



County of Santa Cruz  
Community Development & Infrastructure (CDI) Department

# Study Session on the Draft 2023 Housing Element

**Housing Advisory Commission**  
September 6, 2023 Regular Meeting

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## Agenda

- Background
- Community Engagement
- Housing Element Structure
- Fair Housing
- Policies and Programs
- Sites Inventory / Rezoning
- Next Steps
- Commissioners Input



The graphic features the County of Santa Cruz logo at the top left. Below it, the text reads "2023 Housing Element" in large green font, followed by "6th Cycle Housing Element Update" in smaller black font. A yellow button contains the text "Draft Housing Element Available!". At the bottom, a grey button with a left-pointing arrow contains the text "Back to Planning website".

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# Background



2023  
Housing Element



## What is a Housing Element?

- One element (chapter) of the County’s General Plan
- Required by state law
- Must be updated every 8 years
- Affirmatively Furthers Fair Housing (AFFH)
- Describes local housing needs, policies and programs
- Includes inventory of parcels where housing can be accommodated

## What is the Housing Element?

The Housing Element is one of the 10 State-mandated “elements” or chapters of a local jurisdiction’s [General Plan](#). It identifies policies and programs to meet existing and projected housing needs for all segments of the community, including various household types, special needs populations, and all income levels of the jurisdiction.



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## Background: Housing Element Update Process

1. State Projects Housing Needs for Next Cycle
2. Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)
3. Regions Allocate Housing Needs to Cities and Counties
4. Each City and County updates their Housing Element



### County of Santa Cruz Process

1. Board Direction
2. Data Gathering & Analysis
3. Community Engagement
4. Public Meetings
5. Board & Commission Study Sessions
6. First HCD Review and Revisions
7. Commission Recommendation, Board Adoption
8. Second HCD Review & Certification

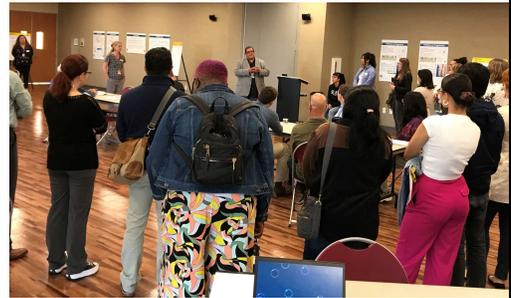
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## Community Engagement

Following Board direction, staff implemented a robust community engagement plan beginning in early 2023.

### Components of Community Engagement Plan:

1. Bilingual meeting facilitators
2. Project website
3. Email blasts, social media, flyers and press releases
4. Focus Groups: Stakeholder Group and Community Panel with ~20 participants each
5. Three public community meetings
6. Presentations to multiple commissions and community groups
7. Participation in Affordable Housing Month Events



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## Needs Identified through Engagement Process

- Units affordable to low- and moderate-income households
- Variety of housing options
- Near transit/transportation corridors
- Farmworker housing
- Teacher housing
- Smaller units
- Senior housing
- Supportive housing for special needs households



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## HOUSING ELEMENT STRUCTURE

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs
- Section 3 – Housing Needs and Constraints
- Section 4 – Vacant and Available Sites
- Section 5 – Energy Conservation

### APPENDICES

- A. Fair Housing Report
- B. Review of Previous Housing Element Programs
- C. Public Engagement Results
- D. Housing Constraints
- E. Housing Sites Inventory
- F. Sites Inventory Maps

<https://www.sccoplanning.com/PlanningHome/Housing/2023HousingElement/ProjectDocuments.aspx>

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## Housing Element Goals

- Goal 1: Facilitate Development of New Housing, Primarily in Infill Areas;
- Goal 2: Maintain and Enhance the Quality and Affordability of Existing Housing;
- Goal 3: Facilitate the Development of Affordable and Equal Opportunity Housing;
- Goal 4: Assist in Provision of Housing for Special Needs Households
- Goal 5: Promote Energy Conservation and Sustainable Design; and
- Goal 6: Collaborate Across Sectors and Publicize Housing Resources



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## FAIR HOUSING



**New to the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle:** State law requires communities to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing or “AFFH” through their housing elements.

Definition: *“Taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and fosters inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity.”*

Appendix A, Fair Housing Report, provides data and analysis to support the AFFH-related programs, policies and sites inventory.

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## Policies and Programs: Continuing

- **Policies:** Improve local codes to make it easier and less costly to build a wider variety of homes (“streamlining”)
- **Programs:** Help create and maintain affordable housing for lower-income renters and first-time buyers
- **Special Needs:** Improve housing accessibility for people with special needs
- **Partnerships:** Partner with utility providers and others to increase feasibility and community support for housing

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## Proposed New Programs (Partial List)

- H-1C: By-right Overlay Zone (“-Min”, required by state law)
- H-1D: Site Consolidation Bonus
- H-1E: Rezone Opportunity Sites
- H-1F: Update Multi-family Development Standards
- H-2H: Proactive Code Enforcement for Vacation Rentals
- H-3D: Advocate for State Limits on Renter Application Fees
- H-4D Explore options for increasing supply & awareness of affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities
- H-5: Explore requiring all new housing built to be electric
- H-6E: Explore formation of a “CDBG Urban County” with local cities



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## 2022 General Plan and Code Update (“Sustainability Update”) and Climate Action and Adaption Plan

- ✓ Result of Goal 1 in current Housing Element
- ✓ All density ranges expanded/increased
- ✓ Residential Flex Zone: 22-45 units per acre
- ✓ Missing middle housing (2-4 homes in single family zones)
- ✓ Encourage housing near transportation
- ✓ More housing in mixed-use (50% -> 80%)
- ✓ Infill development supports Climate Adaptation



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# Sites Inventory and Proposed Rezoning



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Income Level	Regional Housing Needs Allocation (Units)			
	RHNA Units Required	RHNA + 10% Buffer	Capacity in Existing Zoning	Unit Shortfall (Surplus)
<b>Very Low</b>	1,492	1,641	890	751
<b>Low</b>	976	1,074	888	186
<b>Moderate</b>	586	645	582	63
<b>Above Mod</b>	1,580	1,738	1,786	(48)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,634</b>	<b>5,098</b>	<b>4,146</b>	<b>952</b>

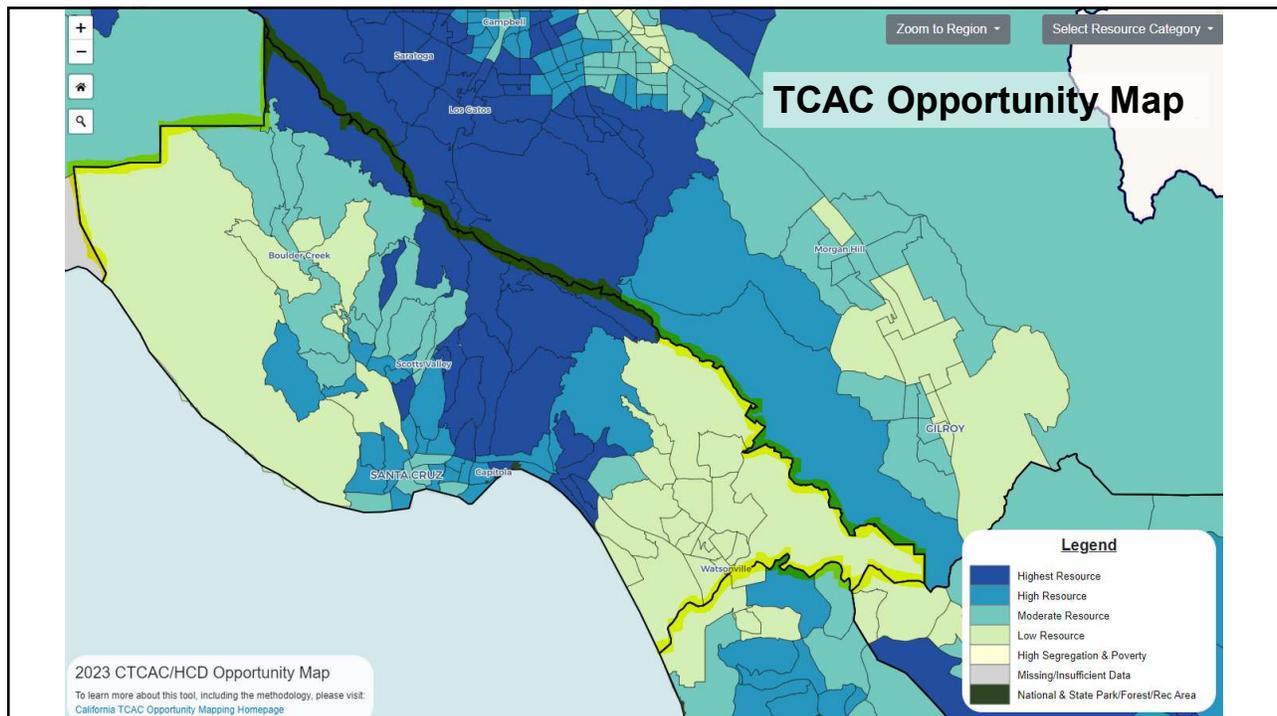
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## Site Selection Factors for Sites Inventory

- ✓ State standards for availability and feasibility:
  - Vacant or Underutilized
  - Size
  - Few environmental hazards/constraints
  - Availability of utilities
  - 20+ units/acre, for lower-income units
- ✓ State (TCAC) Opportunity Maps
- ✓ Fair Housing (AFFH)
- ✓ Community Engagement
- ✓ Pending Projects in County Pipeline
- ✓ Property Owner Intent
- ✓ Zoning/General Plan Land Use Designations



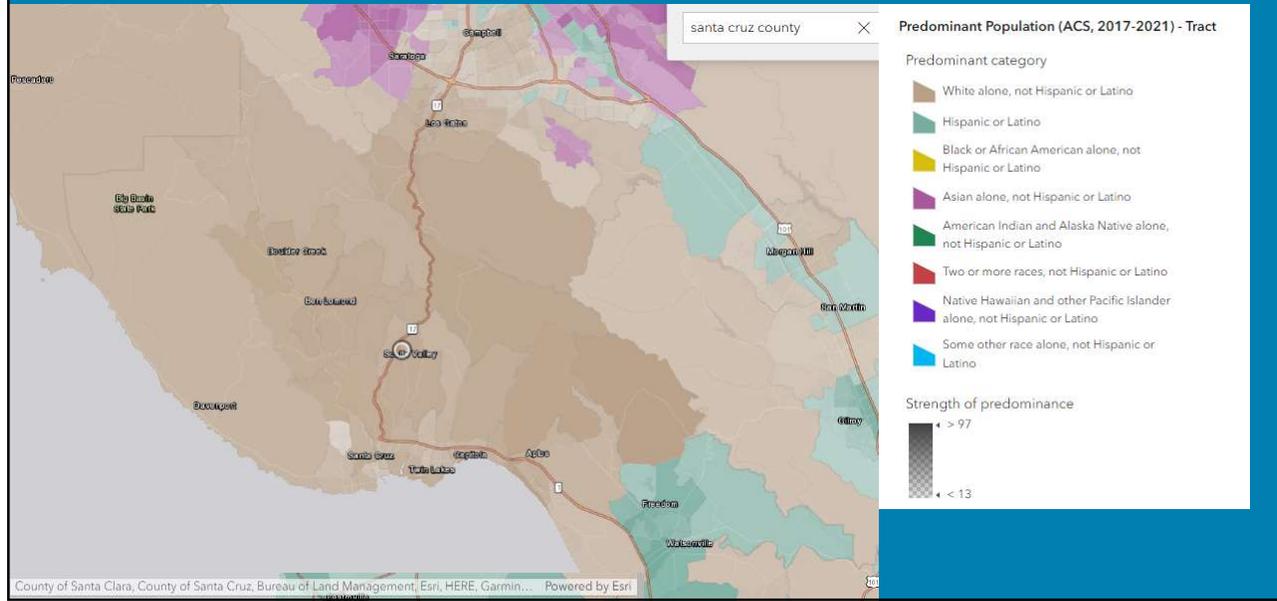
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# FAIR HOUSING (AFFH)

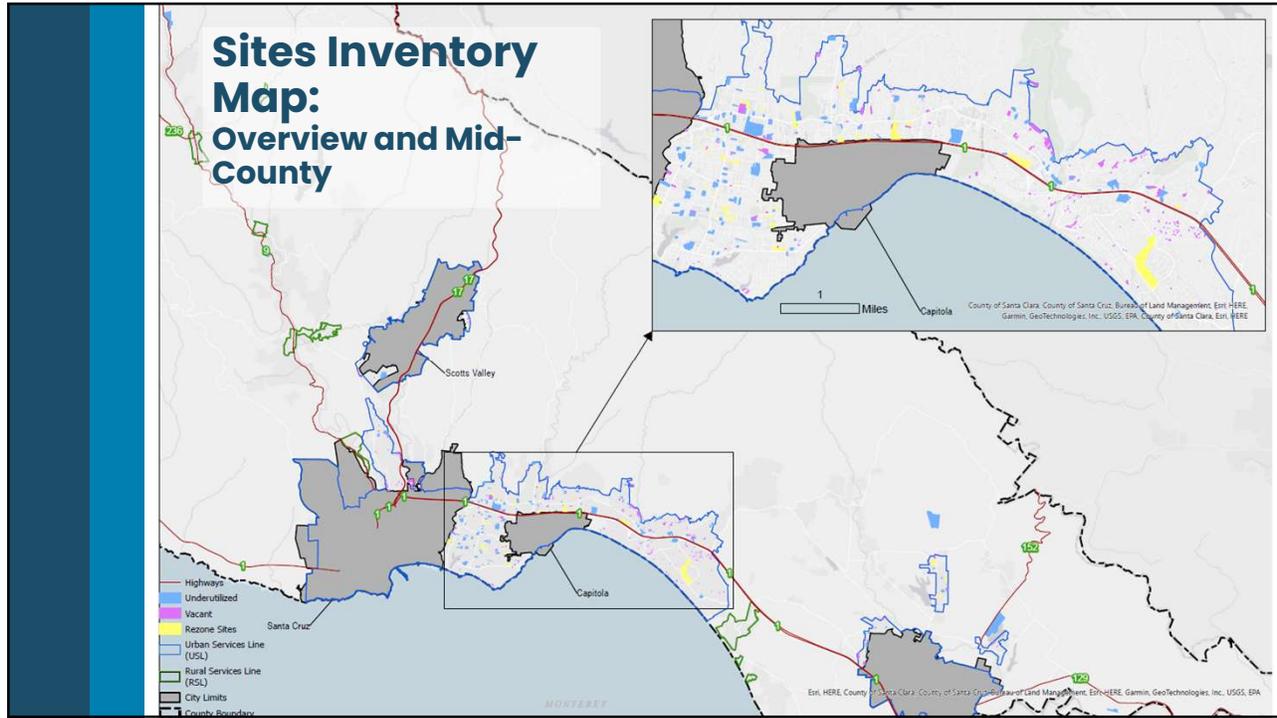
**Figure HE-A-35: Predominant Race by Census Tract, 2021**



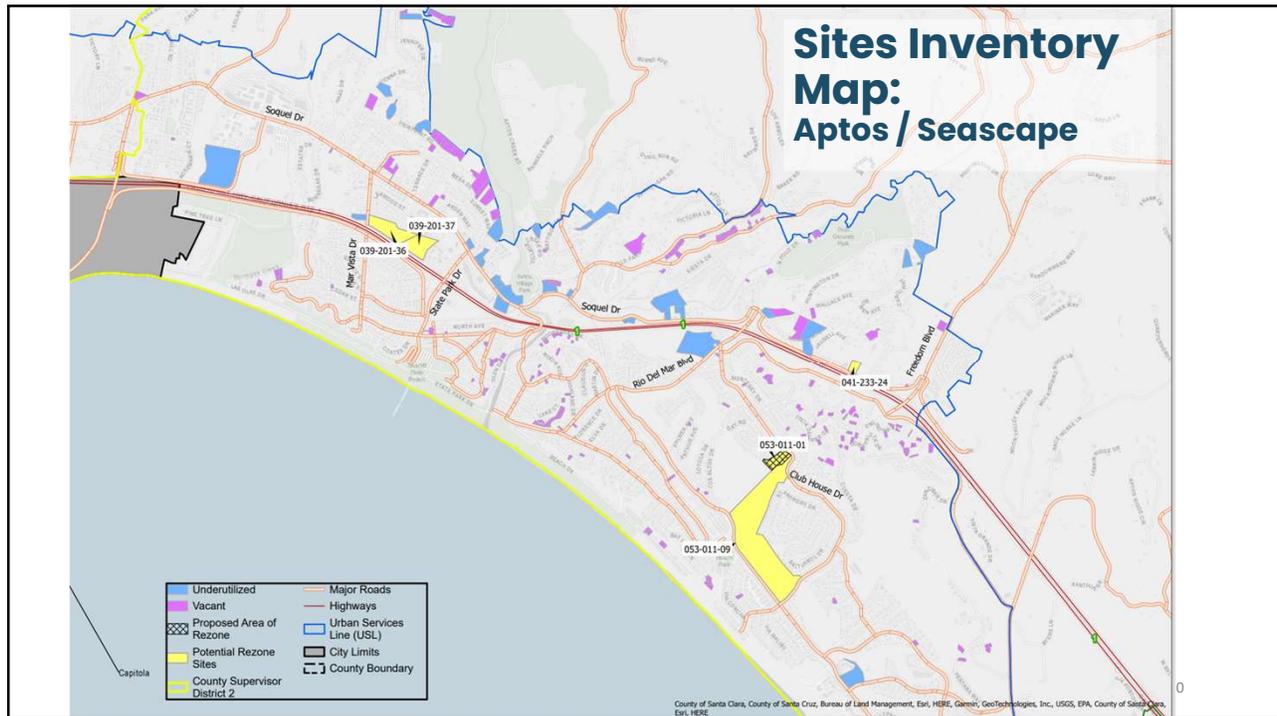
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Income Level	Sites Proposed for Rezoning to Meet RHNA			
	Shortfall (Units)	Units from Standard Rezoning	Units from SB 10 Rezoning	Total New Unit Capacity
<b>Very Low</b>	751	719	33	752
<b>Low</b>	186	602	66	668
<b>Moderate</b>	63	79	128	207
<b>Above Mod</b>	(48)	416	148	564
<b>Total</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>1,816</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>2,191</b>

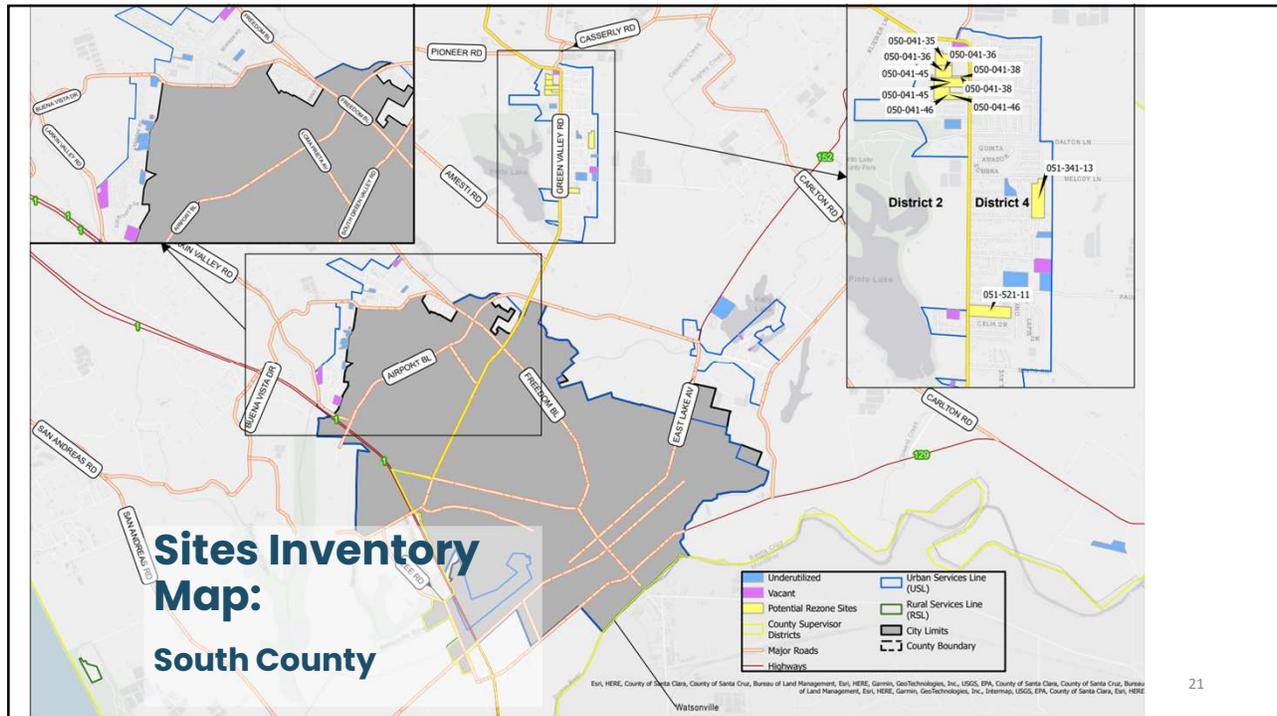
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## Next Steps

Sept. 12	Board Study Session
Sept. 27	Planning Commission Study Session
<b>October 23</b>	<b>End of 90-Day HCD Review</b>
Oct. 25	Planning Commission Public Hearing
Nov. 1	HAC Public Hearing
Nov 14	Board Hearing - Adoption
<b>Nov 15</b>	<b>Submit HE to HCD for 60-Day review</b>
<b>Jan 15, 2024</b>	<b>Anticipated HCD Certification</b>

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# Questions and Feedback




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## Summary of Proposed Rezoning, by Supervisorial District

Supervisor District	No. of Parcels	Percent of Parcels	No. of Acres	Percent of Acres
1	64	84%	68.1	60%
2	10	13%	36.1	32%
3*	0	0%	0.0	0%
4	2	3%	8.8	8%
5*	0	0%	0.0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112.9</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Districts 3 and 5 have no sites proposed for rezoning because these districts have very little land in the unincorporated areas within the Urban Services Line (USL), where utilities are available.



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## Santa Cruz County RHNA Allocation

Income Level	5 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA	6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA	Percent Increase
<i>Very Low</i>	317	1,492	471%
<i>Low</i>	207	976	471%
<i>Moderate</i>	240	586	244%
<i>Above Moderate</i>	550	1,580	287%
<b>Total RHNA</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>4,634</b>	<b>353%</b>

*In the 5th Cycle the County has permitted 1043 units - 79% of goal*

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## Where Should New Housing Go?



- Near transportation corridors and other services
- In existing neighborhoods and business districts (Infill)
- Farmworker housing on ag land
- On land without environmental constraints
- Rural areas?

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