

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: Regular Meeting of November 17, 2021

SUBMITTED BY: Zoe Merideth, Senior Planner

APPROVED BY: Forrest Ebbs, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **Notice of Preparation Scoping Meeting for the City of Antioch
6th Cycle Housing Element Update**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission take the following action:

1. Receive public comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Antioch 6th Cycle Housing Element Update.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Antioch will be the Lead Agency to prepare an EIR for the City of Antioch 6th Cycle Housing Element Update (herein after referred to as the “proposed project”) in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Additionally, this Housing Element update triggers the update of the Environmental Hazards element and Environmental Justice (EJ) policies. The proposed project will be a citywide project.

California state law requires the City to update the chapter or “element” of its General Plan regarding housing by January 31, 2023, while making any changes to other elements of the General Plan needed to maintain internal consistency, and undertaking related changes to the City’s zoning ordinance. The Housing Element was last updated in 2015 and covers the “5th Cycle” housing element planning period from 2015 through 2023. Because this period is drawing to a close, State law [Government Code Section 65588] requires the City to update its Housing Element and provides a deadline of January 31, 2023. In accordance with State law, the planning period, also known as the “6th Cycle”, for the updated Housing Element will extend from January 31, 2023 to January 31, 2031.

Housing Element

The Key Components of the housing element are:

- **Housing Needs Assessment:** Examine demographic, employment, and housing trends and conditions and identify existing and projected housing needs of the community, with attention paid to special housing needs (e.g., large families, persons with disabilities).
- **Evaluation of Past Performance:** Review the prior Housing Element to measure progress in implementing policies and programs.
- **Housing Sites Inventory:** Identify locations of available sites for housing development or redevelopment to ensure there is enough land zoned for housing to meet the future need at all income levels.
- **Community Engagement:** Implement a robust community engagement program, reaching out to all economic segments of the community plus traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Constraints Analysis:** Analyze and recommend remedies for existing and potential governmental and nongovernmental barriers to housing development.
- **Policies and Programs:** Establish policies and programs to be carried out during the 2023-2031 planning period to fulfill the identified housing needs.

Through the Housing Element update process, the City is required to demonstrate that it has the regulatory and land use policies to accommodate its assigned Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The Housing Element is required to demonstrate potential sites where housing can be accommodated to meet all the income levels of a jurisdiction's RHNA. The draft RHNA for the City are shown in the table below.

INCOME LEVEL	AMOUNT
Very-Low-Income (0-50 percent of AMI) *	792
Low-income (50-80 percent of AMI)	456
Moderate-income (80-120 percent of AMI)	493
Above moderate-income (120 percent or more of AMI)	1,275
TOTAL	3,016

*Area Median Income

Environmental Hazards

The goal of the Environmental Hazards Element (previously known as the Safety Element) is to reduce the negative impacts caused by natural phenomena such as fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and landslides. This goal is achieved by identifying policies and programs that reduce the risks faced by residents. Since 2012, there have been several updates to Environmental Hazards Element requirements to include climate change vulnerability and adaptation and greater attention to wildfire and evacuation routes. Jurisdictions are required to complete a vulnerability assessment, develop adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives, and develop a set of feasible implementation measures addressing climate change adaptation and resiliency (SB 379, 2015). Jurisdictions must review and update these portions of the Environmental Hazards Element upon each revision of the housing element or local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP), but not less than once every eight years. (SB 1035, 2018).

Environmental Justice

In 2016, SB 1000 passed which required cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities to incorporate EJ policies into their General Plan. The City meets both criteria for an EJ update as it is home to disadvantaged communities and is currently adopting or revising two or more elements concurrently. Local jurisdictions may choose to create a stand alone EJ element or integrate policies within the General Plan. The City plans to take the latter approach and integrate the policies into the General Plan. The term “disadvantaged communities” is defined as a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. Additionally, within this context “low-income area” is defined as an area with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by HCD’s list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the Health and Safety Code. (Gov. Code, § 65302, subd. (h)(4)(C)). The requirements for the EJ policies are:

- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1): Identify disadvantaged communities within the area covered by the General Plan.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to reduce exposure to pollution including improving air quality in disadvantaged communities.
- Gov. Code § 65302 (h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to promote public facilities in disadvantaged communities.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to promote food access in disadvantaged communities.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to promote safe and sanitary homes in disadvantaged communities.

- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to promote physical activity in disadvantaged communities.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(A): Identify objectives and policies to reduce any unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities not otherwise addressed above.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(B): Identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process in disadvantaged communities.
- Gov. Code § 65302(h)(1)(C): Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

DISCUSSION

The City of Antioch is the Lead Agency for the preparation of the EIR for the proposed project. CEQA requires the preparation of a NOP for the purpose of soliciting comments on the scope of the EIR. CEQA requires the NOP be distributed for a 30-day public review period, which began on November 8, 2021, and ends on December 8, 2021. Written comments may be submitted to the City by 5:00 on December 8, 2021, and may be sent to the attention of Zoe Merideth, Senior Planner, at P.O. Box 5007, Antioch, CA, 94531-5007 or zmerideth@antiochca.gov.

In addition, CEQA requires a public scoping meeting to record verbal comments on the scope of the EIR. The purpose of the scoping meeting is not to debate or discuss the merits of the project, but to receive input on the scope of the EIR. Discussion by the Planning Commission or an action from the Planning Commission is not needed at this time.

ATTACHMENT

A. NOP for the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update