

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

A. Sausalito Community Context

~~Considered one of the most charming cities in Northern California, Sausalito is nestled between the bay and the mountains. The City is well known for its beautiful waterfront with sweeping views of the bay, a historic downtown with numerous restaurants and shops, and its proximity to the Golden Gate Bridge. The City has roughly 7,000 residents within its densely populated 2.2 square miles and attracts a large number of visitors all year round. Nestled in the hills and offering sweeping views of the Bay Area and mountains, Sausalito is one of the most charming cities in Northern California. The City's pristine waterfront and historical downtown host a variety of high-quality shops and dining establishments which draw visitors nearly year-round. In addition, the City's proximity to the Golden Gate further draws tourists and cyclists willing to make the short trip to enjoy the environment that Sausalito has nurtured. Sausalito is home to approximately 7,000 residents situated within the City's 2.2 square mile area.~~

~~Sausalito accommodates a variety of housing types that respects its natural setting: a mix of single family residences, cottages, accessory dwelling units, and small scale multi-family units in the wooded glens and flats; residential units above ground floor commercial businesses in the downtown; houseboats and liveaboards along the waterfront; and view estates and several larger multi-family complexes stepped down the hillsides. This Housing Element seeks to protect and enhance the best aspects of the community's historic patterns of development, while permitting a balanced, low impact approach to accommodating incremental growth. Sausalito accommodates a variety of housing types. Housing within the City include: hilltop estates, single-family residences, cottages, accessory dwelling units, small-scale multi-family units, mixed-use residential units, liveaboards and houseboats and a few larger multi-family developments. The location of housing ranges from sea-level to hilltops and provide Sausalito with a unique and challenging housing scenario with new housing needing to be sensitive to view preservation, natural features, and compatibility. The Housing Element seeks to preserve the best aspects of the community's historic patterns of growth and development while encouraging low-impact housing strategies to accommodate incremental growth.~~

~~This Housing Element acknowledges Sausalito's unique demographics and identifies solutions that address those trends and demographics, including the very high percentage of single-person households, an aging population, and a special needs population of marine workers. These distinctive and inherent community characteristics have resulted in unique housing types in the community, and have driven the consideration of housing development potential and housing policies in this Housing Element. The Housing Element acknowledges Sausalito's demographic trends and unique characteristics. Specifically, the Housing Element addresses trends such as the aging population, special needs groups, single-person households and lower-income households. As the City is sensitive to development due to environmental and infrastructure constraints and contains a limited amount of vacant land, the plan aims to creatively address these trends through carefully crafted housing policies.~~

B. Housing Element Overview and Purpose

As a mandatory component of the General Plan, all cities are required to develop a Housing Element. The Housing Element is a document designed to ensure that adequate housing is being provided and that the City maintains local control of residential development practices. Every jurisdiction in California is required to have a Housing Element in its General Plan, to ensure that appropriate long-range planning measures are in place in response to the community's housing conditions and needs.

The purpose of the Housing Element is to achieve an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing for all economic segments of the community, including individuals with special housing needs. The desirability of the Bay Area and Marin County in particular has made it one of the most expensive housing markets in the country, rendering the availability of affordable housing increasingly scarce. Housing affordable to more modest income households often requires public assistance, of which there are several successful examples in Sausalito, including Bee Street Housing (6 very low income units), Rotary Place (10 very low income units), Sausalito Rotary Senior Housing (22 very low income units), and Galilee Harbor (35 rent and income restricted berths). The shortage of affordable housing has its impacts: it becomes more difficult for employers to recruit and retain employees; roadways become congested with workers traveling longer distances; and many young families, longtime residents and other community members may relocate because they can no longer afford to live in the community. The objective of the Housing Element is to assess and plan for the housing needs of a variety of populations and economic segments within the given planning period (2015-2023). Marin County and the Bay Area are highly-desirable places to live, a characteristic that makes housing in these areas very expensive. Housing costs in Sausalito and Marin make housing prohibitive for lower-income households, generally resulting in the need for public assistance to fund such developments. Sausalito currently hosts three lower-income/special needs developments, offering a combined total of 38 units for very low-income residents. Such developments are extremely important for the City as provided housing options for low-income residents and employees can contribute to lessened commute distances, better employee retention and continued residence of longtime community members who would otherwise be forced to relocate because they can no longer afford to live in Sausalito.

Housing supply for all economic segments and special needs groups within Sausalito should be addressed with consideration to development constraints and opportunities. As vacant parcels are limited in both size and availability within the City, infill developments account for many of the opportunities to add new housing units. Typical considerations such as drainage, views, soil stability, access, roads, and parking must also be carefully examined in Sausalito, especially in hillside areas that are sensitive to such factors. Sausalito's maritime culture and waterfront provide a unique housing scenario with numerous liveboards providing housing while contributing to the character and historical significance of the City. In accordance with community concerns, the Housing Element's policies and goals strive to maintain the small-town character of the City.

The housing supply for all economic segments and special groups in Sausalito needs to be addressed by looking at the unique features of the community, and development constraints and opportunities. As Sausalito is compact and built out, large tracts of land for new

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~~development are not available, but many opportunities exist for infill in smaller parcels throughout the community. Additional factors must be considered when looking at sites with housing potential, including steep slopes, soil stability issues, poor drainage, and narrow roads limiting access and parking in certain neighborhoods. Sausalito's proximity to the waterfront has also influences the types of housing needed in the community. Community members have expressed a strong desire to preserve the existing small town character of the community through the goals and policies of the Housing Element.~~

~~Therefore, the goals and policies of this Housing Element recognize the unique housing opportunities in Sausalito, and enhance the diversity of income and community groups that comprise the existing community character. The goals and policies of the Housing Element are tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of Sausalito, celebrating the diversity of housing types and community members.~~

The Housing Element is divided into four chapters:

- Chapter 1 contains introductory material to the Housing Element, including State Laws and requirements;
- Chapter 2 contains the Housing Plan, including housing goals and objectives, policies and implementing programs;
- Chapter 3 contains a summary of the community's existing and future housing needs; and
- Chapter 4 contains an analysis of available sites for housing, and resources available to assist in the implementation of Sausalito's housing programs.

~~Sausalito's last approved Housing Element was for the planning period ending in 19982014. The last Housing Element covered two cycles (1999-2006 and 2009-2014) and accommodated a combined Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 372. Thus, the City's Housing Element is required to fulfill the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for both the current (2007-2014) and prior (1999-2006) RHNA planning periods. With the exception of this prior RHNA, this Housing Element covers the 2009-2014 Housing Element cycle as defined by statute for jurisdictions in the Bay Area. This 2015-2023 Housing Element covers the RHNA for this planning period only, resulting in the significantly less daunting objective of accommodating 79 units in the next 8 years.~~

C. Housing Element Law, and Changes to State Requirements and Streamlining

~~The Housing Element is one of the required seven elements of the General Plan, mandated by California law. The Housing Element is one of the seven elements of the general plan required by California Government Code. Enacted in 1969, Housing Element lawState Housing Element law enacted in 1969, requires local governmentsall jurisdictions in California to develop a plan to adequately plan to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the communityensure that all existing and future housing needs of the community will be adequately met. The law seeks to assure that local governments adopt land use plans and regulations which do not constrain housing and are permissive to the construction of units to~~

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accommodate housing need. In essence, the Housing Element should identify appropriate housing types and potential sites to facilitate private market response in providing adequate housing.

Housing Elements are required by law to be submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review. HCD is in turn responsible for assessing the Housing Element to ensure its compliance with state law while also reporting findings to the subject jurisdiction. If the submitted Housing Element is found to be in compliance with State law, HCD will “certify” the housing element. Under provisions within State Housing Element law, a Housing Element that has been certified by HCD will be more secure against litigation challenging the document’s validity.

~~This law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulations which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development. As a result, housing policy in the State rests largely upon the effective implementation of local general plans and, in particular, local housing elements. Housing Element law also requires that the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) review local housing elements for compliance with State law and to report its written findings to the local government. If HCD finds that the housing element substantially complies with State Housing Element law, HCD “certifies” the housing element. If a housing element has been certified by HCD, State Housing Element law states that there shall be a “rebuttable presumption of validity of the element” in any court challenge to the validity of the housing element.~~

State Housing Element law requires Housing Elements to include several components within the document, some of which have recently been added as part of State law. The previous Housing Element included policies to comply with several of these laws. These incorporated laws are described as follows:

- Senate Bill 2 (2007): Amended Housing Element law and requiring jurisdictions to support local homeless populations by permitting emergency shelters by right within a designated zoning district(s).
- Assembly Bill 1866 (2002): Facilitates development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and allows identification of realistic capacity for second units.
- Senate Bill 375 (2008): Established a monitoring program requiring an annual Housing Element report to be submitted to HCD. The law also outlines repercussions for jurisdictions who fail to adopt a Housing Element.

A Streamlined Update approach is a new procedure established by HCD and designed to save time and money for California jurisdictions. The Streamlined Update approach template is also applicable to select areas of the Housing Element. However, the approach may only be utilized by jurisdictions whose existing Housing Element is adopted and certified and also have amended their Zoning Ordinances to include Density Bonus, SB 2, Reasonable Accommodation, and Transitional and Supportive Housing ordinances. Cities and Counties seeking eligibility must also have completed any re-zoning efforts necessary to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) number from the 2009-2014 cycle. Eligible jurisdictions will benefit from the

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Streamlined Update as they will receive priority when submitting their Draft Housing Elements. HCD will also provide an expedited, 60-day review for streamlined Housing Element Updates.

~~Components of the housing element required by State Housing Element law include a “Residential and Mixed Use Sites Inventory”, identifying where housing potential is present in the jurisdiction. Housing Element law, as amended by Senate Bill (SB) 2 in 2007, requires local governments to support homeless persons in obtaining shelter and services. Specifically, SB 2 requires cities to identify a zoning district (or districts) where emergency shelters are allowed as a permitted use, without a conditional use or other discretionary permit. The bill also requires local governments to add transitional and supportive housing and emergency shelters to its provisions for very low, low, or moderate income households. While the previously certified housing element addressed homeless issues, this housing element contains updates which address the requirements of SB 2.~~

~~Assembly Bill (AB) 1866 passed in 2002 facilitates the creation of second units, or Accessory Dwelling Units, through ministerial approval procedures. It also clarifies Housing Element law to allow identification of realistic capacity for second units, based on development trends of second units in the jurisdiction.~~

~~Senate Bill (SB) 375 passed in 2008, requires the annual submission of reports to the HCD monitoring the Housing Element, and outlines consequences for the failure to adopt a Housing Element.~~

Since, Sausalito has successfully implemented the aforementioned ordinances and drafted a certified 2009-2014 Housing Element, the 2015-2023 Housing Element Update for Sausalito will follow a Streamlined Update approach. The Steamlined Update builds off the existing Housing Element, updating outdated information, policies, and programs of the existing document. Another recent law that affects this Housing Element is the requirement of “reasonable accommodation” procedures. This is a federal mandate that is implemented in the Housing Element, in order to accommodate persons with disabilities in the provision of housing.

D. Relationship to the General Plan

————The General Plan is the guiding planning document serving as a jurisdiction’s “constitution” for development. The General Plan should reflect concerns and characteristics of the jurisdiction and address local and regional planning challenges. The plan’s framework should provide goals, policies and programs formulated in collaboration with the jurisdiction’s community, stakeholders, staff, and decision-makers. Development proposals not consistent with provisions of an adopted General Plan must be revised, or measures must be taken to amend the General Plan itself.

State law requires all elements of the General Plan must be internally consistent to both preserve the document’s effectiveness and integrity while protecting the jurisdiction from litigation. In addition, all elements of the General Plan are treated as equal, meaning one

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element does not take precedence over another, a characteristic which further emphasizes the importance of internal consistency within the plan. This Housing Element is designed to function as an integral part of the City's General Plan.

While the General Plan is generally encouraged to be comprehensively reviewed every ten to fifteen years, the Housing Element is required to be updated every eight years. The Housing Element's update cycle is due to its objective of addressing housing and population changes which may vary greatly in shorter time periods. The fluctuating nature of demographic, economic, and housing trends make Housing Element Updates imperative for jurisdictions to complete on schedule.

~~————The General Plan serves as the "constitution" for development in a jurisdiction. It is a long-range planning document that describes goals, policies and programs to guide decision-making. All development-related decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. If a development proposal is not consistent with the General Plan, the proposal must be revised, or the General Plan itself must be amended. State law requires a community's General Plan to be internally consistent. This means that the Housing Element, although subject to special requirements and a defined timetable of updates, must function as an integral part of the overall General Plan, with consistency between it and the other General Plan elements. This Housing Element is consistent with Sausalito's General Plan.~~

E. Community Participation Summary

In 2009, the City Council established a Housing Element Committee, which subsequently was transformed into the Housing Element Task Force in 2011. The Task Force was composed of City Council representatives, Planning Commission representatives, and City residents. Over 45 public meetings were held, including three community workshops, to engage community residents and property owners in the discussion of topics related to the update of the Housing Element.

The three workshops were devoted to educating and soliciting feedback from the community. The first workshop was aimed at explaining the background of the Housing Element and new State laws influencing the update. The second workshop reviewed options to meet the Housing Element State law, and the third workshop reviewed and solicited feedback on the goals, policies and implementing programs of the Housing Element.

Community concerns raised at the workshops included the impact of the Housing Element policies on the development patterns and density in Sausalito, and how the Housing Element might affect current property values. Residents also expressed interest in the RHNA calculation, clarifying Housing Element procedures, and suggesting additional issues for analysis and discussion in the Housing Element. Throughout the community workshops and Task Force meetings, residents were particularly concerned about potential rezoning and other measures that would negatively impact the existing small-town character of Sausalito. Community members offered constructive suggestions on the implementation and operation of affordable housing.

In addition to the City's direct efforts, Sausalito residents forwarded concerns regarding the potential impacts of specific strategies proposed in the Housing Element. More details on community participation are provided in Appendix E. [DJ1]



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