

SAN BENITO COUNTY

DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT 2007 – 2014

Adopted by the San Benito County Board of Supervisors on _____, 2009



SAN BENITO COUNTY DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT 2007 - 2014

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Preface

Setting

San Benito County is located in the California Coastal Range, containing portions of the Gabilan and Diablo Mountain Ranges. The San Andreas and Calaveras Earthquake Faults traverse the County from south-east to north-west and have helped define the valleys between the mountain ranges. The County is located at the southern tip of the San Francisco Bay Area and is immediately south of Santa Clara County and east of Monterey County (Figure 1-1). County population growth and commute patterns are directly related to job growth within these counties. The County is known for its agriculture, which plays an important role in the local economy. Due to its proximity to major transportation nodes, San Benito County has also become increasingly important as a manufacturing and distribution center.



San Benito County has a total land area of 1,389 square miles and population of 57,784. The County contains two incorporated cities, both located in the north-west portion of the County (Figure 1-1). The City of Hollister has a total population of 37,051 (64.12%) and the population of San Juan Bautista is 1,874 (3.24%) (Figure 1-2). Development within unincorporated San Benito County is generally located adjacent to these cities, or in the unincorporated communities of Aromas and Tres Pinos. These communities are also located in the North County area. Development in South County is very sparse, the majority of which is concentrated in the Paicines/Panoche area. In Census 2000, 88% of the County population resided in the Hollister Civil Division (46,901) with another 10% in the San Juan Bautista Civil Division (5,437). The remaining 2% of the population resides in the San Benito-Bitterwater Civil Division (896). Figure 1-2 shows the boundaries of these Civil Divisions.

Approximately 99% of the County is unincorporated land, with approximately 79% of that land being in some form of public or private open space. Figure 1-3 shows that the majority

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of the open space lands are in private ownership under Williamson Act Contract (64.5%), with the remainder in government ownership (13.2%). 91% of government land in the County is federally owned, the majority of which is located in South County and held by the Bureau of Land Management land (105,403 acres) or Pinnacles National Monument (approximately 26,000 acres).

Program Period

The state requires each community to update its Housing Element on a periodic basis. The last County update was for 2001 through 2008, and the current program period is from 2007 through 2014. This revision has been prepared to address the housing needs of the unincorporated area of the County. The current Housing Element has been a part of the County's General Plan and in effect since 2004, the previous State-mandated date for Housing Element revision. The state requires each community to update its Housing Element on a periodic basis. This document is partially based on the State-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation provided to the local Council of Governments in July 2007 and subsequently divided among local jurisdictions for inclusion in their respective Housing Elements. The updated Housing Element is required by the State to be adopted by August 31, 2009.

Purpose

The San Benito County Housing Element is a state mandated document that provides local strategies for addressing state and local housing needs. The Housing Element is the major Local Housing Strategy Document intended to provide citizens and public officials with the understanding of the housing needs of the community. This element sets forth policies and programs aimed at attainment of defined goals. This element will serve not only as a programmatic expression of a local commitment to act, but will also provide guidance for decision making in all matters related to housing. State Housing Law (Government Code Section 65583) requires that a "housing element shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments. This report is an update of the Housing Element previously adopted by the County in 2004. The assessment and inventory must include all of the following:

- Analysis of population and employment trends, documentation of projections, and a quantification of the locality's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. Such existing and projected needs shall include the locality's share of the regional housing need in accordance with Section 65584 of the Government Code.
- Analysis and documentation of household characteristics, including level of payment compared to ability to pay, housing characteristics, including overcrowding, and housing stock condition.
- An inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having potential for redevelopment, and an analysis of the relationship of zoning, public facilities, and city services to these sites.
- Analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including land use

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controls, building codes and their enforcement, site improvements, fees and other exactions required of developers, and local processing and permit procedures.

- Analysis of potential and actual non-governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including the availability of financing, the price of land, and the cost of construction.
- Analysis of any special housing needs, such as those of the handicapped, elderly, large families, farmworkers, the homeless, and families with female heads of households.
- Analysis of opportunities for energy conservation with respect to residential development.

The Housing Element identifies the nature and extent of the County's housing needs. By examining these needs, the County can provide a response to how it will meet these needs in the Policy Document. Additionally, it provides a better understanding of the community and facilitates planning for housing.