



County of Santa Barbara Planning and Development

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF AND PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE
DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA 2023-2031 HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE
(Case No. 23EIR-00000-00004)**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The County of Santa Barbara proposes to implement the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (Case No. 23EIR-00004, SCH No. 2022070490). The Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzes the potential impacts associated with the implementation of the Housing Element Update's goals, policies, and programs, including the potential rezone program.

The Housing Element Update is a mandatory component of the County's Comprehensive Plan (i.e., general plan). It assesses current and projected housing needs in the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County and provides an inventory of sites available for residential development. State housing element law, Government Code Sections 65580-65589.11, requires that the County update its Housing Element every eight years. In February 2023, the County's previous 8-year housing cycle (2015-2023) concluded. As a result, the County's Housing Element Update subject to this Program EIR pertains to the 6th Cycle 2023-2031 housing planning period.

State housing element law requires that cities and counties have adequate sites available to accommodate their share of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for all income levels. The County's 6th Cycle RHNA totals 5,664 units. The County's sites inventory shows that it lacks sufficient capacity to accommodate its lower and moderate-income RHNA in the South Coast and its lower-income RHNA in the North County. Program 1 in Housing Element Update requires that the County accommodate the shortfall of lower- and moderate-income units plus a 15 percent buffer for these units through a combination of rezones and housing development on County-owned sites. The County identified 36 potential sites that could be rezoned and nine County-owned sites that could be selected for new housing. These sites combined identify more sites than necessary to accommodate the County's 6th Cycle RHNA plus the 15 percent buffer. The Board of Supervisors will select a sufficient number of sites to match the RHNA plus the 15 percent buffer.

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project area includes the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County and potential County-owned properties located within the City of Santa Barbara.

PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENT: The County Planning and Development Department (P&D) is soliciting comments on the adequacy and completeness of the analysis and the proposed mitigation measures described in the Draft Program EIR for the County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update. You may comment by providing testimony at the public hearings (in-person or virtually) on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, in the North County at the County of Santa Barbara P&D

conference room, 624 W Foster Rd. Santa Maria at 5:30 p.m. or the following link <https://countyofsb.zoom.us/j/89388719528>, or Tuesday, January 23, 2024, in the South Coast at the Planning Commission Hearing Room (first floor), 105 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara at 5:30 p.m. or the following link <https://countyofsb.zoom.us/j/84952104859>. You may also visit <https://www.countyofsb.org/3177/Housing-Element-Update> where the above links to participate virtually in the public hearings are provided as well as call-in details. Additionally, you may also submit written comments to the project planner identified below before the close of the public comment period on February 9, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

PROJECT DETAILS: The Housing Element Update is designed to ensure that the County appropriately plans for and accommodates sufficient housing across all income levels and special needs groups within the unincorporated areas. The Housing Element Update sets forth goals and policies to address the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. In addition, it includes a schedule of actions the County is undertaking or intends to undertake to achieve these goals and policies. The Housing Element Update also identifies potential rezone and potential County-owned sites for future residential development to ensure the availability of residential sites at adequate densities in the unincorporated areas to accommodate its share of the 6th Cycle RHNA.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FINDINGS: P&D prepared the Draft Program EIR pursuant to requirements of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County of Santa Barbara Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual. The Draft Program EIR prepared for the project identifies and discusses potential impacts, mitigation measures, residual impacts, and monitoring requirements for identified subject areas. **Significant and unavoidable** effects on the environment identified in the Draft Program EIR include aesthetics and visual resources, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, population and housing, public services and recreation, transportation, utilities and water supply, and wildfire.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The Draft Program EIR and all documents incorporated by reference are available on the P&D websites in English:

<https://www.countyofsb.org/3177/Housing-Element-Update>

<https://www.countyofsb.org/3713/Housing-Element-Update---Spanish>

The Draft Program EIR is also available for review at the Santa Barbara Public Library, 40 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, and the Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

HOW TO COMMENT: Please provide comments to the project planner, Hannah Thomas at 123 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, (805) 568-3577, or housingelement@countyofsb.org prior to the close of the public comment on February 9, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. or provide testimony at the public hearings on the dates and times specified above. Please limit comments to issues pertaining to the environmental impact analysis. Future notice will be provided for dates of future public hearings to consider project approval or denial.