



# County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

**Lisa Plowman, Director**

Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

**DATE:** July 21, 2022

**TO:** State Clearinghouse  
Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**FROM:** County of Santa Barbara  
Planning and Development Department  
Long Range Planning Division  
123 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2058  
(805) 568-2000

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation and Scoping of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

**PROJECT NAME:** *County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update* (HEU)

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The proposed HEU (Project) involves planning for residential development in appropriate locations within the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, including the South Coast, Lompoc Valley, Santa Maria Valley, Cuyama Valley, and Santa Ynez Valley.

**LEAD AGENCY:** The County of Santa Barbara (County) is the Lead Agency preparing the EIR with the purpose of informing decision-makers and the public regarding the environmental effects related to the proposed HEU in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.).

As the Lead Agency, the County has prepared the enclosed Environmental Scoping Document in accordance with the Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. The County has identified a potential for significant environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the proposed HEU. The EIR will address the potential effects for each of the environmental resource areas described in the enclosed Environmental Scoping Document.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Since 1969, California has required that all local governments (i.e., cities and counties) adequately plan for and meet their housing needs by adopting a Housing Element as a part of their General Plan. State housing element law (Government Code Section 65588) requires that local governments update their Housing Element regularly on an eight-year cycle. This process starts with the development of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) to determine how much housing and what type of housing is needed at different affordability levels. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) uses demographic information provided by the California Department of Finance (DOF) to

determine housing needs for each regional planning agency, including the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). Each regional planning agency then uses its demographic figures to further refine HCD's allocation and develops a RHNA Plan, which quantifies and geographically locates the need for housing within each local jurisdiction.

In February 2023, the housing cycle addressed in the County's 2015-2023 Housing Element will conclude. As a result, the County must prepare a HEU that complies with State housing element law for the upcoming eight-year cycle from 2023-2031. The proposed HEU must be adopted locally no later than February 2023 and certified by HCD.

For the proposed HEU, SBCAG has determined that the County's RHNA allocation is 5,664 units. The RHNA is a targeted housing number; cities and counties do not have to build this number of units, but rather they must plan for them and show that they can be accommodated under existing zoning and adopted land use policies and development standards. Per State requirements, the County's proposed HEU must include the following components to adequately plan for and address housing needs in the unincorporated area:

- A detailed analysis of the County's demographic, economic, and housing characteristics;
- An assessment of community housing needs;
- An analysis of the barriers or constraints to producing and preserving housing;
- A review of the County's progress in implementing current housing policies and programs;
- An identification of goals, objectives, and policies, in addition to a full list of programs and strategies that would implement the plan; and
- A list of sites (i.e., Suitable Sites Inventory) that could accommodate new housing, demonstrating the County's ability to meet its RHNA allocation.

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETING:** A scoping meeting will be held virtually on August 11, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. Please register in advance for this Zoom webinar at: [https://countyofsb.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZGcyewiDTV-na\\_OT0prGCQ](https://countyofsb.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZGcyewiDTV-na_OT0prGCQ). After registering, you will receive a confirmation e-mail containing a information about joining, including a Zoom link and a call-in number.

The scoping meeting, which is part of the EIR scoping process, is intended to provide an opportunity for agencies and interested members of the public to provide oral comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis.

**PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS:** The County requests that responsible agencies provide input on the scope of the EIR to reflect any relevant statutory responsibilities related to the proposed HEU. Interested members of the public are also encouraged to provide comments on the scope of the EIR.

All written agency and public **comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 18, 2022**. Please send your comments and the name of a contact person in your agency to the EIR Project Manager, Jessi Steele, at the address provided below.

NOP and Scoping of an EIR  
2023-2031 Housing Element Update  
July 21, 2022  
Page 3 of 3

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Additional information regarding the proposed HEU will be posted to the County's webpage at:  
<https://www.countyofsb.org/3177/Housing-Element-Update>.

cc: County of Santa Barbara Clerk of the Board

Enclosure: Environmental Scoping Document