
REPORT TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

September 2006

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The intent of this report is to demonstrate the County's compliance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65400(b)(1), which mandates the County to prepare an annual report on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation. A copy of this report must be sent to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Providing a copy to HCD fulfills a statutory requirement to report certain housing information, including the County's progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing, as defined in Government Code Sections 65584 and 65583(c)(3).

BACKGROUND

According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, OPR does not require submission of a detailed progress report while a jurisdiction is in the process of comprehensively updating its general plan. In this case, OPR requests that the County provide a brief letter indicating that the comprehensive update is in progress with a brief description of the scope of work and an anticipated completion date. This report is intended to fulfill this requirement.

GENERAL PLAN STATUS

The County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning (Department) serves as the planning agency for the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, an area of roughly 2,655 square miles. During the late 1990s, a review of the General Plan status was commenced that led to the preparation of a multi-year work program to significantly redesign and update the General Plan. The County's General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since its adoption in 1980.

The Department is currently in the process of updating the Los Angeles County General Plan in compliance with Government Code Sections 65300.7, 65301 and 65302. This multi-year planning effort is intended to reflect changing demographic, growth, and infrastructure conditions in the County. It includes streamlining the General Plan's countywide elements into a manageable document, the elimination and/or consolidation of optional elements, the review of critical policy areas, and preparation of associated environmental reports in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

The unincorporated area is a highly diverse and complex planning environment, necessitating a creative approach to planning. Consequently, the General Plan has many components and levels of plans – from the general to the highly detailed – to address the diverse needs of county residents and to address the full range of urban, suburban and rural land use issues facing the County. One way the General Plan addresses complex countywide issues is to encourage infill development in existing urban areas. Several strategies are being used to implement infill, including locating new housing developments in transportation corridors and near existing transportation infrastructure. An incentive to encourage such development is an increase in allowable housing densities. Infill development also results in open space protection, one of the General Plan goals, by reducing the impacts of sprawl.

The update program focuses on amending the countywide elements of the General Plan. It concentrates on the following elements of the General Plan: General Goals and Policies, Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Conservation/Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The program is being conducted in two phases:

Phase I: **Housing Element Update**

The Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive revision to the Housing Element on October 23, 2001. On February 13, 2002, the Housing Element was conditionally certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) subject to the County demonstrating progress toward implementing housing programs aimed at identifying adequate sites for multi-family housing and farmworker housing assistance. The Department continues to implement these programs, which are discussed in more detail in this report. The Department has begun the process for the Fourth Revision of the Housing Element, which must be adopted by June 30, 2008.

Phase II: **Countywide Elements of the General Plan**

The Department is revising and consolidating the remainder of the countywide chapters into the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Conservation/Open Space, Noise, and Safety. All State-required components of a general plan will either be included in these elements or adopted by reference. Following the 2004 public release of the first draft of the comprehensively updated General Plan, *Shaping the Future 2025*, workshops were held throughout the county with significant public and agency comments received. Substantial mapping and policy revisions were conducted through 2005 to produce the Draft Preliminary

General Plan, which is scheduled for public release in late 2006. Following revisions from public and agency input, a Preliminary General Plan and companion Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be released to the public in spring 2007. Public hearings before the Regional Planning Commission on the Preliminary General Plan and EIR will occur through summer 2007 followed by the public release of a Proposed General Plan in late 2007. Public hearings before the Board of Supervisors on the Proposed General Plan will begin in 2008.

HOUSING ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Overview

Currently, the County of Los Angeles is in compliance with State Housing Element law (Article 10.6 of the Government Code) in that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the County's Housing Element on October 23, 2001, and HCD has determined that the Housing Element is in compliance, conditioned upon the County completing Housing Action Programs #43 and #44 relating to farm worker housing and identifying adequate sites for multi-family development and related rezoning activities.

The Housing Element contains an ambitious array of programs with specific time frames for implementation. Many programs are implemented by other agencies; therefore, the actual program work may vary from the original target completion dates. This report focuses on the major programs with activity during the FY 2005-2006. Major highlights for FY 2005-2006 include the successful completion of the **County's Density Bonus Ordinance (see details on page 8)** and the **County's Infill Estimation Project—Phase I (see details on page 4)**. Information on Housing Action Programs #41, #43, and #44 is reported as of June 30, 2006 to provide an update on the County's progress in implementing these programs.

Second Unit Ordinance Implementation (Program #41)

On March 3, 2004 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 2004-0012, amending the Los Angeles County Zoning Code with regulations and procedures for the review of second residential units—as required for consistency with State law. The Ordinance took effect April 2, 2004, and is included as **Appendix A**. As of the end of FY 2005-2006, the Department has approved 212 second units since the ordinance has taken effect.

Farm Worker Housing (Program #43)

The County has completed the preparation of a draft ordinance amending the County's Zoning Ordinance to add definitions for farm worker and farm worker housing and to permit farm worker housing by right in agricultural zones. Additional public outreach efforts are needed prior to scheduling the public hearing. It is anticipated that a public hearing before the County's Regional Planning Commission will be held in 2007. When approved by the Commission, the Ordinance will be scheduled for a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors. A copy of the working draft is included as **Appendix B**.

Identifying Adequate Sites for Multifamily Housing (Program #44)

Housing Advisory Committee

The Housing Advisory Committee is a key component of the Housing Element's Action Program #44 (Identify Sites for Multifamily Housing). The Committee is currently comprised of sixteen citizens and private sector volunteers who are closely related to and interested in the production of affordable housing in the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. The role of the Committee is to assist the Department of Regional Planning by recommending incentives for, and ways to further remove barriers to, the construction of affordable housing in the unincorporated area, and to identify vacant and underutilized sites that could be used for affordable housing development.

Since its formation in September 2002, the Housing Advisory Committee has convened 19 times, with another meeting scheduled in early November 2006. A list of the Committee's members is included as **Appendix C** and copies of the agendas and notes from the Committee's meetings since August 2005 are included as **Appendix D**.

Los Angeles County Infill Estimation Project (Phases I and II)

On June 30, 2006, the Department, in conjunction with consultant, Solimar Research Group and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), completed the *Los Angeles County Urban Infill Estimation Study*. The study provides a comprehensive GIS analysis of residentially and commercially-zoned urban areas in unincorporated Los Angeles County and a financial feasibility and policy analysis of five study areas, the results of which will be used to initially focus Program #44 on key sites that have the most infill potential. A copy of the report is included as **Appendix E**.

In addition, the Department has received funding for Phase II of the Study for the 06-07 fiscal year. Phase II will apply the same infill estimation methodology used in Phase I, which comes from a collaborative effort led by Environment Now, their consultants (Solimar Research Group and Terrell Watt Consulting), the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles in 2004, to explore opportunities for mixed-uses in commercially and industrially-zoned parcels in the urban areas of Los Angeles County. The results of this study could be used to initially consider key non-residentially zoned sites for Program #44. A copy of the Scope of Work approved for funding by SCAG is included as **Appendix F**.

Zoning Mapping Conversion and Integration Project (ZCIP)

The Zoning Mapping Conversion and Integration Project (ZCIP) is a multi-year project that provides the conversion and integration from the "technologically" obsolete zoning maps (in CAD format) to a GIS format. This format is fully integrated with all other GIS layers generated and maintained by the Department of Regional Planning, the Department of Public Works and the Assessor's Office.

The project has identified 4,062 acres of R-3 zoned parcels, and 170 acres of R-4 zoned parcels in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Such zoning would potentially allow for the

development of multifamily housing by-right. The Department will follow up with an analysis of actual use of property, which could include single family residential uses, institutional uses, or be vacant, in order to determine development potential.

Mixed-Use Ordinance

On September 27, 2006, the Regional Planning Commission will consider initiating an ordinance to allow residential/commercial mixed use developments in commercial zones through an administrative procedure. The ordinance, if initiated, would consider the recommendations of a report from the Department to the Board of Supervisors on September 15, 2005 regarding residential and mixed-uses in commercial zones, which currently requires a conditional use permit. The report included significant input from the Housing Advisory Committee to consider finding sites for higher density multifamily housing zoned for multifamily housing or are commercially zoned, as these areas are likely to be the most suitable for accommodating additional residential density. A copy of the memo to the Regional Planning Commission on September 20, 2006, which includes the report to the Board of Supervisors, is included as **Appendix G**.

HOUSING ELEMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting Overview

The County is required to report certain housing information in accordance with State Housing Element Law (Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584) and the State HCD's housing element guidelines in reporting the County's progress toward meeting regional housing needs.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has determined that total housing construction need for the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County is 52,232 housing units for the current planning period of 1998-2005, an annual average of 7,462 units.¹ This level of construction is deemed necessary by the State to meet both the housing needs of projected growth during the period, and to make up for current housing deficiencies of existing residents. This housing need is further segmented into four broad income categories: Very-low income (9,019 units), low income (7,519 units), moderate income (9,859 units), and above-moderate income (25,835 units).

During the past eight and a half years, from January 1, 1998 to June 30, 2006, the Department of Public Works (DPW) issued building permits for 24,622 dwelling units. The average time between permit issuance and completed construction is estimated at 305 days. The new dwelling units figure is offset by dwelling units removed from the housing stock as authorized by 1,796 demolition permits (the total number of dwelling units authorized for demolition was not available at the time of report preparation). A summary of residential building and demolition permits issued during January 1, 1998-June 30, 2006 is included as **Appendix H**.

¹ Refer to Chapter 4 of the Housing Element, adopted on October 23, 2001, for full details on current housing needs as set forth by SCAG in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) for the planning period January 1, 1998 to June 30, 2005.

Table 1 (on the next page) identifies the housing units completed during the reporting period for Housing Element and in FY 05-06, as compared to the unincorporated County's share of regional housing needs by income level for the Housing Element period. Table 1 includes very low, low and moderate income housing developments completed from January 1, 1998 through June 30, 2006.² Table 1 also reports that building permits were issued for 24,622 dwelling units during the period January 1, 1998 through June 30, 2006, compared to 52,232 dwelling units needed to meet the county's fair-share requirements for the period January 1, 1998 through June 30, 2005.³ According to the table, the number of additional dwelling units needed during the period July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2006 is 27,610, or roughly 53 percent of the RHNA allocation.

² Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, affordable housing development completions data, January 1, 1998-June 30, 2006.

³ County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Building and Safety Division, Unincorporated County Area, Residential Building Permit and Demolition Data, January 1, 1998-June 30, 2006.

TABLE 1 RHNA CONSTRUCTION NEED AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 1998-2006

Construction Need	Very Low Income Units	Lower Income Units	Moderate Income Units	Above Moderate Income Units	Total
Unincorporated Area	9,019	7,519	9,859	25,835	52,232
Number of Dwelling Units Constructed 1/1/98-6/30/06	679	322	3,949	19,672	24,622
Number of new Dwelling Units Needed	8,340	7,197	5,910	6,163	27,610

Source: SCAG, *Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2000*; Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Building & Safety Division for the number of dwelling units assumed to be constructed during the period January 1, 1998-June 30, 2006; Los Angeles County Community Development Commission affordable housing development completions, January 1, 1998-June 30, 2006. Income categories based on a household of four members and the area median income, which is annually revised according to the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Affordable Housing Completed During the Planning Period

According to the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, 1,022 new affordable dwelling units were constructed in the unincorporated area from January 1, 1998 – June 30, 2006. Of these units, 322 are affordable to lower income households, 679 are affordable to very-low income households, and 3949 units are affordable to moderate-income households. It should be noted that in Table 1, the 21 moderate-income units are included in the 3949 moderate-income units constructed during the January 1, 1998 - June 30, 2006 reporting period.

Development Approvals Summary

During the period January 1, 1998, through June 30, 2006, the County issued discretionary approvals for 289 residential development projects totaling 18,407 dwelling units (the 18,407 figure differs from the 24,622 dwelling units constructed in that the constructed units also include ministerial/non-discretionary project approvals and also may have resulted from planning and building approvals issued prior to 1998). This figure includes 18 projects totaling 420 units that were approved by the County for affordable housing developments (with low- and very-low income affordability restrictions).

Although the County is currently working with its Housing Advisory Committee to craft regulatory strategies that facilitate and provide increased incentives for affordable and market-rate housing, the Committee has recognized that even under the best-case scenario, the 52,232-unit RHNA allocation is unattainable. The overall RHNA construction target is unrealistic considering that even if the County had been in the position to complete the major task of adopting major regulatory changes to double the annual average number of housing units permitted for the entire 7.5-year planning period plus FY 05-06, this would have accomplished

only 94 percent of the RHNA allocation. This scenario illustrates that other market factors are at work that are non-regulatory in nature and not under the County's control that significantly impact the pace of new housing construction.

ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

Density Bonus Ordinance For Affordable and Senior Citizen Housing

On August 8, 2006, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance 2006-0063, amending the Los Angeles County Code with eligibility, regulations and procedures for the granting of density bonuses and incentives for affordable and senior citizen housing—as required for consistency with Section 65915 of the California Government Code, the State Density Bonus Law. The Ordinance took effect September 7, 2006 and is included as **Appendix I**. As of the end of FY 2005-2006, the Department has approved 197 affordable units and 220 units total from the density bonus program since SB 1818, which made significant changes to the State density bonus law, took effect in January 1, 2005.

Infill Sites Utilization Program

The density bonus ordinance includes local provisions to enhance the County's Infill Sites Program by making participating projects eligible for specified density bonuses and affordable housing incentives. The Infill Sites Utilization Program, which is administered by the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission (CDC), was approved by the Board of Supervisors on August 3, 2004. The CDC, in conjunction with the Housing Authority's Industry Program, may authorize the acquisition, lease or sale of infill sites of no more than four units. The Program will serve to provide more housing opportunities for low and moderate income families, to make more efficient the delivery of smaller development and acquisition/rehabilitation projects and to assist in the elimination blight. The Infill Program encompasses a variety of improved and unimproved sites. A copy of the Infill Sites Utilization Program is included in **Appendix J**.

SUMMARY

The annual report provides information on the status of the County's General Plan and progress toward its implementation. This report also complies with the requirements of State law regarding the preparation and submission of General Plan annual reports. The Department will keep you informed in the upcoming months of the County's progress in implementing the major programs discussed in this report.

JEH:RDH:JTM:cc

Enclosures:

- Appendix A: Second Unit Ordinance
- Appendix B: Working Draft of Farm Worker Housing Ordinance
- Appendix C: Housing Advisory Committee Roster
- Appendix D: Housing Advisory Committee Agendas and Meeting Notes
- Appendix E: Los Angeles County Infill Estimation Study
- Appendix F: Los Angeles County Infill Estimation Study, Phase II Scope of Work
- Appendix G: Memo to Regional Planning Commission Regarding Initiating Mixed-Use Ordinance, September 20, 2006
- Appendix H: Residential Building/Demolition Permits January 1, 1998 - June 30, 2006
- Appendix I: Density Bonus Ordinance
- Appendix J: Infill Sites Utilization Program