

**Housing Element Webinar
November 12, 2020 – 7:30 PM
Q&A Responses**

crubin

- **Question:** Hi all, thanks for the presentation!
- **Answer:** Thank you.

crubin

- **Question:** Could you share a bit about the housing goals for other westside cities and to what extent Santa Monica is coordinating with Culver City, Beverly Hills, Malibu, WeHo, Inglewood etc?
- **Answer:** RHNA numbers of other cities are provided in Slide 33 of the City's [PowerPoint presentation](#) for November 9, 2020.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** How many units are already in the Planning Department pipeline such that they will receive their building permits at a time that will count towards the new (2021-2029) cycle?
- **Answer:** Please see the Powerpoint presentation provided in the webinar. As indicated, the City had added 1769 market rate units, 26 moderate income units, 150 low income units, 263 very low income units, and 114 extremely low income units.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Are the last cycle's numbers posted somewhere online? (2013-2021)?
- **Answer:** The 5th Cycle Housing Element (2013-2021) is available online at <https://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Plans/2013-2021-Housing-Element/>. The 5th Cycle RHNA numbers can be found on page 25 of the document.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What is the current vacancy rate of apartment/condo rental housing in the City? Some estimates say 4,000.
- **Answer:** Based on the State's Department of Finance population and housing estimates, City currently has a 8.6% vacancy rate. Vacant units include vacation/seasonal homes, secondary homes, units undergoing remodeling/rehabilitation, units sold but not yet occupied, and vacant units available for sale/rent.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Does the Planning Department believe SM should still try to build housing in all categories or just in Very, Low, and Moderate categories? (i.e., Affordable Housing).
- **Answer:** State law mandates that the City's Housing Element include the identification of sites, policies, programs, and regulatory framework necessary to

accommodate for the potential development of housing units in accordance with the RHNA of 8,873 units, of which 69% must be at low income levels which include the very low, low, and moderate income categories. While the production of affordable housing is a key goal for Santa Monica, the RHNA allocation includes market-rate units as well so the Housing Element Update must plan for market-rate units.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What might this much added density and heights do to fire safety?
- **Answer:** An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Update will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of any increases in density and heights that could be proposed. The EIR for the Housing Element Update will analyze the potential need for increases in public services, including fire safety issues.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** How does this much more development square with our police and fire resources, our water resources and infrastructure, and energy supplies and infrastructure?
- **Answer:** An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Update will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of new housing development. The EIR for the Housing Element Update will analyze the potential need for increases in public services, water resources and infrastructure, and energy supplies and facilities.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What about all of the trees that will likely be cut down to achieve even some progress towards the 8873 goal? How does that square with Urban Forest goals, green goals, etc.?
- **Answer:** Street trees within public right of ways are protected by the City's Tree Ordinance, consistent with the City's Urban Forest Master Plan. Furthermore, in it is anticipated that housing development towards the RHNA would occur primarily on existing commercial properties (with minimal landscaping/trees).

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** We are a notably park-poor City - only 1.4 acres per 1000 residents, where LA has about 3.5 acres/1000 and national recommendation for health and wellness is 5+ acres. How will City build additional park space to serve the needs of this significant infusion of residents?
- **Answer:** As required by the City, new housing will be required to contribute to open space fees that will fund the construction of open space and recreational

facilities. Additionally, the EIR for the Housing Element Update will analyze potential physical effects of new housing on parks and recreational facilities.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** We hear a lot about a jobs-housing imbalance in our City. Has City considered asking employers to survey employees to ask questions about (1) where do they currently live if not in SM, (2) do they want to move to SM, (3) what size home would they want, (4) what could they afford?
- **Answer:** Thank you for the suggestions. These suggestions will be considered as the City prepares future surveys and questionnaire.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Does Planning Dept have a perspective - aside from State mandates - about where you see SM falling on the continuum between being a Barcelona vs. staying more of a Stars Hollow?
- **Answer:** As described in the presentation, the intent is to prepare a plan that is consistent with the adopted Land Use and Circulation Element – focusing new development largely in areas with access to major transportation systems and protections for residential neighborhoods. We understand that there is concern regarding the large RHNA allocation and implications for possible changes in the built environment. City staff is committed to putting forth proposals that are consistent with adopted policy reflective of Santa Monica's values. However, we are mandated to plan for the RHNA allocation so the community will have an opportunity to review draft land use concepts in mid-March and understand potential tradeoffs.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What about noise pollution and air quality issues? I've lived by construction every year of my life in SM and it is crazy-making. Should we aim to foist this level (aiming to build 8873 units in 8 years) of noise and air pollution on the community?
- **Answer:** An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Housing Element Update will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of new housing development. The EIR for the Housing Element Update will analyze potential noise and air quality impacts due to housing construction.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Has the Planning Department explored assertions by groups like Livable California, the Embarcadero Institute, etc. that the State's numbers are artificially inflated and involved double-counting and that actual demand in next cycle is about \$1.1M rather than \$3.1M? So that SM's # would be lower.
- **Answer:** The City acknowledges that there is an on-going debate about the accuracy of the State's estimated housing need of 3.1 million units. Notwithstanding this debate, City staff is required under State law to prepare a

Housing Element Update that demonstrates the City has the plan, policies, and land available to accommodate for its RHNA number as determined by SCAG.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** If vacancy rate in SM now IS 4000, would the 8873 # be lowered by 4000? So the target for next cycle should be more like 4873?
- **Answer:** SCAG's RHNA methodology takes into account a jurisdiction's future vacancy need in determining the RHNA. The details of SCAG's final adopted RHNA Methodology can be found on SCAG's website <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scag-final-rhna-methodology-030520.pdf?1602189316>. As stated by SCAG, "an undersupply of vacant units can prevent new households from forming or moving into a jurisdiction. Formulaically, future vacancy need is a percentage applied to the jurisdiction's household growth by tenure type (owner and renter households). While individual jurisdictions may experience different vacancy rates at different points in time, future vacancy need is independent of existing conditions and instead is a minimum need to support household growth."

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** Community Wealth: How does this advance / foster / cultivate household wealth through property (including multi-family) ownership, local small business? How does this keep wealth within our community rather than facilitate wealth extraction?
- **Answer:** By improving housing security for lower-income households, it may enable the foundation for community wealth building as households have more available income to divert to potential savings.

Cathy Karol-Crowther

- **Question:** are the new recent apartment building that went up along Lincoln, 5th and 6th and Broadway full? the units are very small, they are called family but are tiny
- **Answer:** The City does not have information regarding the current occupancy of privately-owned apartment buildings. However, all new housing projects have a unit mix requirement that mandates a minimum 15% of total units for 3-bedrooms and 20% of total units for 2-bedrooms.

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** New Housing Model: Protect land in a network of community-owned nonprofit land trusts with property improvements held in resident-owned, limited-equity community cooperatives. The cooperatives pay ground rent to the land trusts. The wealth-building accrues to the residents. Eg: LA EcoVillage.
- **Answer:** Comment is noted.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What is Planning Department's perspective on Growth generally - both economic and dramatic growth in housing stock? Is this sustainable and good for the planet? Growth and sustainability seem to be in direct conflict,, no?
- **Answer:** The City's growth strategy is outlined in the adopted Land Use and Circulation Element. The LUCE promotes the critical linkage between land use (siting of new development and uses) and transportation (major transit stops like the Expo Stations) as the basis for sustainable growth. As indicated in the LUCE and LUCE EIR, transit-oriented growth will help the City and the State meet sustainability goals. By placing jobs and housing closer together near transit and in mixed-use areas, there will be a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (the distance) and greenhouse gas emissions.

Michael

- **Question:** Did the 2013-2021 Element have a target or state requirement for number of units to add? How many units have been added in this period?
- **Answer:** Please see the Powerpoint presentation provided in the webinar. As indicated, the RHNA for the 5th Cycle 2013-2021 Housing Element was City had added 1769 market rate units, 26 moderate income units, 150 low income units, 263 very low income units, and 114 extremely low income units.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Does Planning Department agree that rehabilitation / reuse of existing buildings is often significantly more "green" than building new, i.e., involves creating a much lower carbon footprint?

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** Social Capital: How protect / conserve / foster social capital? We need life-long friendships and social networks to persist, grow and for relationships to deepen and age well. There is a need for community culture to flourish and deepen over multi-generations. Same neighbors, better neighborhoods
- **Answer:** Housing stability is a key tenet of the City's housing approach. The Housing Element will include a review of policies and programs addressing housing preservation.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** What is Planning Dept's perspective on proposed upzoning in the State, such as was attempted with SB50?
- **Answer:** The Housing Element Update process will entail preparation of the Suitable Sites Inventory and a housing feasibility analysis to determine whether changes to zoning are needed to accommodate the RHNA.

Macrina

- **Question:** is there a program to help low to moderate income families purchase property in Santa Monica?

- **Answer:** There is no program in Santa Monica to help low to moderate income families purchase property. However, Section 8, also known as the Housing Choice Voucher program, is a rental assistance program for low-income households. Eligible applicants may receive a voucher to pay for part of their rent.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** For me, the priority is very affordable housing as that is where production has fallen short since 2008. We have more market rate and luxury than we need. If we want to maintain economic diversity, affordable should be the focus. How will GS/GSH revenues help?
- **Answer:** Measure GSH revenues form the majority of the funding for the City's Housing Trust Fund. The Housing Trust Fund funds the production of affordable housing. Currently, the prioritization of funds is towards the production and preservation of affordable housing, the Preserving Our Diversity (POD) program, and permanent housing for persons experiencing homelessness. A report on affordable housing production and Housing Trust Fund financing is available online here:
https://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/HED/Housing_and_Redevelopment/Affordable_Housing/Reports/Summary%20Rpt%20of%20Multifamily%20Housing%20Production%20and%20HTF%20Financing%20FY201819%20final%20042820.pdf

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** How can we create community land trusts such as the Dudley Street Neighbors -- <https://www.dsni.org/> ?
- **Answer:** The City has few if any, vacant undeveloped land. Creation of a community land trusts would have little benefit for the City.

Julia

- **Question:** In terms of coliving style houses. Could that be zoned in R2 areas, instead of being limited to commercial like a hostel would be? How would it count towards "unit" requirement for the city? Can each room count as a unit if it's a different person?
- **Answer:** Housing units count towards achieving the RHNA and are defined as, "a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters." Based on this definition, shared living quarters as proposed in some coliving situations would likely not count as a housing unit for purposes of achieving the RHNA.

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** How can we engage with the California Community Land Trust Network (<https://www.cacltnetwork.org/>) for our community to bring authentic, resident-oriented new housing models?
- **Answer:** The City has few if any, vacant undeveloped land. Creation of a community land trusts would have little benefit for the City.

Matt Stauffer

- **Question:** What happens if the city does not meet either the target housing unit number or the deadline for approving the housing element?
- **Answer:** Repercussions for noncompliance include limited access to state funding where eligibility for funding is contingent on the jurisdiction having a substantially compliant housing element. To incentivize and reward local governments that have adopted compliant and effective Housing Elements, several housing, community development and infrastructure funding programs include Housing Element compliance as a rating and ranking or threshold requirement. Some of the programs that consider Housing Element certification in their criteria are listed below:
 - Infill Incentive Grant (IIG) Program
 - Multifamily Housing Program
 - Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program
 - SB1 Sustainable Communities grants
 - SB2 Planning grants
 - Cal Recycle
 - Water Resources Control Board

Funding programs that are currently used by the City are the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, SB1 grants, SB2 grants, LEAP grant, Cal Recycle, and Water Resources Control Board.

In addition to the loss of State funding for a variety of programs, cost penalties for a non-compliant Housing Element per Government Code Section 65585 are as follows:

- An initial penalty of between \$10,000 and \$100,000 per month, if within 12 months of the order, the city or county does not comply.
- Triple the initial penalty, if within three months of the imposition of the first penalty, the city or county does not comply.
- Six times the initial penalty, if within six months of the imposition of the first penalty, the city or county does not comply. The court may also appoint a receiver with all powers necessary to bring the city or county into substantial compliance.

Arlene Hopkins

- **Question:** How can we engage with the LA Tenants Union please?
<https://medium.com/@LATenantsUnion/affordable-housing-is-a-scam-9a4c43ba8149>
- **Answer:** This organization may sign up for notifications on the Housing Element Update by sending an email to HousingUpdate@smgov.net. The City welcomes public input from all sectors of the community. All are welcome to participate in

the City's Housing Element Update by participating in our virtual webinars, emailing comments, and taking the questionnaire.

Benjamin jtg

- **Question:** Do all cities need to provide ~70% affordable units or was this the choice of Santa Monica?
- **Answer:** The City of Santa Monica's RHNA is based on SCAG's adopted RHNA methodology, which utilizes a number of factors including jobs, transit access, household growth, and disproportionate communities. The details of SCAG's adopted RHNA Methodology can be found on SCAG's website <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scag-final-rhna-methodology-030520.pdf?1602189316>. Of the 8,873 units, 69% must be at low income levels. The affordability levels of the RHNA is determined by applying a Social Equity Adjustment that accounts for disproportionate concentration of each income category in the County and affirmatively furthering fair housing.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** I thought the EXPO was going to solve transit issues and make it easier to get to work in SM; but NOW we have to actually build homes here. What gives? We do so much and it's never enough?!!
- **Answer:** State law requires that Housing Elements plan for the housing needs of the community. Housing needs are determined by the California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), who decides what the numerical housing targets should be for each regional council of governments. The high RHNA targets for the City's upcoming 6th Cycle were determined by SCAG. The details of SCAG's adopted RHNA Methodology can be found on SCAG's website <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scag-final-rhna-methodology-030520.pdf?1602189316>.

Christine E Parra

- **Question:** What was the metrics used to determine the RHNA number of housing units required?
- **Answer:** The City of Santa Monica's RHNA was determined by SCAG, based on SCAG's adopted RHNA methodology. The methodology utilizes a number of factors including jobs, transit access, household growth, and disproportionate communities. The details of SCAG's adopted RHNA Methodology can be found on SCAG's website <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/scag-final-rhna-methodology-030520.pdf?1602189316>.

Benjamin jtg

- **Question:** In order to build all this housing, will we plan on increasing development FAR, height and unit counts?
- **Answer:** As part of the Housing Element Update process, a Suitable Sites Inventory will be prepared to determine where housing development could be accommodated to meet the RHNA. Sites across the City will be reviewed.

Additionally, a market feasibility analysis will be conducted to determine the likelihood of housing being developed in various areas of the City. Information from the SSI and the feasibility analysis will determine whether changes to density standards are needed to zoning districts.

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Why is it OK for State to mandate such a huge RHNA, which has the potential to completely change the character of and life in our City?
- **Answer:** State law requires that Housing Elements plan for the housing needs of the community. Housing needs are determined by the California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), who decides what the numerical housing targets should be for each regional council of governments. Each council of government across the state then further allocates the regional housing number (known as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment– or RHNA) to every city and county within its jurisdiction. For the planning period of 2021-2029, HCD has determined that the RHNA for the Southern California region is 1.3 million units. This 1.3 million units was further allocated to amongst cities and counties in SCAG's region.

Karen Melick

- **Question:** Why didn't Santa Monica contest the high RINA allocation number like some other Cities?
- **Answer:** *The City Council chose not to appeal the RNHA.*

Ann Hoover

- **Question:** Thank you!
- **Answer:** Thank you.