Replacement Options

To maintain the existing affordable housing stock, the City must either preserve the existing assisted units or facilitate the development of new units. Depending on the circumstances of at-risk projects, different options may be used to preserve or replace the units. Preservation options typically include:

1. Transfer of project to non-profit ownership;
2. Provision of rental assistance to tenants using non-federal funding sources; and
3. Purchase of affordability covenants.

In terms of replacement, the most direct option is the development of new assisted multi-family housing units. These options are described below.

1. **Transfer of Ownership:** Transferring ownership of an at-risk project to a non-profit or public housing provider is generally one of the least costly ways to ensure that the at-risk units remain affordable for the long term. By transferring property ownership to a non-profit or public organization, low-income restrictions can be secured indefinitely and the project becomes potentially eligible for a greater range of governmental assistance. In 2006, the City of Sonoma, through its Community Development Agency, purchased the 34 unit Village Green II apartments to preserve this at-risk project as very low income affordable housing in perpetuity.

The transfer of ownership preservation option is, however, not applicable to the at-risk Cabernet Apartments as they are already owned by a non-profit corporation – Burbank Housing. This project is determined to be at low risk of conversion largely due to its non-profit ownership status.

2. **Rental Assistance:** Cabernet Apartments does not currently utilize federal Section 8 rent subsidies. One preservation option would be to apply to HUD for project-based Section 8 rent subsidies, or to utilize alternative State or local funding sources to provide subsidies. Assistance could be structured similar to the Section 8 program, where HUD pays the owners the difference between what tenants can afford to pay (30% of household income) and what HUD estimates as the Fair Market Rent (FMR) in the area.

The feasibility of this alternative depends upon the availability of federal and non-federal funding sources necessary to make rent subsidies available and the willingness of the property owner to accept rental vouchers if they can be provided. Table 27 estimates the cost of providing rent subsidies to Cabernet Apartments, derived by subtracting the maximum affordable housing cost (30% of very low income threshold, plus utility allowance) from the 2009 Sonoma County Section 8 voucher payment standard. As indicated, the total cost of subsidizing rents at the seven at-risk units is estimated at about \$2,600 per month or \$31,000 annually.

**Table 27: Estimated Rental Subsidies Required**

At-Risk Units	Unit Size	Sonoma Co. Voucher Payment Standard	Household Size	Very Low Income Threshold (50% AMI)	Maximum Affordable Cost	Monthly Per Unit Subsidy	Total Monthly Subsidy
7	1-br	\$1,129	1	\$28,050	\$750	\$379	\$2,653

Another way rent subsidies could be structured is as a rent buy-down. This would involve the Agency providing a one-time assistance loan to the property owner to cover the present value of the decrease in rents associated with the extended affordability term compared with market rents achievable on the units. This approach offers a benefit to the owner in that they receive cash upfront from the loan. A potential disincentive to the owner is that the use of Redevelopment set-aside funds for the rent buy-down necessitates a 55 year affordability covenant on the units.

3. **Acquisition or Construction of Replacement Units:** The construction or purchase of a replacement building is another option to replace at-risk units should they be converted to market-rate. The cost of developing housing depends upon a variety of factors, including density, size of the units, location, land costs, and type of construction. A general estimate of the cost to develop affordable rental housing in Sonoma can be assessed based on the 2008 financial pro forma prepared for Valley Oaks apartments. Development costs for this project are estimated at \$350,000 per unit, exclusive of land which is being contributed by the Community Development Agency. Assuming a similar cost structure and land donation, the cost to replace the seven very low income units in Cabernet Apartments can generally be estimated at \$2.5 million.

**Cost Comparisons:** Given its ownership by the non-profit Burbank Housing, it is highly unlikely that Sonoma’s Cabernet Apartments will convert to market rate. Nevertheless, the above analysis attempts to estimate the cost of preserving the at-risk units under various options. The annual cost of providing rental subsidies required to preserve the seven very low income units is relatively low at \$31,000. However, long-term affordability of the units cannot be ensured in this manner, unless it was structured as a one-time rent buy-down. The option of acquiring or developing seven replacement units is far more costly at an estimated \$2.5 million, and is constrained by a variety of factors, including limited purchase opportunities of existing multi-family properties and the scarcity of land for new development. The best option to preserve the at-risk units may be the purchase of affordability covenants through a one-time rent buy-down. This option would likely require the participation of Sonoma’s Community Development Agency and the use of its set-aside funds.



## Regional Housing Needs

State law requires all regional councils of governments, including the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to determine the existing and projected housing need for its region (Government Code Section 65580 et. seq.) and determine the portion allocated to each jurisdiction within the ABAG region. This is known as the "Regional Housing Needs Assessment" (RHNA) process.

### Existing Housing Needs

#### Overcrowding

Overcrowding occurs when housing costs are so high relative to income that families double up to devote income to other basic needs of food and medical care. Overcrowding also tends to result in accelerated deterioration of homes, a shortage of street parking, and additional traffic. Therefore, maintaining a reasonable level of occupancy and alleviating overcrowding are critical to enhancing the quality of life in the community.

The Census defines overcrowding as an average of more than one person per room in a housing unit (excluding kitchens, porches, and hallways); severe overcrowding is defined as greater than 1.5 persons per room. The incidence of overcrowded housing is a general measure of whether there is an available supply of adequately sized housing units. Table 28 shows the incidence of overcrowding in Sonoma by tenure, as measured by the 2000 Census. In 2000, 58 households in Sonoma met the definition of living in overcrowded conditions, representing only one percent of all households. The rate of overcrowding is slightly higher for renter households, at two percent, though still significantly below the rate of overcrowding amongst Sonoma County renter households, at ten percent.

**Table 28: Overcrowded Households**

Overcrowding	Households	Percent	Sonoma County %
<b>Owners</b>	2,670	62%	64%
Overcrowding*	20	1%	3%
Severe Overcrowding**	0	0%	1%
<b>Renters</b>	1,622	38%	36%
Overcrowding	38	2%	10%
Severe Overcrowding	16	1%	4%
<b>Total Overcrowding</b>	58	1%	6%

Source: 2000 Census

Note: Severe Overcrowding is a subset of Overcrowding

\* Overcrowding is calculated at >1 person per room

\*\*Severe Overcrowding is calculated at >1.5 persons per room

#### Overpayment

Housing overpayment refers to spending more than 30 percent of income on housing; severe overpayment is spending greater than 50 percent. As is the case in throughout the Bay Area, it is not uncommon to overpay for housing in Sonoma. However, to the extent that overpayment is often disproportionately concentrated among the most vulnerable members of the community, maintaining a reasonable level of housing cost burden is an important contributor to quality of life. Table 29 shows the incidence of overpayment in Sonoma.

According to the 2000 Census, 46 percent of renters and 31 percent of homeowners in Sonoma were overpaying for housing, similar to the rate of overpayment for the whole County. Severe overpayment, however, is significantly more common in the City than in the County. Severe overpayment impacts 26 percent of the City's renters and 14 percent of owners. In terms of lower income (<80 percent AMI) households overpaying, 616 lower income renters and 415 lower income homeowners were faced with overpayment in Sonoma, indicating approximately three-

quarters of lower income renters and half of lower income homeowners were overpaying. Of these lower income households overpaying, 264 (43%) renters and 112 (27%) owners earned extremely low incomes (<30% AMI).

**Table 29: Housing Overpayment**

Overpayment	Households	Percent	Sonoma County %
<b>Total Owners</b>	2,151	57%	60%
Overpayment*	673	31%	32%
Severe Overpayment**	292	14%	10%
% Lower Income Households Overpaying	415	46%	
<b>Total Renters</b>	1,653	43%	40%
Overpayment	767	46%	41%
Severe Overpayment	422	26%	18%
% Lower Income Households Overpaying	616	78%	
<b>Total Overpayment</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>

Source: 2000 Census; [socds.huduser.org/chas/reports](http://socds.huduser.org/chas/reports)

Notes: Percentage lower income overpayment reflects % of total lower income households spending >30% income on housing. Severe Overpayment is a subset of Overpayment

Table 30 provides a more detailed review of households that experienced severe housing overpayment. Among renters, the elderly were most impacted by severe overpayment, with 45 percent of the City's total 555 elderly renters spending more than half their income on rent. Among homeowners, it's again the elderly who experience a comparatively higher level of severe overpayment, at about 11 percent.

**Table 30: Severe Housing Cost Burden by Type and Tenure**

	Elderly	Small Family	Large Family	Other	Total
<b>Renter Households</b>					
Total # by household type	555	582	34	508	1,679
% with severe cost burden	45%	11%	0%	21%	25%
<b>Owner Households</b>					
Total # by household type	1,148	995	142	378	2,663
% with severe cost burden	11%	9%	0%	35%	13%

Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2000 - <http://socds.huduser.org/chas/reports>

## Future Housing Needs

California's Housing element law requires that each city and county develop local housing programs to meet its "fair share" of existing and future housing needs for all income groups, as determined by the jurisdiction's Council of Governments. This "fair share" allocation concept seeks to ensure that each jurisdiction accepts responsibility for the housing needs of not only its resident population, but also for the jurisdiction's projected share of regional housing growth across all income categories. Regional growth needs are defined as the number of units that would have to be added in each jurisdiction to accommodate the forecasted number of households, as well as the number of units that would have to be added to compensate for anticipated demolitions and changes to achieve an "ideal" vacancy rate.

In the Bay Area region, the agency responsible for assigning these regional housing needs to each jurisdiction is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The regional growth allocation process begins with the State Department of Finance's projections of population and associated of housing demand for the planning period. In 2008 ABAG developed its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) based on forecasts contained in *Projections 2007: Forecasts for the San Francisco Bay Area to the Year 2035*. The State, in consultation with ABAG, has identified a total housing need for 214,500 housing units in the Bay Area during the 2007-2014 period.

ABAG is responsible for allocating the region's projected housing needs among its jurisdictions by income category. This is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process. The RHNA represents the minimum number of housing units each community is required to provide "adequate sites" for through zoning and is one of the primary threshold criteria necessary to achieve State approval of the Housing Element.

Future housing needs refer to the share of the region's housing need that has been allocated to a community. In allocating the region's future housing needs to jurisdictions, ABAG is required to take the following factors into consideration:

- Water and sewer capacity
- Land suitable for urban development or conversion to residential use
- Protected open space – lands protected by state and federal government
- County policies to protect prime agricultural land
- Distribution of household growth
- Market demand for housing
- City-centered growth policies
- Loss of units in assisted housing developments
- High housing cost burdens
- Impact of universities and colleges on housing needs in a community

In devising the formula for allocating the 214,500 units amongst jurisdictions, ABAG had to consider how each of these statutory factors could be incorporated into the mathematical equation. ABAG staff and members of the Housing Methodology Committee sought input from every jurisdiction in the Bay Area on the factors and how they could be used. The final allocation method adopted by ABAG's Executive Board includes factors related to housing and employment growth, and public transit. ABAG's allocation formula of the region's projected housing growth is based on the following selected factors and weights:

- Household growth (45%)
- Existing employment (22.5%)
- Employment growth (22.5%)
- Household growth near existing transit (5%)
- Employment growth near existing transit (5%)

ABAG's goals in the weighting of these factors include: 1) directing housing units to areas where local governments are planning growth; 2) planning for housing in tandem with jobs growth and addressing existing jobs-housing imbalances; 3) directing housing to communities with transit infrastructure; and 4) minimizing housing growth in outlying areas, thereby reducing pressures on open space and agricultural lands. As defined by the RHNA, Sonoma's

new construction need for the 2009-2014 period has been established at 353 new units, distributed among the four income categories as shown in Table 31. This is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (“RHNA”) process. The RHNA represents the minimum number of housing units each community is required to plan for by providing “adequate sites” through the general plan and corresponding zoning regulations.

**Table 31: Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2007-2014, City of Sonoma**

Income Level	Percent of AMI*	RHNA Allocation	Percent of Total RHNA Allocation	Units produced or approved during 2007-March 2009 “gap period”	“Net RHNA”
Very Low	0-50%	73	21%	0	73
Low	51-80%	55	16%	29	26
Moderate	81-120%	69	20%	33	36
Above Moderate	120%+	156	44%	93	63
<b>Total</b>		<b>353</b>	100%	<b>155</b>	<b>198</b>

*Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Regional Housing Needs Determination (May 15, 2008).  
AMI – Adjust Median Income for Sonoma County*

### Units Built, Under Construction, and/or Approved During Planning Period

Housing units receiving building permits during the 2006-2007 RHNA “gap period” can be credited towards meeting the adequate sites requirement of the RHNA. Between January 2006 - December 2007, a total of 155 units received building permits in Sonoma. These units include 29 units for lower income households, 18 of which were constructed as part of the 2007 Wildflower sweat-equity project. Ten second units constructed or approved during the gap period were assumed to be in the low income category. Thirty-three units affordable to moderate income households and 93 affordable to those in the above moderate income were built or permitted during the “gap period”. The Wildflower sweat equity project contained 18 units in the lower income categories and 16 in the moderate category. Eleven second units constructed or approved were assumed to be affordable to low income categories. Many of the condominium developments, such as Pursell or Giannis, and many of the planned developments, such as Willows Wild, contained units affordable to both moderate and above moderate income categories. Most single-family residences, and two planned developments, Maron Investments at 317 Second Street East and Ikeda at 881-887 First Street West, provided only units affordable to the above moderate category. As shown in Table H-4 in the Housing Element, 96 of the units from the “gap period” have been constructed or have building permits issued. Fifty-nine “gap period” units have been approved by the planning department but do not yet have building permits issued; 47 of those are units affordable to above-moderate income levels. The 59 units that have received entitlements are spread across nine projects and aside from 3 second units include:

- MacArthur Planned Development: 26 units including 21 above moderate and 5 moderate units intended as “work-force” housing.
- Pursell Development: 9 above moderate and moderate condominiums.
- Giannis Property: 8 unit condominium development, 7 of which are above moderate units and 1 moderate income unit.
- Murray Condominiums: 6 units, including 5 above moderate and 1 moderate
- Ikeda Planned Development: 4 units, all above moderate.
- Maron Investments Property: a planned development with 3 units, all market rate.

**Table 32: “Net” Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2007-2014, City of Sonoma**

Income Level	2008 Income Limits	RHNA Units	NET RHNA	Default Density
Very Low (<50% AMI)	\$38,900	73	73	Minimum 20 du/acre
Low (51-80% AMI)	\$61,500	55	26	
Moderate (81-120% AMI)	\$93,400	69	36	Minimum 12 du/acre
Above Moderate (>120% AMI)	> \$93,400	156	63	No density minimum
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>353</b>	<b>198</b>	

# HOUSING CONSTRAINTS

## Governmental Constraints

Governmental actions affect the cost and provision of housing in numerous ways, both directly and indirectly. The following review examines the primary local governmental constraints on housing development, with the intent of identifying opportunities for removing or mitigating barriers to the extent feasible.

## Land Use and Zoning Regulations

The City of Sonoma recently (2006) completed a comprehensive update of its entire General Plan, except the Housing Element. The 2020 General Plan is committed to responsible development aligned within natural resource limitations, providing a diversity of housing which is available and affordable to residents and the local workforce. In furtherance of this goal, the General Plan increased permitted residential densities in Sonoma’s multi-family, commercial and mixed use districts. The Plan provides expanded opportunities for multi-family housing, including encouraging residential uses in the Town Center and along Broadway through mixed use development. Furthermore, within its commercial and mixed use land use districts, the City now requires new development to include a residential component of at least 50% the total building area, a policy which has proven effective in integrating housing within walking distance of commercial uses. Sonoma’s General Plan land use designations and corresponding zoning districts provide for a wide range of residential development types and densities. Table 33 summarizes the

**Table 33: Planning/Development Standards**

Land Use Category	Zone District	Density	Min Setbacks (ft.) (Front/Rear/Side)	Lot Coverage	FAR	Max. Height (ft.)	Parking Spaces/Unit
Hillside Residential	R-HS	1 du/10 acres	15/15/15	20%		30' (2 stories)	1
Rural Residential	R-R	Up to 2 du/acre	30/30/50	40%	0.2	35' (2 stories)	1
Low Density Residential	R-L	2-5du/acre	20/20/15	40%	0.35	35' (2 stories)	1 (SF) 1.5 (Duplex)
Sonoma Residential	R-S	3-8 du/acre		40%	0.35	35' (2 stories)	1 (SF), 1.5 (MF)
Medium Density Residential	R-M	7-11 du/acre	20/15/15	50%	0.5	30' (2 stories)	1 (SF), 1.5 (MF)
High Density Residential	R-H	11-15 du/acre	15/15/15	60%	0.7	30' (2 stories)	1.5
Housing Opportunity	R-O	15-25 du/acre	15/15/15	60%	0.7	36' (3 stories)	1.5
Mobile Home Park	R-P	Up to 7 du/acre	20/20/15	50%	0.3	16	1.5
Commercial	C	Up to 20 du/acre		70 – 100%	0.6 – 2.0	36' (3 stories)	1.5
Gateway Commercial	C-G	Up to 20 du/acre		50%	0.8	36' (3 stories)	1.5
Mixed Use	MX	Up to 20 du/acre		70 – 100%	0.6 – 1.2	36' (3 stories)	1.5

Source: Sonoma 2020 General Plan, 2006; Sonoma Development Code, 2009.

Setbacks requirements can vary among planning areas within the City. The Table above presents average setback requirements; refer to the Development Code for specific setbacks by planning area.

basic standards for the City’s residential zoning districts, including the standards for setbacks, lot coverage, building height, and parking requirements.

In addition to the standards presented in this table, multi-family projects (except duplexes) are required to provide permanently maintained outdoor open space for each dwelling unit (private open space), and for all residents (common open space). Private open space requirements vary depending on unit size, and range from 75 square feet for studio and one-bedroom units, to 150 square feet for two-bedroom units, and 225 square feet for three-bedroom units and larger. Common open space is to be provided at a rate of 300 square feet per unit. A reduced open space requirement of 300 square feet has been adopted for residential development within commercial and mixed use districts, and 250 square feet for live-work developments; any combination of public and private open space may be used to fulfill these requirements. As a means of encouraging pedestrian-oriented open spaces that exceed the minimum requirements, the City offers the following incentives:

- Reduced parking
- Increased lot coverage
- Reduced front and street-side setback

Table 34 provides examples of several affordable projects developed in Sonoma and demonstrates how the City’s development standards have permitted the development of affordable housing.

**Table 34: Comparison of Selected Affordable Projects**

Project	Affordable Units	Density	Lot Coverage	Open Space	General Plan Land Use Designation	Zoning District
<b>Wildflower PUD</b> 404 Napa Road	34	11.4 du/acre	26%	16%	High Density Residential	High Density Residential (HDR)
<b>Firehouse Village</b> 560-620 Second Street	29	20.4 du/acre	30%	38%	Housing Opportunity	Housing Opportunity (HO)
<b>Casa Primera</b> 805 First Street	13	18 du/acre	27%	49%	Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)
<b>Maysonnave Apartments I</b> (Donahue Apts) 270 First Street	10	10 du/acre	23%	57%	Mixed Use	Mixed Use (MX)
<b>Maysonnave Apartments II</b> (Setzer Apts) 673 First Street	8	33 du/acre	25%	30%	Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)
<b>Cabernet Apartments</b> 510-550 Seventh Street	7	17 du/acre	32%	57%	Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Source: City of Sonoma Planning Division

Sonoma’s Development Code allows for flexibility in the application of many of its development standards. For example, the Planning Commission retains the option of allowing for a reduction in the minimum private open space requirement within multi-family and mixed use districts based on a finding that the quality of common open space provided justifies a lesser amount. Parking requirements for mixed use developments may be reduced upon a determination by the Planning Commission that a reduction is justified. Furthermore, the Planning Commission is permitted to grant the following Exceptions to the Development Code of up to 30% in response to environmental features and site conditions, historic development patterns, and to promote creativity in site planning and development:

- Exceptions to Dimensional Standards – building heights, distance between structures, building area and coverage, landscape and paving requirements
- Exceptions to Parking Standards – number and dimension of parking spaces, loading spaces, landscaping and lighting requirements

While the Planning Commission retains the discretion to provide exceptions to the Development Code and does so where justified, the City could provide greater certainty to developers by further defining its multi-family parking standards and incorporating within the Code. Current parking standards of 1.5 spaces per multi-family unit could potentially serve as a disincentive to the provision of studio and one-bedroom units, although the Planning Division has not observed this to be the case. Nonetheless, the City has included a program in the Housing Element to re-evaluate its residential parking requirements, and to refine as appropriate to better facilitate the provision of a variety of housing types and sizes.

The Development Code allows residential uses in the Mixed Use (MX) zone by right, and conditionally permits residential developments in the CO (Commercial) and GCO (Gateway Commercial) zoning districts. Stand-alone residential development is permitted in the MX, CO, and GCO zoning districts.

## **Facilitating Affordable Housing**

Sonoma has adopted several provisions within its Development Code to facilitate and encourage the development of housing affordable to low and moderate income individuals and families. These provisions include an inclusionary housing program, density bonus provisions, growth management exemptions, reduced development fees, and mobile home rent control.

### ***Inclusionary Housing Requirement***

The purpose of an inclusionary housing requirement is to ensure a component of affordable housing is provided as part of residential development. Sonoma’s inclusionary housing program is authorized under Section 19.44.020 of the Development Code, and is applicable to projects with five or more residential units or lots. The City currently requires 20% of units within a development project to be provided at an affordable housing cost to at least moderate income households. (In smaller developments of between 5 to 9 units, the inclusionary requirement is one unit). Within the Sonoma Residential District which generally pertains to properties at least 3 acres in size, at least one-half of the inclusionary units must be affordable to low income households. The City has in the past taken the approach that provision of required inclusionary units does not qualify the applicant for a density bonus unless affordable units are provided over and above those required by the inclusionary ordinance.<sup>3</sup> However, through the process of working with the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on the Housing Element update, Sonoma has learned that the City’s interpretation differs from HCD who indicate “the benefits of State density bonus law are required to be made available without regard to the presence or absence of a mandatory local inclusionary program.” The City acknowledges HCD’s interpretation, and will clarify in conjunction with the update of its density bonus ordinance (Program #21).

As illustrated in the City’s inventory of affordable rental units (Table 26), inclusionary zoning has proven an effective tool in integrating a small number of affordable units within market rate developments. On-site development of Inclusionary Units is the City’s preferred approach to achieving mixed income housing. Nonetheless, as a means of providing flexibility, the City will consider alternatives, including off-site construction, land donation, and for projects with ten or fewer units, payment of an in-lieu fee. For example, the City has in the past allowed for-sale developers to provide rent restricted second units as a means of fulfilling their inclusionary obligations.

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<sup>3</sup> The legislative history on SB 435 which sought to clarify some of the ambiguities of SB 1818 (density bonus law) provides opposing views from the two houses of the State Legislature on the issue of whether inclusionary units count towards density bonus requirements.



A developer subject to the City's inclusionary housing ordinance may appeal to the City Council for a reduction, adjustment or waiver based a determination that the requirements would legally constitute a taking of property without just compensation. The Developer has the burden of providing economic information and other evidence necessary to justify the taking finding.

In summary, Sonoma's inclusionary housing requirements are reasonable, provide flexibility, and have not served as a constraint to development.

### ***Permit and Fee Payments***

The Sonoma Community Development Agency (CDA) pays low and moderate income housing funds into the City General Fund to pay for some or all of a developer's building permit fees for units that have affordability restriction covenants. Units subject to the City's inclusionary requirements are eligible for fee reimbursements, thereby reducing the ordinance's economic impact. This program provides substantial cost savings to developers, who can in turn pass the savings on the development in the form of affordable units. For many projects in Sonoma, the savings have ranged from \$1,800 to \$2,400 per unit, and in some cases have gone even higher. The CDA budgets \$25,000 annually for this program.

### ***Affordable Housing Density Bonus***

In addition to establishing the City's inclusionary requirements, Chapter 19.44 of the Development Code specifies density bonus incentives the City offers to support development of affordable rental and ownership housing. As specified in this chapter, the City offers density increases of at least 25 percent over the otherwise maximum density, along with one additional development incentive, in exchange for the provision of 10 percent very low income units, 20 percent low income units, or 50 percent age restricted units. Sonoma has approved density bonuses for several affordable housing projects in the past (Firehouse Village, Maysonnave Apartments), but has had no requests for density bonuses in recent years.

The State legislature has amended Section 65915 of the California Government Code which regulates affordable housing density bonuses, providing a tiered system of density bonuses ranging from 20-35 percent and up to three development incentives/concessions, depending on the proportion of affordable units and level of income targeting. Density bonuses are now also available for the provision of a minimum of 10 percent moderate income units within condominium developments. As a means of facilitating the use of affordable housing density bonus incentives, Sonoma's Housing Element includes a program for the City to update its density bonus provisions consistent with current State provisions and to promote the program among the development community.

### ***Mobile Home Park Rent Stabilization***

With three mobile home parks and over 400 coaches, mobile homes represent an important source of affordable housing in Sonoma. As a means of preserving the affordability of its mobile home parks, primarily occupied by seniors, the City has implemented a mobile home park rent control ordinance since 1993. This ordinance limits rent increases to a maximum of 80% of the increase in the consumer price index, but no greater than 5% in a 12 month period. The ordinance ensures stable rents for those residents of the mobile home parks who are not on long-term leases (in excess of 12 months). Park owners are permitted to charge a new base rent for a mobile home space whenever a coach-in-place sale or lawful space vacancy occurs. The City's Mobile Home Park Rent Review Board reviews requests for rental increases

### ***Growth Management Ordinance – Exception for Affordable Housing***

Sonoma's Growth Management Ordinance (GMO), adopted in 1980, currently limits development in the City to an average of 65 units per year, a level determined after extensive study to allow for manageable increases in service and infrastructure demand without exhausting available water and sewer treatment capacity. (Between 2000-2008, actual

residential development in Sonoma has averaged 59 units per year). While the entire GMO is evaluated in detail later in this section, the following discussion focuses on GMO incentives to facilitate production of affordable housing.

The GMO exempts the following types of development from the allocation process in that a qualifying development may apply for a building permit or planning approval, as applicable, at any time:

- Applications in which at least 60 percent of the proposed units qualify as deed-restricted affordable housing, and which involve City participation in planning, financing or development, as determined by City Council on a case-by-case basis. (To date, the City has approved all requests for GMO exemptions for projects with an affordable housing component).
- Inclusionary units provided at the very low or low income level
- Density bonus units
- Second units

## Provisions for a Variety of Housing

Housing element law specifies that jurisdictions must identify adequate sites to be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards to encourage the development of various types of housing for all economic segments of the population. This includes single-family homes, multi-family housing, factory-built housing, mobile homes, single-room occupancy housing, emergency shelters and transitional housing among others. Table 35 summarizes housing types permitted within Sonoma’s residential and commercial zone districts.

**Table 35: Housing Types Permitted by Zone**

Housing Types Permitted	R-R	R-L	R-S	R-M	R-H	R-O	R-P	C / CG	MX	P
<b>Residential Uses</b>										
Single-Family Dwellings	P	P	P	P	UP	--	--	--	P*	--
Second Units	P	P	P	UP	UP	--	--	--	--	--
Duplexes	--	UP	P	P	UP	UP	--	--	--	--
Multi-Family (4 or fewer)	--	--	UP	P	P	P	--	UP	P	--
Multi-family (5 or more)	--	--	UP	UP	UP	P	--	UP	UP	--
Live/Work Facilities	--	--	UP	--	--	--	--	UP	UP	--
Mobile Home Park	--	--	--	--	--	--	UP	--	--	--
<b>Special Needs Housing</b>										
Community Care Facility (6 or fewer persons)	P	P	P	P	P	--	--	--	--	--
Residential Care Homes (6 or fewer clients)	--	--	UP	UP	--	--	--	--	--	--
Senior Residential Care Facilities	--	--	--	UP	--	--	--	--	--	--
Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing	--	UP	--	UP	UP	UP	--	UP	UP	UP
Caretaker and Employee Housing	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	UP

*P = Permitted UP = Use Permit -- Not Allowed*

*\*Limited to single residence on existing lot; otherwise use permit required*

*\*\*Caretaker and employee housing also permitted in A, PK and W zone districts with a use permit*

*Source: City of Sonoma Development Code, 2009.*

### Second Units

The purpose of permitting additional living units in single-family districts is to allow more efficient use of the existing housing stock and infrastructure to provide the opportunity for the development of small rental housing units designed to meet the special housing needs of individuals and families, while preserving the integrity of single-family neighborhoods.

The passage of AB 1866 (effective July 2003) now requires local governments to use a ministerial process for second unit applications for the purpose of facilitating production of affordable housing. AB 1866 does allow cities to impose development standards on second units addressing issues such as building size, parking, height, setbacks, and lot coverage.

In conjunction with the comprehensive revision to the City’s Development Code in 2003, the City amended its second unit provisions consistent with current State requirements. As depicted in Table 35, the City now permits second units within the Rural Residential, Low Density Residential and Sonoma Residential districts by right, and within the Medium and High Density districts with a use permit.

Sonoma's Development Code (Section 19.50.090) establishes the following standards for second units:

- A minimum parcel size is not required, but all applicable residential zoning district requirements regarding coverage and floor area must be met.
- Unit sizes for detached units must fall between 150 to 850 square feet, and for attached second units, between 150 square feet and 30% of the living area of the existing primary unit.
- At least one on-site parking space shall be provided for each second unit, in addition to the minimum number required for the primary dwelling. The additional space may be uncovered for an attached unit, but must be covered for a detached unit.
- The owner of the property must reside in either the main or second unit.
- Factory-manufactured second units are permitted in compliance with all applicable requirements.
- The second unit shall be compatible with the design of the main unit and surrounding neighborhood in terms of exterior treatment, height, landscaping, scale and setbacks.

Second units that comply with the above requirements are reviewed and approved ministerially through the issuance of a zoning clearance. Exceptions to these standards may be approved subject to a conditional use permit.

Between 2003-2008, a total of 23 second units received building permits, averaging 3 to 4 second units annually. Several residential subdivisions have in the past provided second units as a means of fulfilling their affordable housing requirements under the City's inclusionary housing ordinance, although due to difficulty in monitoring, the City's current policy is to not allow inclusionary requirements to be met through second units. Sonoma's second unit development standards are reasonable, less restrictive than many jurisdictions, and do not serve as a constraint to their development.

### ***Manufactured Housing/ Mobile Homes***

Section 65852.3 of the California Government Code requires jurisdictions to administratively allow manufactured homes on lots zoned for single-family dwellings if they meet certain standards. Consistent with this requirement, Sonoma's Development Code includes mobile homes on a permanent foundation within its definition of "single-family dwelling."

Sonoma has three mobile home parks containing approximately 400 mobile home units. The City has established a permanent mobile home land use designation in its General Plan, as well as M-P, mobile home park zoning, as a means of protecting its three parks for long-term mobile home park use.

### ***Live-Work Units***

In 2003, the City adopted section 19.50.050 of the Development Code as a means of facilitating the provision of live-work units. As indicated in Table 35, live/work units are permitted within the Residential Sonoma, Commercial, Gateway Commercial, and Mixed Use zoning districts, subject to a use permit. Due to their commercial nature, the City's residential density limitations are not applicable, with the number of live/work units permitted within a given development subject to Planning Commission approval. Development standards are fairly flexible to provide for creative design solutions, specifying only that the residential component not exceed 70% of the unit area, and standards for a minimum work area of 300 square feet, a minimum unit size of 700 square feet, and an average project-wide unit size not in excess of 1,200 square feet. The Development Code establishes a reduced parking requirement of one space for every 300 square feet of work area, plus one space for every 4 units, as well as a reduced open space requirement of 250 square feet.

The City has approved several live-work projects under its ordinance, including Carneros Village Lofts (30 units); Sonoma Centro (4 units); and Sonoma Lofts I (14 units).

### ***Single Room Occupancy (SRO)***

SRO residences are small, one room units (generally 100-250 sq. ft.) occupied by a single individual, and may either have shared or private kitchen and bathroom facilities. SROs can provide an entry point into the housing market for extremely low income individuals, formerly homeless and disabled persons.

Sonoma classifies SROs without individual kitchen facilities the same as hotels for zoning purposes, and as such are permitted with a use permit in the C, CG, and MX zones. SROs with individual kitchens would be considered the same as multi-family residential units, and as indicated in Table 35, are permitted or conditionally permitted in most residential and commercial zone districts. While Sonoma has not received any development applications for SROs, as a means of clearly defining SROs and clarifying where different types of SROs are permitted, the Housing Element includes a program (#22) to amend the Development Code to create an SRO use category, identify zones in which SROs are permitted by right and/or with a use permit, and to establish development standards to regulate SROs.

### ***Residential Care Facilities***

Section 1566.3 of the California Health and Safety Code requires residential facilities serving six or fewer persons to be considered a residential use of property for purposes of local zoning ordinances. No local agency can impose stricter zoning or building and safety standards on these residential facilities – such as a use permit, zoning variance or other zoning clearance - than is required of a family dwelling of the same type in the same zone.

Sonoma’s Development Code defines “community care facilities” as follows: a residential care facility serving six or fewer persons as provided for under Section 1566.3 of the California Health and Safety Code. While this definition complies with State requirements, community care facilities are not identified as a discrete use category in the Development Code, and provisions for care facilities with seven or more occupants are not specified. The Code does list “residential care homes” (6 or fewer clients) as a conditionally permitted use within the R-S and R-M districts, and defines this use as follows: “facilities providing residential social and personal care for children, the elderly, and people with limited ability for self-care, but where medical care is not a major element; includes children’s homes, transitional houses, orphanages, rehabilitation centers, and self-help group homes.” The Code does not impose any spacing requirements between residential care facilities.

In order to better facilitate and encourage community care facilities for special needs populations and provide greater certainty to project applicants, a program has been added to the Housing Element to amend the Development Code to achieve the following: a) clearly define community care facility and distinguish from residential care homes; b) for community care facilities with 6 or fewer occupants, list as a permitted use in residential zone districts; and c) for facilities with 7 or more occupants, list as a permitted or conditionally permitted use within designated zone districts.

### **Definition of Family**

The California courts have invalidated the following definition of “family” within jurisdictions Zoning Ordinances: (a) an individual, (b) two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, or (c) a group of not more than a certain number of unrelated persons as a single housekeeping unit. Court rulings state that defining a family does not serve any legitimate or useful objective or purpose recognized under the zoning and land planning powers of the City, and therefore violates rights of privacy under the California Constitution. A zoning ordinance also cannot regulate residency by discrimination between biologically related and unrelated persons.

While Sonoma’s Development Code does not currently contain a definition of “family,” this has not functioned to preclude community care facilities from single or multi-family residential zones, as evidenced by the State Community Care Licensing Division website (March 2009) which identified two Adult Residential Facilities, one Residential Care Facility for the Elderly, and one group home within the Sonoma City limits. As discussed above, the Housing Element includes a program to revisit the definitions and permissibility of various types of special needs housing including community care facilities, residential care homes, SROs, transitional housing and emergency shelters. As part of this process, the City will develop definitions that are inclusive and non-discriminatory and will incorporate those definitions within the Development Code.

### ***Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelters***

**Transitional housing** is temporary housing (generally six months to two years) for a homeless individual or family transitioning to permanent housing. Residents are provided with a range of support services, typically including case management, education and training, employment assistance, mental and physical health services, and support groups. Transitional housing can take several forms, including single-family group housing or multi-family units. Recent changes in State law (SB 2 - effective January 2008) require transitional housing to be treated as a residential use and only subject to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone. For example, if the transitional housing is a single-family use proposed in a single-family zone, then zoning should treat the transitional housing the same as other single-family uses in the zone.

Sonoma has adopted the following definition of transitional housing within its Development Code: “any dwelling unit or group living accommodation designed or operated as temporary living quarters or residence for homeless persons or victims of abuse (does not include any facility licensed as a community care facility by the State).” As indicated in Table 35, transitional housing facilities are currently permitted with a use permit in the following zone districts: R-L, R-M, R-H, R-O, C, C-G, MX, and P. Hence, transitional housing is treated the same as multi-family residential (5 or more units) in most zone districts, the exception being the R-O zone which allows multi-family without a use permit, whereas transitional housing requires a use permit. In order to provide compliance with SB 2, the City will eliminate the use permit requirement for multi-family transitional housing in the R-O zone, and for single-family transitional housing in the R-L and R-M zones.

**Permanent supportive housing** is affordable housing for people with disabilities that includes on- or off-site services to assist residents achieve stability. This long-term solution has proven effective both nationwide and locally in ending homelessness for many people who have been outside for years. The Sonoma County Community Development Commission identifies 725 permanent supportive housing beds in the County, with 96 additional beds in various stages of development. While the City of Sonoma regulates supportive housing as a residential use, the Development Code does not currently contain explicit provisions for supportive housing. Similar to transitional housing, SB 2 requires permanent supportive housing to be treated as a residential use. In order to comply with these provisions, a program has been added to the Housing Element to: 1) include supportive housing within the definition section of the Code; and 2) list supportive housing as a permitted use within residential zoning districts subject to the same standards and permitting procedures as other residential uses.

**Emergency shelters** are defined in Sonoma’s Development Code as “facilities for the temporary shelter and feeding of indigents or disaster victims, operated by a public or nonprofit agency.” Similar to transitional housing, emergency shelters are permitted with a use permit in the following zone districts: R-L, R-M, R-H, R-O, C, C-G, MX, and P.

Pursuant to SB 2, jurisdictions with an unmet need for emergency shelters are now required to identify a zone(s) where emergency shelters will be allowed as a permitted use without a conditional use permit or other discretionary permit. The identified zone must have sufficient capacity to accommodate the shelter need, and at a minimum provide capacity for at least one year-round shelter. Permit processing, development and management standards for emergency shelters must be objective and facilitate the development of, or conversion to, emergency shelters.

As discussed in the homeless section of the Housing Needs Assessment, the 2007 Sonoma County Point in Time Homeless Survey identified nearly 2,000 homeless people in the County, nine of which were identified within the Sonoma City limits. While the City currently permits shelters in a wide variety of zones with a use permit and will continue to do so, the Public (P) zone has been identified as best suited to house an emergency homeless shelter by right. The City developed its three-unit emergency shelter on the City-owned Police Station property in 2008, which is now operated by Sonoma Overnight Support. With less than half of this seven acre site currently developed, the site provides ample room for expansion of the current shelter facility, or even provision of a separate shelter facility. While the Police Station property is probably the most suitable for a shelter, shelters will be permitted on all Public zoned sites. With a total of 37 parcels within the City limits zoned “Public Facility” and an average parcel size of 5.6 acres, the Public zone has sufficient capacity to accommodate Sonoma’s shelter needs. The City has included a program within the Housing Element to modify the Development Code to permit shelters in the P zone by right, subject to the same development and management standards as other permitted uses in the zone. Pursuant to SB-2,

the City can also specify written, objective standards to regulate the following aspects of emergency shelters to enhance compatibility:

- The maximum number of beds or persons permitted to be served nightly;
- Off-street parking based on demonstrated need;
- The size and location of exterior/interior onsite waiting and client intake areas;
- The provision of onsite management;
- The proximity of other emergency shelters, provided that emergency shelters are not required to be more than 300 feet apart;
- The length of stay;
- Lighting;
- Security during hours that the emergency shelter is in operation.

### ***Farm Employee Housing***

Agriculture is a key part of the Sonoma County economy, with an estimated 6,200 farm-related jobs in the County. Although there are numerous vineyards in the Sonoma Valley, the City of Sonoma is a small, relatively urbanized community with just 25 acres of agriculturally zoned lands within its City limits and no farms of significant size. ABAG's *Projections 2007* estimate 80 persons within the City of Sonoma and its sphere of influence were employed in agriculture and natural resource jobs in 2005, representing just one percent of the total jobs in the City. The City's farmworker population is predominately non-migratory, and as such, their housing needs are best addressed through the provision of year-round, affordable rental and ownership housing. The City recently assisted in development of the 34 unit Wildflower sweat-equity homeownership project which included units specifically designated for occupancy by farmworkers. The City acknowledges the important role farmworkers play in the regional economy, and is committed to assisting in the provision of housing for this special needs group.

According to the 2009 Sonoma County Housing Element, within the unincorporated County where agricultural production is focused, there is a significant need for housing to accommodate peak farm labor activity in the late summer through the grape harvest in the fall. While there are no farm labor camps in Sonoma County, the California Human Development Corporation operates three camps in neighboring Napa County. Some Sonoma County vineyards provide bunkhouses for workers, although many farmworkers crowd into motel rooms or live in outdoor encampments. Vineyard Worker Services provides temporary housing at two trailer camps in the County. The City of Sonoma will continue to coordinate with Vineyard Worker Services to address farmworker housing needs, and support the County's efforts to provide housing for seasonal farmworkers.

According to the Sonoma County 2009-2014 Housing Element, there are a total of 254 farmworker family housing units in the unincorporated County, including 110 rental units within four developments, and 144 units within seven ownership developments. In addition, there are 883 agricultural employee units and beds in the unincorporated County. Despite these farmworker housing resources, the County indicates that reports of overcrowded homes, apartments and motels are common, indicating an unmet need for affordable housing for farmworkers.

Where a community has a demonstrated need for housing for farmworkers, the Housing Element must ensure that local zoning, development standards, and permitting processes comply with provisions specified under California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.5-6 pertaining to certain agricultural employee housing. More specifically, State law requires any agricultural employee housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in a group quarters, or 12 units or spaces designed for use by a single household be deemed an agricultural land use designation. No conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other zoning clearance shall be required of this employee housing that is not required of any other agricultural activity in the same zone. The permitted occupancy in employee housing in an agricultural zone shall include agricultural employees who do not work on the property where the employee housing is located. In addition, any agricultural employee housing with six or fewer employees shall be deemed a single-family structure and shall only be subject to those restrictions that apply to other single-family residential uses. Thus, as indicated in Table 35, agricultural housing with six or fewer occupants is to be permitted by right within Sonoma's R-R, R-L, R-S, R-M, and MX zone districts, and permitted by use permit in the R-H zone.

While agricultural land within the City of Sonoma is limited to just 25 acres and farmworkers in the community are non-migratory, the City recognizes that farmworker housing needs are a significant issue which impact the entire region. Therefore, the City has included a program in the Element (#22) to amend the Development Code to provide opportunities for agricultural employee housing within Agriculture and Residential zone districts consistent with State statutes.

## **Accessibility Accommodations**

Both the federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act impose an affirmative duty on local governments to make reasonable accommodations (i.e. modifications or exceptions) in their zoning and other land use regulations when such accommodations may be necessary to afford disabled persons an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. For example, it may be a reasonable accommodation to allow covered ramps in the setbacks of properties that have already been developed to accommodate residents with mobility impairments.

The City has conducted a review of zoning and building code requirements, and has not identified any barriers to the provision of accessible housing. Sonoma accommodates most accessibility modifications through issuance of building permits. Handicapped ramps or guardrails are permitted to intrude into the standard setbacks required under zoning to allow first floor access for physically disabled residents. The Building Department has adopted the 2007 California Building Code without amendment, and enforces the disabled access regulations delineated in chapters 11A (Housing Accessibility) and 11B (Accessibility of Publicly Funded Housing). New apartment buildings with three or more units are subject to requirements for unit “adaptability” on ground floor units, and accessibility to common use areas. Adaptable units are built for easy conversion to disabled access, such as doorway and hallway widths, and added structural support in the bathroom to allow the addition of handrails.

It is the policy of the City of Sonoma to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities seeking fair access to housing in the application of its zoning and building laws. While Sonoma has not identified any constraints on the development, maintenance and improvement of housing for persons with disabilities, the City has not developed specific procedures for requesting a reasonable accommodation. As a means of facilitating such requests, the City has included a program in the Housing Element to develop procedures for reasonable accommodation requests with respect to zoning, permit processing, and building laws. Such reasonable accommodations may include exceptions to development standards, allowing an otherwise prohibited use, or allowing uses by right where discretionary approval might otherwise be required, for the purpose of removing constraints to housing for persons with disabilities.

As discussed earlier in this section, the Housing Element includes a program to revisit the issue of zones in which community care facilities for persons with disabilities are permitted, and to amend the Development Code to clearly reflect where these uses will be permitted. As part of this process, the City will review all definitions and use allowances for homes and facilities for disabled individuals to ensure that use classifications and definitions are appropriate and in full compliance with all state and federal laws. This includes but may not be limited to community care facilities, residential care homes, facilities for the mentally disabled, sober living homes, and other such uses. The revisions to the Zoning Ordinance will also recognize and incorporate the Reasonable Accommodation process discussed above to ensure that opportunities are available for disabled housing.

## **Growth Management Ordinance**

Sonoma’s residential growth control system—the Growth Management Ordinance or GMO—was adopted by City Council in 1980 based on a computer model developed by ABAG that examined various rates of growth against the City’s ability to maintain an appropriate level of services. Factors addressed in the model included City revenues, water supply and infrastructure requirements, police and fire service, street maintenance, and capital improvements. The evaluation indicated that an annual average of 100 new units would allow for manageable increases in service without exceeding the available water supply for at least 20 years. In 2005, the average rate of allowed development was reduced to 88 units, and in 2008 reduced to 65 units to reflect the current and projected availability of water and



sewer treatment capacity<sup>1</sup> and the actual rate of development experienced, while maintaining sufficient development capacities to accommodate Sonoma’s fair share housing allocation (RHNA).

Key provisions of the current GMO are as follows:

- Control occurs at the planning approval stage, or “front-end,” of the development process through an annual distribution of allotments.
- Projects of fewer than five (5) units, which are defined as “small developments,” may be processed at any time, but the number of units in such projects is counted against the succeeding year’s available allotment.
- Developments of five (5) units or more that do not otherwise qualify as “infill developments” (defined as “large developments”) are processed on a first-come/first-served basis depending on their place on a “Pre-Application Waiting List.” There is no fee to get on the list; all that is required is a preliminary development plan and the authorization of the property owner. A one-page form is used to record pre-applications.
- The ordinance defines a “development year” over the course of which units are counted and allotments are distributed as described below. The development year runs from September 1st to August 31st.
- Each September, the City Council distributes allotments from the 65-unit pool, as follows: a) any unused development or forfeited allocations from the prior year may be added to the pool, at the discretion of the City Council, except that the number of allocations available for distribution shall not exceed 97 allocations; b) the number of small developments approved during the previous twelve months is subtracted from the available development applications; c) 30 allocations are made available for potential “infill” developments; d) development allocations are distributed to large developments and exempt developments which have received some but not all of their allotments requested through their pre-application (up to 20 per year); e) any remaining development allocations are distributed to the next available pre-applications in the processing queue in order of date received (up to 20 per project). Allotments are distributed until either the pool is used up or there are no more projects in line to receive them.
- The 30 allocations for “infill” development are made available for that development year on a first-come, first-served basis to projects of 15 units or fewer that are proposed for sites that have been within City limits for at least three years and that fully develop the site.
- Large developments may receive a maximum of 20 allotments per development year (in order to prevent one project from taking an entire year’s allocation).
- Once a potential development on the waiting list receives allotments, the prospective developer has three years to file an application; otherwise, the allotments are forfeited. Forfeited allotments may be added to the following year’s allocation pool, at the discretion of the City Council. The City Council has not followed a consistent policy in re-allocating forfeited allotments. In some cases, such allotments have been added to allocation pool, but in others they have not. However, over the past ten years (1998-2007), an average of 71 units per year has been built (based on building permit records). Since it is natural for some allotments to go unused based on changed development plans for given sites, this shows that forfeiture of allotments has not been a critical issue in developing housing in Sonoma.
- In cases where a development is denied or withdrawn, any allotments accumulated by such developments are generally added to the following year’s allocation pool.
- Although over the long term the 65-unit per year average is maintained, the system may result in some peaks in actual construction because of varying market conditions or a group of approved projects all building at the same time.
- Until November 1993, when this exemption was removed, projects in which 100 percent of the units were affordable were exempt from the processing restrictions; however, the units were eventually counted in the year they would have been eligible to begin processing had the project been market-rate.

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<sup>1</sup> As detailed in the 1999 Water System Improvement Study, the 2003 Addendum to the Water System Improvement Study, the 2007 Water Connection Charge and Rate Study, and the review of municipal services conducted for the 2005-2020 General Plan.

The GMO exempts the following types of development from the allocation process in that a qualifying development may apply for a building permit or planning approval, as applicable, at any time:

- Applications in which at least 60 percent of the proposed units qualify as deed-restricted affordable housing, and which involve City participation in planning, financing or development, as determined by City Council on a case-by-case basis. *(To date, the City has approved all requests for GMO exemptions for projects with an affordable housing component).*
- Inclusionary units provided at the very low or low income level
- Density bonus units
- Second units

Since the Growth Management Ordinance allows for 65 units to be built per year, and Sonoma’s 2007-2014 fair share RHNA allocation is 353 units, or an average of 50 units per year over the seven year period, the GMO will not prohibit the City from meeting its target housing needs allocation. The GMO is not a voter-approved initiative, allowing City Council the discretion to amend the Ordinance over time as appropriate. As indicated in Housing Element program #18, the Council will annually review the GMO in conjunction with the monitoring of affordable housing production to ensure adequate incentives for the provision of affordable housing and fulfillment of regional housing growth needs. Monitoring will continue future housing element cycles to ensure the GMO does not impede Sonoma from addressing its regional housing needs for all income levels.

## Fees

### *Planning-Related Fees*

Planning fees are charged by the City upon the submittal of any application for a discretionary development approval, such as a use permit, minor subdivision, or planned unit development permit. Table 36 lists the City’s 2009 planning fee schedule for various residential development applications. These fees vary, from \$378 for a Minor Use Permit, to \$1,200 for Planned Unit Developments. As a percentage of the total cost of any residential development project, these fees are relatively minor; most of them do not increase as the size of a project increases, and those that do increase are not significant in comparison to the total value of a project.

**Table 36: Planning Department Fee Schedule, 2009**

Procedure	Fee
Public Notice	\$79.00
<i>Tentative Parcel Map</i>	\$669.00 + \$50 per lot
Tentative Subdivision Map	\$1459.00 + \$50 per lot
Minor Use Permit	\$378.00
Major Use Permit	\$673.00
Temporary Use Permit	\$53.00
Variance	\$695.00
Planned Unit Development	\$1,200.00
Rezoning	\$751.00
General Plan Amendment	\$1106.00
Prezoning/Annexation	\$1021.00
Modifications of an Approved Plan	\$330.00
Environmental Review (Initial Study)	\$913.00
Design Review (Major)	\$476.00
Design Review (Minor)	\$188.00
Design Review (Alteration)	\$128.00
Design Review (Landscaping Plan)	\$218.00

Design Review (Demolition or Relocation)	\$277.00
Building Plan Review	\$89.00 per hour

Source: City of Sonoma Planning Department, January 2009

### Construction-Related Fees

Far more significant than planning fees are construction-related fees, which fall into five major groups: building permit fees, City impact fees, water connection fees, school impact fees, and sewer connection fees. The first three are set and collected by the City of Sonoma, while school fees are set and collected by the Sonoma Valley Unified School District, and sewer fees are charged by the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District. Although the amounts involved may be reasonable individually, collectively these fees represent a significant cost component in the price of a new home. Table 37 illustrates the typical construction-related fees associated with a single-family residence, and detached and attached units in a Planned Unit Development.

The City has used restraint in setting its own fees. While building permit fees have grown incrementally over the years, the increases have been in line with other comparably sized communities. The City's largest fees, the Capital Improvement Fee and the Impact fee, have not been increased in several years (proceeds from the Capital Improvement Fee and the Impact Fee go into the Capital Improvement Fund and are used for infrastructure improvements such as road maintenance and storm drain upgrades). Unlike most California jurisdictions, Sonoma does not impose park fees or land dedication requirements.

Two of the highest fees are charged by outside agencies, the school district and the sanitation district. School impact fees are regulated by State law. The local school district charges at the upper level of what the State allows because the school system is approaching capacity and the funds are needed to provide additional classroom space. The sanitation district sets its fees with the goal of ensuring that the district is self-sufficient. Its fees have increased considerably in recent years to cover the cost of capital expenditures.

**Table 37: Building Department Fee Estimates for Residential Development, 2009**

	Single Family Dwelling (2,600 sq. ft. w/ 2-car Garage)	Detached Unit in P.U.D. (2,100 sq. ft. w/ 2-car Garage)	Attached Unit in P.U.D. (1,700 sq. ft.) (apts. or condos w/ carport)
<b>Construction Valuation:</b>			
Building Permit	\$2,764.40	\$2,343.66	\$1,836.16
Plan Check	\$1,787.18	\$1,544.32	\$1,238.70
Miscellaneous	\$416.40	\$356.00	\$278.10
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$4,967.98</b>	<b>\$4,243.98</b>	<b>\$3,352.96</b>
Capital Improvement <sup>1</sup>	\$614.00 (3-bed)	\$614.00 (3-bed)	\$478.00 (2-bed)
Impact Fee	\$966.00	\$966.00	\$966.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,580.00</b>	<b>\$1,580.00</b>	<b>\$1,444.00</b>
Water Connection (new main)	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$6,400.00
School Impact (\$2.97/sq. ft.)	\$7,722.00	\$6,237.00	\$5,049.00
Sewer Connection and Inspection	\$11,500.00	\$11,500.00	\$9,400.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$27,222.00</b>	<b>\$25,737.00</b>	<b>\$20,849.00</b>
<b>Total Fees</b>	<b>\$33,769.98</b>	<b>\$31,560.98</b>	<b>\$25,645.96</b>

Source: City of Sonoma Building Department, January 2009

(1) Based on number of bedrooms.

### Total Development Fees

Table 38 shows the total planning and construction fees charged for selected residential projects in Sonoma. In an effort to reduce the potential impact of City fees on affordable housing development, the City has a policy of exempting affordable units (including inclusionary units) from building permit and plan check fees, the Capital Improvement Fee, and the Impact Fee. For many projects in Sonoma, the savings have ranged from \$1,800 to \$2,400 per unit, and in some cases have gone even higher. These fees are reimbursed by redevelopment housing funds, with \$25,000 budgeted on an annual basis for fee reimbursements.

**Table 38: Development Fee Estimates for Typical Projects, 2009**

Three-Lot subdivision	Fee	Cost Per Unit
Arborist Report	\$1,000.00	\$333.33
Public Notice	\$79.00	\$26.33
Tentative Parcel Map	\$819.00	\$273.00
City Engineer Plan Check Fees	\$3,478.00	\$1,159.33
Building Dept. Fees	\$18,210.12	\$6,070.04
School Impact Fees	\$19,602.00	\$6,534.00
Water Connection Fees	\$40,233.00	\$13,411.00
Water Agency (SCWA) Fees: Review of Drainage Plan	\$1,288.00	\$429.33
Sanitation District Fees: Sewer Connection & Inspection	\$34,500.00	\$11,500.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$119,209.12</b>	<b>\$39,736.36</b>
Two-Unit apartment in Commercial Zone	Fee	Cost Per Unit
Public Notice	\$79.00	\$39.50
Major Use Permit	\$673.00	\$336.50
Design Review (Minor)	\$188.00	\$94.00
City Engineer Plan Check Fees	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Building Dept. Fees	\$6,209.80	\$3,104.90
School Impact Fees	\$4,752.00	\$2,376.00
Water Connection Fees	\$13,311.00	\$6,655.50
Water Agency (SCWA) Fees: Review of Drainage Plan	\$3,310.00	\$1,655.00
Sanitation District Fees: Sewer Connection & Inspection	\$18,800.00	\$9,400.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$48,322.80</b>	<b>\$24,161.40</b>
Eight-Unit Planned Development	Fee	Cost Per Unit
Arborist Report	\$1,200.00	\$150.00
Initial Study	\$913.00	\$114.13
Public Notice	\$79.00	\$9.88
Planned Development Permit	\$1,200.00	\$150.00
Tentative Subdivision Map	\$1,859.00	\$232.38
DFG & County Filing Fees	\$1,926.75	\$240.84
Design Review (Major)	\$476.00	\$59.50
Design Review (Landscaping Plan)	\$218.00	\$27.25
City Engineer Plan Check Fees	\$3,412.00	\$426.50
Building Dept. Fees	\$41,704.77	\$5,213.10
School Impact Fees	\$42,768.00	\$5,346.00
Water Agency (SCWA) Fees: Review of Drainage Plan	\$3,310.00	\$413.75
Water Connection Fees	\$68,088.00	\$8,511.00
Sanitation District Fees: Sewer Connection & Inspection	\$92,000.00	\$11,500.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$259,154.52</b>	<b>\$32,394.33</b>

**Table 38: Development Fee Estimates for Typical Projects, 2009**

<b>Twelve-Unit Apartment Complex</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Cost Per Unit</b>
Arborist Report	\$1,200.00	\$100.00
Initial Study	\$913.00	\$76.08
Public Notice	\$79.00	\$6.58
Use Permit (Major)	\$673.00	\$56.08
DFG & County Filing Fees	\$1,926.75	\$160.56
Design Review (Major)	\$476.00	\$39.67
Design Review (Landscaping Plan)	\$218.00	\$18.17
City Engineer Plan Check Fees	\$2,000.00	\$166.67
Building Dept. Fees	\$30,641.48	\$2,553.46
School Impact Fees	\$28,512.00	\$2,376.00
Water Agency (SCWA) Fees: Review of Drainage Plan	\$3,310.00	\$275.83
Water Connection Fees	\$51,908.00	\$4,325.67
Sanitation District Fees: Sewer Connection & Inspection	\$112,800.00	\$9,400.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$234,657.23</b>	<b>\$19,554.77</b>
<b>24-Unit Subdivision</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Cost Per Unit</b>
Arborist Report	\$2,000.00	\$83.33
Initial Study	\$913.00	\$38.04
EIR	\$100,000.00	\$4,166.66
Public Notice	\$79.00	\$3.29
Tentative Subdivision Map	\$2,659.00	\$110.79
DFG & County Filing Fees	\$2,656.75	\$110.70
Design Review (Major)	\$476.00	\$19.83
Design Review (Landscaping Plan)	\$218.00	\$9.08
City Engineer Plan Check Fees	\$7,236.00	\$301.50
Building Dept. Fees	\$150,254.24	\$6,260.22
School Impact Fees	\$178,200.00	\$7,425.00
Water Agency (SCWA) Fees: Review of Drainage Plan	\$5,520.00	\$230.00
Water Connection Fees	\$204,264.00	\$8,511.00
Sanitation District Fees: Sewer Connection & Inspection	\$276,000.00	\$11,500.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$930,475.99</b>	<b>\$38,769.82</b>

Source: City of Sonoma Planning, Building & Public Works Departments, January 2009

## Building Codes

The City of Sonoma has adopted the 2007 California Existing Building Code, based on the International Building Code of 2006. The City has not made any amendments to the State Building Code, although the City did adopt fire sprinkler requirements in 1999 requiring that *all* new buildings and remodels requiring a building permit install an automatic sprinkler system.

The City lacks the resources to conduct regular surveys to identify violations of the building codes, and instead relies on public complaints of alleged violations. Once a violation has been confirmed by City staff, the City's primary recourse for securing compliance is the abatement process. The City typically receives fewer than ten phone inquiries per year regarding housing code violations, the vast majority of which are related to property maintenance. As Sonoma's housing stock is generally very well maintained, residential code enforcement is not a significant issue.

## Public Improvements

Typical public improvements required by the City for residential development include: 1) reconstruction of curb, gutter, sidewalk and street; 2) installation of separate sewer mains and laterals; 3) installation of separate water service; 4) provision of private underground utility services (gas, electricity, cable T.V., telephone) to each lot; 5) installation of street trees and street lighting; 6) development of storm drains and related facilities; and 7) provision of asphalt or concrete paving for all parking and driveway areas. These improvements are standard for most cities since most local governments cannot afford to pay for the improvements necessitated by new development and can, therefore, charge improvement fees, as long as the fees charged are reasonably related to the cost of providing the improvements.

## Development Review and Processing Procedures

### Planning Entitlements

Many forms of housing development, including residential developments of five or more units and specialized housing types, such as live-work facilities, require discretionary planning approvals such as a use permit, subdivision map, and/or site plan and architectural review. In addition, the City adopted new regulations in 2007, which expanded the design review requirements for projects in the Historic Overlay zone, requiring discretionary approval of infill development on existing lots. Although the Planning Division is primarily responsible for administering the planning permit process, there is close coordination with all branches of the City government, including the Public Works Division, the Building Division, the City Engineer, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. Outside agencies and organizations may also play a role in the review process, depending upon the circumstances of the application. (For example, the State Department of Fish and Game participates in the review of projects involving wetlands, while Caltrans reviews developments involving changes with the right-of-way associated with State Highway 12.)

The City's planning permit requirements associated with various types of housing developments are summarized in Table 39 below (refer to Table 35 for exceptions where Use Permits are required or exempted in certain zoning districts).

**Table 39: Planning Permit Requirements**

Type of Development	Review Authority and Permit Type			Estimated Timing
	Planning Commission		Design Review Commission	
	Use Permit	Parcel Map or Tentative Map	Landscape and/or Architectural Review***	
Single-family residence on an existing lot	No*	No	No, unless in Historic Zone	30 days
Duplex on an existing lot	No*	No	No, unless in Historic zone	30 days
Four-plex (rental)	No*	No	Yes	60-90 days
6-unit Apartment Building	Yes**	No	Yes	90 -120 days
10-lot Single-family subdivision	Yes	Yes	Yes	180-270 Days
24-unit Planned Unit Development	Yes	Yes	Yes	270-540 Days
12-unit Condominium	Yes**	Yes	Yes	180-270 Days

Source: City of Sonoma Planning Division, 2009

\*Use permit required for: single-family in R-H zone; duplexes in R-L, R-H and R-O zones; four-plexes in R-S, and C/CG zones.

\*\*As a means of facilitating higher density development, the R-O zoning district permits multi-family uses by right without a use permit.

\*\*\* The Design Review Commission only conducts site plan review for projects that that are not also subject to review by the Planning Commission.

Applications involving more than one approval by a review authority (e.g., the Planning Commission) are processed concurrently. For example, a Planned Unit Development requires both a subdivision map and a planned development

permit. The Planning Commission, which is the review authority for those types of permits, hears and acts upon both permit requests at the same time. In addition, the Planning Commission would also conduct site plan review and approve the architectural concepts of the development. The findings required for approval of a use permit are as follows:

1. That the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and any Specific Plan;
2. That the proposed use is allowed with a conditional Use Permit within the applicable zoning district and complies with all applicable standards and regulations of the Development Code (except for approved Variances and Exceptions).
3. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use are compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity; and
4. The proposed use will not impair the architectural integrity and character of the zoning district in which it is to be located.

Subsequent design review, which is conducted by the Design Review Commission, is typically completed in one or two meetings and is focused on landscaping and architectural details. The City Council does not have review authority with respect to planning permit applications unless a decision by Planning Commission or the Design Review Commission is appealed.

To apply for a planning permit, an applicant must submit a complete application, which includes an application form, the application fee, and the specific submittal requirements associated with the particular application. For example, a use permit application requires the applicant to provide a project narrative describing the proposal, a site plan, and (for new development) building elevations. An application for a subdivision requires the submittal of a tentative map. The specific requirements associated with a given application are listed on the application form. The City of Sonoma employs a single form for all types of planning applications in order to simplify the process for applicants. Sonoma's review process is aimed at ensuring that new development is consistent with the General Plan and the Development Code, as required by State law, and it does not introduce significant uncertainty, costs or delays to development review.

### ***Design Review***

The City does not normally conduct design review for single-family units or duplexes, unless such units fall within the Historic Overlay zone. There is, however, design review for all multi-unit projects of more than two units and all PUDs (including landscape review).

When applicable, the design review of new residential development is conducted by the City's Design Review Commission (DRC), a five-member citizen commission that normally meets once each month. The authority of the DRC can differ depending on the scope of a project. If a project is subject to discretionary review by the City's Planning Commission, then subsequent DRC review is normally limited to three areas: 1) architectural details; 2) colors and materials; and, 3) landscaping and lighting. This approach is intended to ensure that when a project is subject to Planning Commission review, the subsequent design review does not result in changing or revisiting key elements of the project. However, when discretionary projects are not subject to review by the Planning Commission, the DRC's authority is much broader, including consideration of the project site plan, building massing and elevation concepts. The applicant is required to submit a one-page application form, the application fee, site plan, and drawings documenting proposed building designs, colors, materials, lighting and landscaping. The application is evaluated by the DRC in a public meeting. The applicant has the option of conducting the review in stages (e.g., having the architecture colors and materials reviewed at one meeting and having the landscaping reviewed at another meeting) or all at once. Usually, only one or two meetings are necessary to receive an approval.

The DRC makes use of design guidelines set forth in the City's Development Code that address site plan elements, building types and materials appropriate to Sonoma. Although they are reasonably detailed and give an applicant practical guidance as to the City's expectations with regard to design, they are necessarily somewhat subjective. The findings required for approval of site plan and architectural review are as follows:

1. The project complies with applicable policies and regulations, as set forth in this Development Code (except for approved Variances and Exceptions), other City ordinances, and the General Plan;

2. On balance, the project is consistent with the intent of applicable design guidelines set forth in this Development Code; and
3. The project responds appropriately to the context of adjacent development, as well as existing site conditions and environmental features.

In addition to the basic findings set forth above, above, additional findings are applicable for any project located within the Historic Overlay District:

1. The project will not impair the historic character of its surroundings; and
2. The project substantially preserves the qualities of any significant historic structures or other significant historic features on the site.

As mandated by state law, the City has adopted a low-water use landscaping ordinance that sets forth requirements applicable to the landscaping associated with new development. This ordinance makes use of a quantified “water budget” approach that gives applicants maximum flexibility in selecting plant types as long as an overall water use limit is met. In compliance with State Law, this ordinance is being updated with respect to water conservation requirements.

## Processing Time

The time it takes to move a residential development from an initial application to a final planning approval (e.g., tentative map or use permit approval) can have a significant effect on housing prices because of the costs of carrying the land. In Sonoma, processing times for smaller residential developments (those of four units or less) have increased slightly over the last several years, particularly for projects located within the City’s Historic overlay zone. It normally takes an application of this kind two to four months to be decided. Somewhat larger projects of five to twenty units for which a negative declaration is required typically involve a minimum processing time of five months.

The processing times for larger-scale developments are longer, especially for those for which an environmental impact report (EIR) is required. There are several factors responsible for this increase in processing time. The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which governs the preparation of EIRs, have grown increasingly complex and the standards for legal adequacy have become more rigid. As a result, the City and its environmental consultants must spend considerable time in document preparation to ensure that the EIR is legally adequate. In addition, public involvement in the EIR process has increased, which also leads to additional time in document preparation since all public comments must be addressed. Delay may also result when developers do not submit information needed for the review process in a timely manner.

A project for which an EIR is required normally takes one and a half years to process, but it can take up to three years if there are special environmental circumstances involved, such as drainage issues or the presence of archaeological/historic resources, wetlands, nesting sites, or vernal pools. For example, the review process for the Sonoma Valley Oaks/Eastside Estates Unit III developments, a recent development for which an environmental impact report was prepared, took about three and one-half years to complete. The City has taken the position that it is critical to take the time needed to prepare a complete and legally defensible EIR, since in many cases the EIR is subjected to litigation. The City takes seriously its responsibility to process applications in a timely way, but it will require action by the State with regard to the reform of environmental laws to significantly shorten the environmental review process.

One method that the City has instituted, with partial success, to expedite environmental review is the “Expanded Initial Study,” which provides a detailed assessment of potential impacts for a development project prior to the decision on whether to prepare an EIR. This approach is typically used for applications where potential environmental impacts are limited to a few areas of concern. The expanded initial study may show that a negative declaration is appropriate or it may find that there are significant impacts associated with the project which cannot readily be mitigated, resulting in the requirement of an EIR. While the preparation of an expanded initial study is something of a gamble from the applicant’s point of view, if an EIR is eventually needed, the analysis that goes into the study may shorten the EIR preparation period. In some cases this approach has worked to mitigate potential impacts while avoiding the need for an EIR. A recent example of a residential project where a mitigated negative declaration was



adopted through an expanded initial study process is the Willows Wild Planned Development, a 15 unit development on a 2.4 acre site. The application for this project was filed in November 2004 and planning approvals were granted in October 2005, a review process of just under one year.

## Infrastructure and Service Constraints

This section provides an overview of the availability of public services (sewer and water) to serve projected growth within the City of Sonoma during the Housing Element planning period 2009-2014.

### Wastewater Treatment

The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) provides wastewater treatment services to all lots in the City, as well as to many parcels in nearby unincorporated areas of the county. The Sonoma Valley Sanitation Zone (SVCSD), which encompasses about 4,700 acres from Glen Ellen to the communities surrounding the City of Sonoma, is one of 11 areas countywide where wastewater treatment, reclamation, and disposal are managed by the SCWA. Each sanitation area operates under a separate permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The SVCSD operates one wastewater treatment plant, located south of the City on Eighth Street East, which discharges into Schell Slough during wet weather months. During the dry weather period, recycled water is used for irrigation by local farmers and for wetland enhancement. While the treatment plant has an estimated maximum capacity of 16 mgd (increasing to 20 mgd upon the completion of the tertiary treatment system), the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit limits the dry weather flow to 3.0 mgd. The current (2007) average dry weather flow is 2.85 mgd, or 95 percent of the discharge limit.

Over the past decade, the SVCSD has implemented a number of capital, operations and maintenance improvements at the treatment plant. These improvements, which have greatly improved compliance with the NPDES permit, include upgrades to its aeration basins, the addition of a 90 million gallon storage reservoir, and improvements to its irrigation and recycling facilities. Most recently, the District has implemented a tertiary treatment system, significantly increasing opportunities for recycled treated wastewater.

The SVCSD's strategy to address projected wastewater treatment requirements focuses on conservation and recycling. The District estimates that its water conservation programs will successfully conserve treatment capacity within the current allowance of 3.0 mgd/day during the dry period through 2015. This estimate is based on 2% growth rate within the District, an amount consistent with City and County growth management regulations.

The Sanitation District is taking the following actions to provide treatment capacity necessary to serve projected growth within the City and the sanitation district as a whole:

- The District is continuing to implement water conservation programs aimed at reducing flows from existing connections.
- The District has upgraded the reclamation facility by providing for tertiary treatment and is increasing the amount of reclaimed wastewater use by pursuing additional reclaimed water user contracts.
- The District is working with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to renew the plant's NPDES permit.
- The District is completing additional engineering and environmental studies on required improvements needed.

### Water Supply

The City of Sonoma purchases the bulk of its potable water from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). The SCWA draws water from gravel beds along the Russian River in the vicinity of Forestville. Transmission mains distribute this water, with final delivery to the City of Sonoma via the Sonoma Aqueduct through the Valley of the Moon Water District. The City's revised contract with the SCWA provides for a monthly delivery rate of up to 6.3 mgd, with an annual volume limit of 3,000 acre-feet. However, the effective maximum delivery rate at present, due to capacity limitations of the Sonoma Valley Aqueduct and limitations in the amount of water actually available to SCWA, is 3.45 mgd.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Water Strategy Review, City of Sonoma Planning Department and Public Works Department, December 20, 2008.

Sonoma's SCWA supply is supplemented by a system of City-owned groundwater wells. These wells serve several important purposes. They provide a potable water source in the event that aqueduct deliveries are interrupted or are otherwise unable to meet demand. In addition, the wells play a critical role in supplementing water deliveries from the SCWA during the period of peak demand that occur in the summer months. In recent years, the City has rehabilitated existing wells and planned for the development of new wells to help ensure that future demands will be met. Currently, the maximum rated capacity of active wells suitable for use without restriction is 1.51 mgd, and staff estimates the sustainable yield to be on the order of 1.0 mgd. Well water currently represents 3% of the City's annual water usage.

The total buildout capacity under Sonoma's 2020 General Plan allows for an additional 1,320 dwelling units, as measured from January 2008 forward. With respect to the rate at which this development is expected to occur, water demand projections made in the *2007 Rate and Connection Charge Study* assumed that growth would occur at the rate of 80 equivalent single-family units per year, and found that under this assumption, General Plan buildout would occur in 2023. Reduction of the City's Growth Management Ordinance in 2008 to 65 units per year is projected to extend General Plan buildout to 2025.

Assuming no effect from additional conservation measures, peak month demand is projected to reach the current capabilities of the SCWA for water delivery (3.45 mgd) in 2010, and to reach the 3.8 mgd committed to the Memorandum of Understanding in 2017. At General Plan buildout, peak month demand is projected to amount to 4.08 mgd assuming no demand reduction from water conservation, or 3.81, depending on the effectiveness of water conservation programs.

In essence, any level of water use in excess of 3.45 mgd can only be accommodated through use of wells. Although the City's existing well capacity, in combination with the peak month delivery capacity currently available from the SCWA, is theoretically sufficient to meet projected water needs through the year 2031, no margin of safety is provided in the event of extended dry periods or failure of individual wells. Therefore, it is essential that the City take steps to improve water conservation, upgrade its water supply infrastructure, increase the local supply of water through new wells, and protect the quality and sustainability of its groundwater resources.

As documented in the City's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan and the 2007 Rate Study, the City has developed and is implementing a comprehensive strategy to ensure its future water needs are met. The elements addressed in this strategy are conservation, imported supply, groundwater supply and management, re-use, system management, and demand reduction.

## Market Constraints

Land costs, construction costs, and market financing contribute to the cost of housing reinvestment, and can potentially hinder the production of new affordable housing. Although many constraints are driven by market conditions, jurisdictions have some leverage in instituting policies and programs to address the impacts of these constraints.

## Development Costs

Construction costs vary widely according to the type of development, with multi-family housing generally less expensive to construct than single-family homes. However, there is wide variation within each construction type depending on the size of unit, type of parking provided, and the number and quality of amenities. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments, wood frame construction at 20-30 units per acre is generally the most cost efficient method of residential development.

Construction costs have changed significantly over the past decade. From 2000-2007 construction costs were rising faster than inflation. In late 2007 they reached their peak, and have dropped roughly ten percent since that time. Another factor affecting the cost of construction is the use of prevailing wage labor which is typically required for publicly funded affordable housing developments.

A 2007 review of total development costs for affordable apartment development projects throughout the Bay Area identifies an overall average cost of \$350 per square foot, inclusive of land. Based on a recent (2008) financial proforma for an affordable rental development in Sonoma, construction costs are estimated at \$210 per square foot; additional hard costs associated with on and off-site improvements increase total construction costs to \$280 per square foot.

A reduction in amenities and the quality of building materials (above a minimum acceptability for health, safety, and adequate performance) can lower the cost of development. In addition, prefabricated factory-built housing may provide for lower priced housing by reducing construction and labor costs. Another factor related to construction costs is the number of units built at one time. As the number increases, overall costs generally decrease as builders can benefit from economies of scale.

Another key component is the price of raw land and any necessary improvements. The diminishing supply of residential land combined with a high demand for housing keeps land cost high throughout the Bay Area. The Sonoma Community Development Agency has a history of assisting with site acquisition for affordable housing projects, providing low-interest acquisition and/or development loans to non-profit housing providers and various other forms of assistance in exchange for long-term affordability covenants. For example, the City recently (fall 2008) issued a Request for Proposal for development of affordable housing on an Agency owned site at 19344 Sonoma Highway, and is in the process of entering into a development agreement with a non-profit for development of 40 extremely low, very low and low income family rental units. The Agency also owns a vacant property on Broadway (the "Four Corners" site) which it intends to provide for affordable housing.

## Mortgage and Rehabilitation Financing

The availability of residential financing in a community depends on a number of factors, including the type of lending institutions active in the community, lending practices, rates and fees charged, laws and regulations governing financial institutions, and equal access to those institutions. Until mid 2008, home mortgage financing was readily available at attractive rates throughout Sonoma County and California, with average interest rates ranging from around 6.25 percent to seven percent between 2006 and 2008 for a 30 year fixed rate loan. Beginning in mid-2008, the impacts of the home foreclosure crisis and resulting credit crunch made mortgage financing more difficult to obtain, particularly for persons with short credit history, lower incomes or self-employment incomes. The Federal Reserve has continued to lower interest rates in attempts to stimulate mortgage lending.

Under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), lending institutions are required to disclose lending data to the public down to the census tract level. Table 40 summarizes HMDA data for both for the City of Sonoma and Sonoma

County as a whole, providing information on the approval status of all home purchase, refinance and home improvement loan applications during 2007.<sup>4</sup> Of the total of 559 applications for conventional home purchase loans in the City, 77 percent were approved, 14 percent denied, and nine percent withdrawn or incomplete. In comparison to the County-wide average, mortgage loan approval rates were higher in Sonoma (77%), than the County (70%). Over 1,200 applications for refinance were processed in the City during 2007, reflecting favorable interest rates at this time. While the 62 percent refinance approval rate was well below that for home purchases, this still reflects a loan approval rate above the County-wide average of 58 percent. Similarly, approval rates for home improvement loans were significantly higher in Sonoma than the County as a whole, at 63 percent compared to only 58 percent County-wide.

**Table 40: Home Purchase and Improvement Loans - 2007**

Loan Type	# Loan Applications in Sonoma City	% Loans Approved		% Loans Denied		% Loans Withdrawn/Incomplete	
		Sonoma City	Sonoma County	Sonoma City	Sonoma County	Sonoma City	Sonoma County
Home Purchase	559	77%	70%	14%	18%	9%	12%
Refinance	1,256	62%	58%	23%	26%	15%	16%
Home Improvement	133	63%	58%	24%	30%	13%	12%

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data, 2007

To address potential constraints and expand homeownership and home improvement opportunities, the City of Sonoma offers and/or participates in a variety of programs. These include City Homebuyer Assistance on Affordable Units and Mortgage Credit Certificates (MCC), as well as rehabilitation programs for single-family homes and rental properties. Such programs assist lower- and moderate-income residents by increasing access to favorable loan terms to purchase or improve their homes. The Housing Plan provides more detailed information on the type and extent of programs available.

In addition to the credit crunch for mortgage lending, construction loans for development of new housing are difficult to secure in the current market. Builders throughout the State are finding it nearly impossible to obtain construction financing. Complicated projects, such as mixed use developments, are often the most challenging to finance.

Affordable housing developments face additional constraints in financing. Though public funding is available, it is allocated on a highly competitive basis and developments must meet multiple qualifying criteria, often including the requirement to pay prevailing wages. Affordable rental developments tend to be easier to finance than for-sale developments, as there are more sources of funding available. However, recent cuts in public spending statewide have put pressure on these sources. For example, though low income housing tax credits have traditionally been a major source of revenue for affordable housing developers, programs have been cut and the tax credit resale market has softened.

<sup>4</sup> 2007 is the most recent year of HMDA data available and does not reflect the full impact of the credit crunch which peaked in the fall of 2008.

# HOUSING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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In order to develop an effective housing strategy for the 2009 to 2014 planning period, the City must assess the achievements of the existing housing programs. This assessment allows the City to determine the effectiveness and continues appropriateness of the existing programs and make necessary adjustments for the next five years.

## Evaluation of Accomplishments under Adopted Housing Element

Under State Housing Element law, communities are required to assess the achievements under their adopted housing programs as part of the five-year update to their housing elements. These results should be quantified where possible (e.g. the number of units that were rehabilitated), but may be qualitative where necessary (e.g. mitigation of governmental constraints). The results should then be compared with what was projected or planned in the earlier element. Where significant shortfalls exist between what was planned and what was achieved, the reasons for such differences must be discussed.

Sonoma's last Housing Element was adopted in 2003, and sets forth a series of housing policies and related implementation measures under each of the following goals:

- Goal HE-1: To provide a mix of housing types affordable to all income levels, consistent with community and regional needs.
- Goal HE-2: To protect and conserve the existing housing stock and ensure that new residential development is consistent with Sonoma's town character and with neighborhood conditions.
- Goal HE-3: To promote energy conservation.
- Goal HE-4: To ensure housing opportunity.

This section reviews the progress in implementing the housing programs since 2001, and their continued appropriateness for the 2009-2014 Housing Element. Table 41 summarizes the City's housing accomplishments since 2003.

**Table 41:**  
**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

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	Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
1	<p>The City shall require that any development containing five (5) or more residential lots or units shall provide that at least twenty percent (20%) of the total lots or units in the development are affordable to households in the moderate-income category. For new development in the Sonoma residential zone, the City shall require that any development containing five (5) or more residential lots or units shall provide that at least twenty percent (20%) of the total lots or units in the development are affordable; at least 50% of the affordable lots shall be affordable to households in the low-income category, and the remaining affordable lots or units shall be affordable to households in the moderate-income category. The City shall require an in-lieu fee to be paid for “partial units” required under these provisions and shall consider on a case-by-case basis whether to allow a full in-lieu fee to be paid for inclusionary units required for developments of 10 or fewer units.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>This requirement is implemented under §19.44.020 of the City’s Development Code.</p>
2	<p>The City Council shall review the Growth Management Ordinance periodically and modify it as necessary to ensure that adequate incentives are provided for the development of affordable housing, consistent with the City’s regional housing needs allocation. The City shall ensure that the Growth Management Ordinance does not preclude the Town from meeting its RHND housing unit allocation.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) has been reviewed and amended by the City Council twice since 2004. The GMO currently allows the City Council to exempt projects that provide affordable housing beyond that required through the inclusionary program. While the number of housing units allowed annually under the GMO has been reduced from 100 to 65 units, the GMO does not preclude the City from meeting its RHNA housing unit allocation.</p>
3	<p>The City shall implement an Affordable Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone for selected multifamily sites that would require that at least forty percent (40%) of the total units in the development are affordable to households in the very low-, low- and moderate-income categories. At least 50% of the units shall be affordable to households in the low-income category, and at least 25% of the affordable lots or units shall be affordable to households in the very low-income category. In return, the City shall target funding as a subsidy for all projects within the Overlay Zone.</p>	<p><i>No longer necessary</i></p>	<p>The Affordable Housing Overlay is actually a funding concept that does not require any amendment to the Development Code to implement. However, while staff has had conversations with numerous private property owners and developers to inform of them of the opportunities and incentives potentially available through this program, to date none has expressed serious interest in pursuing it. This program is no longer necessary for the updated Housing Element.</p>

**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
<p>4 Within two years of the adoption of the Housing Element, the City shall redesignate at least 5 acres of land to a land use designation suitable for the development of affordable housing (High Density Residential and Housing Opportunity designations). If, at any time thereafter, the supply of sites zoned for multi-family housing falls below the quantity of land required to accommodate the City’s remaining need for sites to accommodate higher density multi-family housing during the Housing Element planning period, the City shall initiate redesignations and rezonings to provide additional land. The City shall ensure that future sites designated for higher-density housing are large enough to provide for economies of scale in construction.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished</i></p>	<p>3 acres of land (404 Napa Road) was redesignated to High Density Residential and 5.6 acres of land (19320-19360 Sonoma Highway) was redesignated to Housing Opportunity with adoption of the 2020 General Plan in 2006. The Napa Road site has been developed with the 34 unit affordable Wildwood owner/builder project. More recently, the CDA has purchased the 19344 Sonoma Highway site (designated Housing Opportunity) and is working with a non-profit to develop 40 affordable family rental units, and has purchased a vacant site at 20269 Broadway (designated Mixed Use) for affordable housing.</p>
<p>5 The City shall amend the General Plan to increase the density range of the Medium Density Residential (MDR) designation from 6-10 units/acre to 7-11 units/acre, the density range of the High Density Residential (HDR) designation from 9-12 units/acre to 11-15 units/acre, the density range of the Housing Opportunity (HO) designation from 15-20 units/acre to 15-25 units/acre, the maximum density of the Mixed Use designation (MU) from 12 to 20 units/acre, and the maximum density of the Commercial and Gateway Commercial designations (C and GC) from 15 to 20 units/acre. The City shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to ensure each corresponding zoning district contains consistent development standards.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished</i></p>	<p>Both the General Plan and Development Code were amended to allow for higher densities in the specified General Plan land use designations and corresponding zoning districts.</p>
<p>6 The City shall continue to provide for density bonuses of 25%, consistent with state law.</p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The City continues to provide for density bonuses of 25% under §19.44.030.A. of the Development Code. Pursuant to changes in State density law under SB 1818, the City will be updating its density bonus ordinance.</p>
<p>7 The City shall define and implement a set of guidelines for infill development to ensure that infill development meets community goals for affordable housing, density, design, and compatibility with existing development.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished</i></p>	<p>Guidelines for infill development were implemented through adoption of the Development Code in 2003.</p>
<p>8 The City shall continue to allow duplexes in the Low Density Residential zone, subject to use permit review, through its Zoning Ordinance.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The City continues to allow duplexes as a conditionally permitted use in the R-L zone under §19.10.050.B. of the Development Code.</p>



**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

Implementation Measure		Status	Notes
9	The City shall continue to require properties developed under the Mixed Use land use designation to include a housing component, unless specifically exempted by the Planning Commission.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	Within the MU zone, the City continues to require a residential component in new development unless waived by the Planning Commission under §19.10.020.C. of the Development Code.
10	The City shall require properties of a designated minimum size developed under the Commercial and Gateway Commercial land use designations to include a housing component (with a specified minimum density), unless specifically exempted by the Planning Commission.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	This requirement is implemented under §19.10.020.B. of the City's Development Code.
11	The City shall conduct a review of development procedures and regulations with the intent of eliminating or streamlining requirements when feasible and consistent with other adopted City policies.	<i>Accomplished</i>	A comprehensive review of the City's development procedures and regulations was accomplished through preparation and adoption of the Development Code in 2003.
12	The City shall amend its zoning regulations as necessary to ensure that modular and manufactured housing units are allowed for.	<i>Accomplished</i>	The allowance for modular/manufactured housing units was implemented through adoption of the Development Code in 2003.
13	The City shall review its street width and other infrastructure standards to ensure that they allow for a full variety of housing types.	<i>Accomplished</i>	A comprehensive review of the City's street width and other infrastructure standards was accomplished through preparation and adoption of the Development Code in 2003.
14	The City shall modify its parking standards for affordable units, second units, multifamily units, and mixed-use developments, in order to encourage development of these units. Modifications may include modifying requirements for second units so they only have to provide one uncovered off-street parking space in addition to the parking requirements for the primary dwelling.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	With adoption of the Development Code in 2003, the parking requirements were modified to allow for shared use of parking facilities within mixed-use developments. However, the parking ratio for multi-family projects and second units were not deemed appropriate to be reduced.
15	The City shall increase the maximum building height allowed in the High Density, Housing Opportunity, Mixed Use, Commercial, and Gateway Commercial zones to allow three story construction. The increased height will only be allowed when necessary to accommodate multi-family residential units (market-rate or affordable).	<i>Accomplished</i>	Implemented under §19.40.040 of the Development Code, which allows increased building heights within the Mixed Use, Commercial, and Gateway Commercial zones to accommodate third-floor multi-family residential units. Building heights for multi-family units within the Housing Opportunity zone were also increased to three stories.

**Table 41:****Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

	Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
16	The City shall continue to use the waiver of building permit and impact fees as an incentive for the development of affordable housing units.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	The City uses redevelopment funds to pay for fee waivers for affordable units. Fee waivers are available to all designated affordable units, including inclusionary units.
17	The City shall consider allowing pairs of studio apartments to be built under a single use permit for purpose of calculating densities.	<i>Evaluated - No Longer Appropriate</i>	This concept was considered through the preparation of the Development Code but was not ultimately adopted.
18	The City shall amend the Zoning Ordinance to add emergency shelters as a conditionally allowed use in the public and commercial zones and add transitional housing as a conditionally allowed use in specified residential zones. The Zoning Ordinance shall also be modified to allow single room occupancy dwellings (SROs) as a conditional use in the Commercial and Gateway Commercial zones. Use permit procedures shall facilitate and encourage development of emergency shelter, transitional housing, and SROs and other forms of farmworker housing.	<i>Accomplished</i>	Implemented under §19.10.050 of the Development Code, which allows for emergency shelters and/or transitional housing as a conditionally permitted use in the public, commercial, and certain residential zones. In addition, §19.10.050 allows for SROs as a multi-family residential use within the Commercial and Gateway Commercial zones. Pursuant to SB 2, the Housing Element update establishes a new program to amend the Code to allow shelters and transitional housing by-right.
19	The City shall work with Sonoma County and existing community groups to establish an emergency shelter and transitional housing program with services in Sonoma Valley.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	In cooperation with community groups and citizen committees, the City constructed an emergency shelter at 151 First Street West in 2008 and developed accompanying support programs. The City participates in the Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless and the County's Continuum of Care.
20	The City shall evaluate the feasibility of establishing an emergency shelter and/or transitional housing on the police station property.	<i>Accomplished</i>	In 2008 the City constructed an emergency shelter on the Police Station property at 151 First Street West.
21	The City shall review its Zoning Ordinance and fee schedules to ensure that supportive housing and other group living situations are able to be located with a minimum of regulatory barriers	<i>Accomplished</i>	This was addressed through adoption of the Development Code in 2003 and review of the City's fee schedule on an annual basis.

**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

	Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
22	The City shall designate a liaison with Vineyard Worker Services and shall identify and pursue specific recommendations for the development of farm-worker housing within Sonoma and Sonoma Valley, which may include funding assistance for the seasonal housing program and technical assistance in site identification and evaluation.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	Planning Division staff act as the liaison with Vineyard Worker Services. While farm-worker housing units were included in the Wildflower affordable project (404 Napa Road), the City does not currently provide funding assistance for seasonal farm-worker housing because it generally occurs outside the City limits.
23	The City shall continue to seek available grant funding for affordable housing development, rehabilitation, and loans for first-time homebuyers. The City can apply directly to the California Housing Finance Agency for the Housing Enabled by Local Partnerships (HELP) Program. These funds can be used in a variety of ways, including the provision of loans to non-profit developers and/or down payment assistance to help first-time home buyers. The City can encourage developers’ applications to other public agencies, including Sonoma County for HOME funds, the State of California for Supportive Housing Initiative Act (SHIA) funds and the State of California Multifamily Housing (MHP) Program	<i>Accomplished/Ongoing</i>	The City has obtained funding from a variety of sources for the development of affordable housing and the preservation of existing units. These sources include the CDBG program, low-income housing tax credits, CalHFA, and mortgage revenue bonds.
24	The City shall, as a priority, provide additional staff time and/or funding for the activities of grant writer/affordable housing coordinator. Responsibilities will include applying for housing-related-funding and coordinating housing issues and programs for the City.	<i>No longer appropriate.</i>	The City has not provided additional staff time and/or funding for a designated grant write/affordable housing coordinator. The City has completed an in-depth evaluation of its administrative programs and processes related to affordable housing program monitoring and program administration to improve the delivery of housing services. Based on this review, the City is investigating the option of contracting out for these services.
25	The City shall continue to use the Community Development Agency (CDA) and, at minimum, its 20% affordable housing set-aside fund for the provision, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing.	<i>Accomplished/Ongoing</i>	As required by law, the CDA uses a minimum 20% of its redevelopment tax increment for the provision of affordable housing.

**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
<p>26 The City shall create a program to provide down-payment assistance and other services to low and moderate-income households and other first-time home-buyers. Preference shall be given to those who live and/or work in Sonoma and Sonoma Valley.</p>	<p><i>No Action – Remains appropriate to Element</i></p>	<p>Given limitations on funding and the high cost of homeownership subsidy, the City has not developed a down payment assistance for first-time home buyer program beyond assistance associated with a given affordable housing project. However, given the decline in housing sales prices, a Citywide downpayment assistance program may again become economically feasible, and is appropriate to include in the updated Housing Element.</p>
<p>27 The City shall continue to maintain an up-to-date inventory of vacant, under-utilized, and redevelopable parcels within the city and its sphere of influence. As a part of this, the City shall maintain an updated inventory of potential infill sites (including smaller vacant and underutilized parcels).</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The City maintains an up-to-date inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels on its Geographic Information System.</p>
<p>28 The City shall implement a comprehensive annual monitoring program to determine housing affordability and income levels for all new units built, including those created by the housing market without the use of incentives or mandates.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The City tracks the income level of all new housing units, including affordable units produced through City programs and/or the inclusionary requirement.</p>
<p>29 The City shall report to the City Council and HCD annually on progress in meeting the City’s housing goals, including numbers of affordable units built, rehabilitated, or conserved; and a checklist of progress made in implementing the Housing Element Implementation measures.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>A report is made each year on progress made towards meeting the City’s housing goals. In addition, an annual report is submitted to HCD as required.</p>
<p>30 The City shall prepare a feasibility study, including environmental evaluations, of selected sites assessing their suitability for development with affordable housing.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i></p>	<p>The City has conducted feasibility and due diligence studies prior to the purchase of 20269 Broadway and 19344 Sonoma Highway for the purpose of developing affordable housing.</p>
<p>31 In cooperation with affected property owners, the City shall prepare a specific plan for the Gateway Commercial area at Broadway/Napa-Leveroni Road in order to 1) ensure an appropriate mix of uses, 2) obtain a substantial affordable housing component, and 3) identify commitments for City assistance in the development of affordable housing.</p>	<p><i>Accomplished</i></p>	<p>As part of the 2020 General Plan update, a focused review of the Gateway Commercial area was conducted. However, this review was done in the context of the General Plan update and did not culminate in a specific plan which was not determined to be necessary. The CDA has purchased a site on Broadway for development with affordable housing..</p>

**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

	Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
32	The City shall participate in regional and sub-regional housing programs and initiatives, such as the county-wide commercial in-lieu fee study, the "Continuum of Care" program, and the County Consolidated Plan.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	The City participates in the Continuum of Care program and other regional and sub-regional housing programs as relevant.
33	The City shall continue to enforce the mobile home rent control ordinance.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	The City's Mobile Home Rent Review Board continues to implement mobile home rent control.
34	The City shall assess the feasibility and implications associated with the potential acquisition of a mobile home park.	<i>Evaluated - No Longer Appropriate</i>	Acquisition of mobile home parks has been looked into by City staff and it does not appear that the CDA has sufficient resources to purchase one.
35	The City shall support the continued implementation of the low-income home rehabilitation program and the mobile home seismic bracing program.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	The City participates in the County CDBG program to provide for the rehabilitation of mobile homes. A total of 30 units were rehabilitated during the planning period.
36	The City shall continue to enforce its ordinance restricting the conversion of rental housing developments of five or more units into condominiums.	<i>Accomplished</i>	Restrictions on the conversion of rental housing are set forth under §19.65.030 of the City's Development Code.
37	The City shall establish a monitoring program for local privately-owned assisted housing that will include an early-warning system for units at-risk of conversion to market rate. The City will contact owners to discuss preservation options and to identify possible funding resources that could be used to preserve at-risk units.	<i>Accomplished</i>	While the City keeps tracks of at-risk affordable units, and in 2006 purchased the 34 unit Village Green II Apartments to preserve as long-term affordable housing.
38	The City shall adopt a mobile home conversion ordinance establishing requirements for noticing and relocation assistance in the event of an application to convert a mobile home park to some other use.	<i>Accomplished</i>	In 2004, the City Council adopted Ordinance 05-2004 which established requirements for proposals involving conversion of a mobile home park to another use.
39	The City shall implement standards for energy and water conservation in all new development through its building permit plan check procedures and its low-water use landscaping ordinance.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	New development continues to be subject to the City's low-water use landscaping ordinance, which was recently amended to address small infill projects and replacement landscaping. The Building Division implements State energy and water conservations requirement (including Title 24 standards and the Plumbing Code) through the plan check process. A Green Building Ordinance is also currently in the process of being adopted.

**Table 41:**

**Summary of Accomplishments under Existing City of Sonoma Housing Element Implementation Programs**

	Implementation Measure	Status	Notes
40	The City shall implement standards for non-polluting renewable energy co-generation in conjunction with residential rehabilitation and new residential development.	<i>No action</i>	Standards have not been implemented.
41	The City shall establish and administer fair housing policies in all housing developments in which the City participates.	<i>Ongoing</i>	The City complies with all applicable State and Federal fair housing policies in the administration of its affordable housing programs.
42	The City shall review and amend its Municipal Code as necessary to provide individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices and procedures that may be necessary to ensure equal access to housing. The purpose of this is to provide a process for individuals with disabilities to make requests for reasonable accommodation in regard to relief from the various land use, zoning, or building laws, rules, policies, practices and/or procedures of the City.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	The City complies with all applicable State and Federal policies related to housing for disabled persons. However, the City has not amended its Municipal Code to make explicit provisions for reasonable accommodation, and will establish a program to do so as part of the updated Housing Element.
43	The City shall disseminate information on fair housing laws at the front counter of City Hall, through the City’s website, and at other community facilities, such as the library and the Sonoma Community Center. The City shall also refer housing discrimination complaints to the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing or Fair Housing of Sonoma County, as applicable. Materials shall be provided in languages other than English, as may be applicable.	<i>Accomplished/ Ongoing</i>	Information on fair housing laws and on rent mediation programs offered by Sonoma County is available at City Hall and the local library so that it can be provided to housing developers and interested citizens. Housing complaints are referred to the appropriate agencies/resources as applicable.
44	The City shall examine measures to encourage developers to use barrier-free design in new housing developments. Such measures could include density bonuses, fee reductions or other incentives.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	All new residential development must comply with State and Federal accessibility standards for disabled individuals. Compliance with these standards is accomplished through the project review and plan check process. However, no further measures have been examined or adopted as policy by the City.

Source: City of Sonoma Planning Division, February 2009

Table 42 summarizes the quantified objectives contained in Sonoma’s 2003 Housing Element, and compares the City’s progress in fulfilling these objectives.

**Table 42: Summary of Quantified Objectives, 2003 Housing Element**

Income Level	New Construction		Rehabilitation	
	Goal*	Progress	Goal	Progress
Very Low	146	57	0	0
Low	90	37	20**	30
Moderate	188	77	0	0
Above Moderate	260	527	0	0
Totals	684	698	0	30

\*Reflects RHNA

\*\*Reflects Measure 35 of 2003 Housing Element

Based on review of residential building permits issued between January 1999 and December 2006, the City fulfilled 100 percent of its total regional housing construction needs. However, housing for very low, low, and moderate income households is not being produced at RHNA levels. Approximately 40% of the RHNA goal was met for very low, low, and moderate income households. The very low, low, and moderate units consisted of single family homes, second units, duplexes, condominiums, attached units (typically 2 or 4 units), and small and medium apartment buildings. Affordability category was determined by a range of factors: the type of unit, any deed restrictions, or specific design information if available. An apartment development at 560-596 Second Street West permitted in 2001 produced 30 units affordable to very low and low income households, a significant portion of affordable units added to Sonoma’s housing stock during the previous Housing Element planning period.

The City and Community Development Agency facilitated several affordable projects during the planning period. The City acquired a 3-acre site at 404 Napa Road, rezoned it to High Density Residential, and facilitated development of a 34-unit owner-builder affordable housing project, contribution approximately one million dollars to this project. The City has rezoned 4.39 acres of land to the Housing Opportunity designation. The City continues to monitor and negotiate for acquisition of various sites that would, if secured, be developed with very-low income apartment units.

In terms of housing rehabilitation, the City has worked to rehabilitate mobile homes in the City, a key piece of the affordable housing stock in Sonoma. To achieve Measure 25 in the previous Housing Element, the City has used CDBG funds to provide for the rehabilitation of mobile homes, an effort coordinated between the Community Development Department and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission. Thirty units were rehabilitated over the 5-year period.

A goal for conservation was not set in the previous Housing Element; however the City has been active in monitoring and preserving existing affordable housing stock. In 2006, the City preserved an important affordable housing option when it purchased the 34-unit Village Green II apartment development of very low income senior apartments, and invested \$175,000 in handicapped access improvements.

