

PROJECT HISTORY:

In 2014, the City began working to update its Housing Plan, commonly referred to as *At Home in Encinitas*, to bring us into compliance with State law. Since then, the *At Home in Encinitas* project has been in various stages of planning and discussion. This document summarizes background information about the project. It is organized into four sections, as follows:

Section 1: Introduction to *At Home in Encinitas*. This section summarizes why the City is updating the Housing Element, including information on housing needs.

Section 2: Planning Process Restart. This section discusses how the City initiated a focused review of the Housing Element portion of the General Plan.

Section 3: Community Engagement, Phase 1 Overview. This section provides an overview of the process that was undertaken to develop a draft Housing Element

- **November 2014:** Community dialogue sessions took place in each of Encinitas' five communities and e-Town Hall online engagement was launched
- **January 2015:** City Council and Planning Commission conducted joint study session to review results of public input
- **February 2015:** City Council and Planning Commission conducted joint study session to provide direction on a preferred land use and community character plan for future housing
- **March 2015:** City Council and Planning Commission conducted joint study session to review the complete draft housing plan and policies
- **May 2015:** Submission of the draft plan for State review

Section 4: Community Engagement, Phase 2 Overview. This section highlights the work undertaken to develop zoning standards and design guidelines to support the Housing Element update.

- **July 2015:** City Council and Planning Commission conducted joint study session to review the approach for developing zoning code standards and design guidelines associated with potential viable housing sites. A review of how the community would be engaged in the second phase of outreach was also presented
- **May 2015:** Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping meeting
- **September 2015:** Submitted updated draft plan to State addressing their review comments
- **October 2015:** HCD reports finding of compliance (HCD review letter link [here](#))
- **November 2015:** Public input on draft design guidelines and proposed changes to the zoning code
- **January 2015:** City staff finalizes Draft EIR

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO AT HOME IN ENCINITAS

People live, work and play in different ways than previous generations. The Millennial generation — people born in the 1980s and 1990s — has been slower to buy single-family homes than earlier generations. There are varying reasons for this situation, including rising student debt, cost of housing and new challenges in securing a mortgage for first-time homeowners. They also often want different things in housing and neighborhoods than are available today. They are looking for pedestrian and bike-friendly communities with services and amenities nearby. As a result, for this younger generation, multifamily housing near retail locations is in greater demand than single family homes. At the same time, the Baby Boomer generation is aging and this has impacts on the housing market. The senior citizen population in Encinitas is projected to nearly double by 2035. Many senior citizens will seek to downsize and move into smaller homes in urban areas with easily accessible services, transportation, and amenities.

The provisions of affordable housing in California, and the San Diego area in particular, have been a challenge during both economic boom and bust years. High demand for housing often pushes prices out of reach for low and moderate income households. Encinitas, particularly, is facing a challenge when it comes to our local housing and we need your input to create a plan that includes community supported solutions. Housing costs in Encinitas continue to climb, while the availability and variety of that housing continues to drop. Simply put, Encinitas is evolving and we need to create more housing options that meet our community's growing and changing needs. To make this happen, we need to update our local plan and strategy that addresses future housing opportunities.

Local and state governments have a responsibility to facilitate the improvement, preservation, and development of housing. In carrying out this need each local government must consider community goals set forth in General Plans, which contribute to the region's housing requirements. To assure counties and cities establish and attain these goals, the state requires that local governments prepare, implement and amend as necessary, a Housing Element. The content and process by which a Housing Element is prepared is prescribed in state law, which requires local governments to adequately plan for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the City. The element addresses in greater detail, the identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, programs strategies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. Under State Housing Element Law, the Housing Element must include an adequate discussion and analysis of the six housing-related categories, which are summarized below.

- *Adequate Sites Inventory [Government Code, Sections 65583(a)3 & 65583(c)1]*
A local agency must identify actions that will be taken to make sites available during the planning period with appropriate zoning and development standards and with services/facilities to accommodate the city's share of regional housing need for each income level. Government Code, Section 65583.2(c) establishes the minimum densities

needed to potentially provide housing unit for low- and very low-income households (i.e. 20 units per acre density in rural/suburban areas and 30 units per acre in regional metropolitan areas.

- *Affordable Housing [Government Code, Sections 65583(a)7 & 65583(c)2]*
Must show how it intends to assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of extremely low, very low, low-, and moderate-income households.
- *Mitigation of Constraints [Government Code, Sections 65583(a)5 & 65583(c)3]*
Address, and where appropriate and legally possible, remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing, including housing for all income levels and housing for persons with disabilities.
- *Conservation [Government Code, Section 65583(c)4]*
Must conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock.
- *Equal Housing Opportunities [Government Code, Section 65583(c)5]*
Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, family status, or disability.
- *At-Risk Housing [Government Code, Section 65583(a)9]*
Must preserve for lower income households the assisted housing developments that are at risk of becoming homeless.

Housing Needs

The State Department of Finance helps define and allocates a region's share of the anticipated statewide housing needs based on the regional population forecasts used in preparing Regional Transportation Plans (RTP), vacancy rates, and persons per household among other factors. These housing unit allocations are referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The final RHNA plan for the City and other jurisdictions within San Diego County was adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Board of Directors on October 28, 2011, and covers the 2013 to 2021 Housing Element planning period. This planning period is commonly known as the 5th Housing Element Cycle.

The RHNA for the 5th Cycle is final and the City cannot negotiate to lower these numbers. However, the City can look at its current General Plan, as well as its other existing land use programs and policies, to determine how much of the RHNA can be accounted for without needing to change these plans. The overall allocation process reflects a need for cooperation between both public and private sectors to expand housing opportunities which will allow for new housing development that benefits everyone in the community, such as a greater mix of housing types and choices. It allows local governments to maintain control over where and what type of development should occur in their communities, while allowing the private sector to meet market demand. Government Code Section 65589 provides that there is no requirement

that a city must spend revenue to build potential housing identified in the Housing Element. Private property owners will decide whether to build housing. As is the case today, a small amount of the housing may be subsidized to assist a portion of those in need of assistance. The City's Housing Plan Update will consider additional ways to promote new housing at more attainable prices.

SECTION 2: PLANNING PROCESS RESTART – KICKING OFF AT HOME IN ENCINITAS

From 2008 to 2011, the City of Encinitas was preparing a comprehensive update to the General Plan. Through the course of developing the update, it was pretty clear that the public was going to be most interested in discussing issues and opportunities relating land use and housing matters. Also, the SANDAG Board of Directors adopted the final RHNA Plan for the 5th cycle on October 28, 2011. Because of the significant amount of interest in the subject, Council wanted to ensure maximum and meaningful input opportunities and suggested a focus update to the Housing Element.

As part of the "Restart" effort, in March 2012 the City Council directed that a housing exercise be provided to the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC); the Element Review Advisory Committee ERAC); and the Planning Commission (PC); as well as the community through a series of public workshops. The purpose of the housing exercise(s) was to engage in a dialogue with different groups, get feedback on the opportunities and constraints facing the City, and to consider the appropriate location of higher density housing and ways in which to accomplish it in compliance with State and regional requirements. The ERAC, GPAC and Planning Commission (PC) worked independently to identify where future housing development may be located and developed methodologies on how to distribute multi-family housing in the City. The applied strategies and policy recommendations that each group developed were incorporated into a series of Housing Policy Reports, representing each group's feedback to City Council. The results set forth in the Housing Policy Reports were presented individually by a representative(s) of each group to City Council in February 2013.

An extended public outreach effort was also included as part of the Restart, where the public was asked to consider the appropriate location of higher density housing within the community. This included an extensive educational/question and answer program at five open houses (one in each community), which highlighted Housing Element law requirements and issues associated with addressing regional housing needs. Two public workshops were held, which provided an opportunity for public input through a mapping exercise and tools to accomplish housing survey, similar to those conducted by the GPAC, ERAC and PC. The workshop exercise/survey allowed participants to identify where and how they think appropriate land use changes should occur in order to accommodate housing. The results of the public workshops were presented to Council on September 19, 2012.

The work of the GPAC, ERAC and PC as well as the public open houses and citywide workshops were well attended and the level of participation was significant. A total of 374 people signed in at the open house events and a total of 584 folks signed in at the citywide workshops. Please note that some people attended and chose not to sign-in. Overall, as part of the Council Directed restart, a total of 30 meetings were conducted, consisting of over 60 hours of interaction with stakeholders and community members. The goal of this outreach was let it up to the community develop a framework to identify general areas for potential rezone.

Following the presentations of the restart results, staff analyzed the documents to try to find commonalities or areas of agreement. What was found was that there are a variety of tools that can be utilized to plan for affordable housing sites; some of the most commonly agreed upon strategies/ tools are noted below.

- Near transit centers
- Near commercial areas
- Utilize mixed-use
- Context sensitive locations

There was also general agreement that the allocation of affordable housing units should NOT be placed in any single community, but distributed so that each community takes a reasonable share. Coincidentally, these findings are consistent with Housing Element Policy 1.4 of the current Housing Element, which requires that low and moderate-income households not be concentrated in any single community or single area of the City. On July 17, 2013, the City Council concurred that the City's share of future housing needs should not be concentrated in any single community or single area of the City. Rather, a general dispersed approach is the appropriate methodology for affordable housing unit distribution in the City. The Council also confirmed that flexibility should be built into the dispersion/allocation process to account for best planning practices.

Identifying the ideal location of affordable housing sites is not an exact science; however, there are a number of factors to consider when identifying sites that could best accommodate affordable housing units. Some of the "best professional planning concepts" to consider are listed below

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- Livability: A mixture of uses in close proximity, including schools, retail, public amenities and civic uses.
- Jobs/ Housing: Bring housing and workforces together. Workers find it difficult to find affordable housing near their place of employment; an ideal balance would allow people to go to work without having to commute long distances.
- Transit Access: Improved access to transit can reduce transportation costs for working families as well as mitigate the negative impacts of automobile travel on the environment and the economy.
- Sustainable Places: Avoid environmentally sensitive areas, and minimize impacts to other valued lands.
- Cohesive Communities: Well-integrated projects that can fit within an existing neighborhood and built environment.
- Location Efficiency: Take advantage of existing public services and infrastructure.

- **Cost Effectiveness:** Minimal site preparatory work (clearing of land) with few constraints reducing overall construction costs. Greater economics at the cost/unit level leads to better financing options for affordable housing developers.

While the different groups of the Restart process recorded different site preferences, there were some similarities. When reconciling the Restart consensus map against best practices, while not a perfect match, commonalities were clearly apparent and generally showed locations within all five communities. City staff also reached out to local non-profit and affordable housing developers to learn what proximity criteria is typically used with siting new prospective development opportunities. Possible sites within these areas were assessed for suitability (i.e. if they could reasonably accommodate market-rate or affordable housing projects in the near term). This was done by looking for undeveloped (vacant) parcels and areas that could possibly be redeveloped (i.e. not recently constructed). Based on the search parameters, staff identified a series of potential candidate sites for rezoning, which could be suitable for affordable housing projects.

The list of potential sites was presented to City Council at a meeting on September 25, 2013. The total acreage of these sites represented approximately two percent of the City's total land; however, it was reported to Council that significantly less than that amount of land needed to be tied to a zone change program to accommodate remaining RHNA needs. It was acknowledged, also, that the exact number of sites needed to rezone to meet RHNA obligations would only be learned after official consultations with HCD.

This would become the basis for *At Home in Encinitas*, where a significant amount of public awareness and outreach would be devoted in 2014 and 2015 to develop an updated housing plan. This presented an opportunity to ask the City residents, businesses, and other community members to identify which specific sites within these areas could reasonably accommodate each community's dispersed approach. The overall engagement effort could be broken into two parts, which are summarized in Sections 3 and 4 of this document.

- *Step 1: Identify the type and location of future housing in Encinitas*
This includes an update to the Housing Element and mapping strategies to meet State Housing Element law; and
- *Step 2: Create design standards for future projects so that the community can be confident that they will fit in with the existing neighborhoods*
This includes the development of zoning standards and design guidelines to support the Housing Element update.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PHASE 1 OVERVIEW.

On September 17, 2014, the City Council considered and endorsed staff's Public Participation Plan and associated timeline to involve the community At Home in Encinitas. In addition to the actions listed in the Public Participation Plan, the process also included a series of Community Dialogue Sessions (CDS) that provided the public with information on important topics such as the need for future housing, how future housing can respond to existing character, and where future housing could be located within the City. The draft materials for the CDS events presented to City Council and Planning Commission on September 30, 2014, during a joint meeting. Staff walked the Council and Commissioners through the planned format of these CDS events, describing the information outlined on the material boards. The Council and Commissioners provided feedback and suggested changes to the material and endorsed the overall approach.

Information about housing sites and types was presented with materials that included visual representations to enhance public understanding. Efforts were also made to seek feedback on community character, what characteristics stakeholders want to preserve, and what characteristics stakeholders want to introduce. All public input on the Housing Plan update was collected through e-Town Hall, the City's online engagement tool (a small amount of input was also received via the project email mailbox and written correspondence). The five CDS events during November 2014, one in each of Encinitas' five communities (as well as "make-up" sessions at City Hall from December 1-5, 2014), to provide information about the Housing Plan update and facilitate input on the plan. Participants who attended the meetings were able to learn about housing and provide their input via e-Town Hall at the meeting, or they could do it at a time and location that was convenient to them.

To ensure robust attendance at the CDS events and participation in the e-Town Hall activity, City staff engaged in a far-reaching effort to promote the issue to the public using a variety of methods to reach many audiences.

- The first step in this effort was to create a recognizable name and graphic identity to help audiences easily identify materials associated with the effort. The name "*At Home in Encinitas*" was selected. Using this name and graphic identity, a number of materials were created.
- An e-newsletter explaining the need for a Housing Plan update and including information about how to provide input was sent to all subscribers to the City's various e-news lists (approximately 8,000 subscribers). A series of additional e-blasts with links to e-Town Hall were sent to these same subscribers.
- In addition, regular e-blasts were sent to all e-Town Hall registrants (which grew to include 967 registrants over the course of the outreach process) to ensure that they were made aware about the opportunities to provide input on the Housing Plan. Regular e-blasts were also sent to all other lists to encourage participation.

- A total of 21,343 postcards direct mail postcards were distributed and more than 13,500 door hangers were distributed over a five-day period in early November 2014.
- Print advertisements were placed in the Coast News and the Encinitas Advocate in October and November. Online advertisements with a direct link to e-Town Hall ran on the Encinitas Advocate and Seaside Courier websites throughout the month of November.
- All media coverage, as well as notices were shared on the City's social media channels. At this point in the *At Home in Encinitas* planning process, the City had 488 followers on Twitter, 4,330 followers on Facebook, and 231 followers on Instagram.

Community Dialogue Sessions, Phase 1 Results Summary

City staff hosted five CDS events in November 2014 to share information about why a Housing Element update is needed, potential sites for housing in each community, and housing types. The sessions were designed to make it convenient for the public to participate. They were scheduled in each of the five communities in Encinitas, and the sessions lasted from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., allowing the public to attend at whatever time was convenient for their schedule. For those who could not attend one of the sessions in November, "make-up" CDS events were held at City Hall during business hours from December 1-5, 2014. Staff was present at each of these sessions to help answer questions and walk people through the information provided. The information was presented at six stations with visually engaging displays to help the public easily comprehend the material.

- *Station 1: Why we need to plan for future housing*
- *Station 2: How future housing responds to existing character in each community*
- *Station 3: How housing types can be affordable and compatible*
- *Station 4: How future development fits into our communities*
- *Station 5: Decide where future housing should be located*
- *Station 6: We want your input*

All input was recorded through e-Town Hall, the City's online engagement tool. This tool has helped the City significantly increase public participation by providing a convenient and easy way for people to share their opinions. A total of 1,059 visited the At Home in Encinitas topic on e-Town Hall during the public input period of November 10 through December 5, 2014. Of those, 479 participants left 1,325 comments and suggestions about future housing sites in Encinitas.

Participants on e-Town Hall were provided different housing strategies on which to provide their opinion and feedback on where future housing and types of housing should be located within a particular community: The “Ready-Made” and “Build-Your-Own” strategy. Upon review of the submitted feedback and information, clear themes emerged to guide preparing the Housing Element Update, along with insights into other issues and aspirations participants have beyond housing to further strengthen the quality of life residents and businesses enjoy in Encinitas. When looking at the results, distinct preferred land use and design character Housing Strategy Maps emerged.

- *Ready Made Housing Strategy Map*

Participants who selected the “Ready-Made” strategy overwhelmingly supported the “Mixed Use Places” housing strategy. The sites selected under this strategy are generally focused along the 101 Highway corridor, with sites identified along Encinitas Boulevard at key activity centers (El Camino Real and Rancho Santa Fe Road).

- *Build Your Own Housing Strategy Map*

For this strategy, staff identified the top ranked viable housing sites yielding at least the target number of housing units for each community, along with the top ranked housing types for each site. Participants who utilized this strategy identified different sites than those offered in the “Ready-Made” strategy, but the housing type overwhelmingly preferred was two- and three-story mixed use housing. The preferred sites selected in this option favored the larger sites generally located along Encinitas Boulevard near Quail Gardens and sites located off of El Camino Real, along Coast Highway 101 in Leucadia, Santa Fe Avenue in Cardiff, and Manchester Avenue in Olivenhain.

On February 5, 2015, the Encinitas City Council voted unanimously to move three draft Housing Plan Update maps forward for environmental review. This is an important step forward in the process to update Encinitas’ Housing Plan to address our community’s housing needs. After many months of outreach and receiving public input, City Council reviewed the draft Housing Plan in March and directed that the draft plan be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Report and submitted to the State Housing & Community Development Department for review. The three maps moving forward in the process are “Mixed-Use Places,” a “Build Your Own” map compiled with suggestions made by members of the public, and “Modified Mixed-Use Places,” created with input from the Council after hearing public testimony. Each of these maps identifies potential future housing sites in each of Encinitas’ five communities that would meet projected housing needs.

Relevant Commission or Council Meetings/Hearings:

July 17, 2013 City Council meeting – Review of “housing needs” and determination of a general dispersed approach for any associated rezoning in the City.

September 25, 2014 City Council meeting – Confirmation of the approach to identify candidate sites for rezoning and direction to staff to implement a more innovative way to solicit feedback from each community.

January 15, 2014 City Council meeting - At this public hearing, Council adopted a timeline to present the entire Housing Element Update and associated documents and environmental analysis for voter decision in the 2016 General Election.

September 17, 2014 City Council meeting - At this public meeting, Council endorsed the project schedule and approach to inform and engage the public as the City updates its future housing policies.

September 30, 2014 Joint Session meeting - Joint City Council and Planning Commission to review outreach and display material that will be utilized throughout the upcoming engagement period.

January 21, 2015 City Council meeting - Review of the process that was conducted to engage the public and seek their input on the Housing Element update.

February 3, 2015 Joint City Session meeting – City Council and Planning Commission review of the results from Phase 1 of outreach. At this joint session meeting, City Council and Planning Commission members received a presentation and report that described the results, including an analysis of what this input suggests for moving forward with updating the Housing Element. Council was provided a Public Participation Activities and Results Report.

March 11, 2015 Joint Session meeting - City Council and Planning Commission review of the preliminary draft Housing Plan.

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PHASE 2 OVERVIEW.

After the City Council accepted the three housing strategy maps for further study, City staff has been working on next steps to move *At Home in Encinitas*, the Housing Plan Update, forward. These next steps involved initiating the environmental review process, developing draft design guidelines and proposed zoning code changes, and reaching out to the public to seek their input on these efforts.

- In spring 2015, the environmental review process was initiated with a Scoping Meeting for the Environmental Impact Report. This meeting (and the 30-day Scoping period) provided the public with the opportunity to comment on issues that they felt should be studied during the environmental review.
- In fall 2015, a new website for *At Home in Encinitas* was launched to provide easily accessible information about *At Home in Encinitas* for the public, including the three proposed mapping strategies, key documents, information about upcoming opportunities for public input, and a way to share comments with staff online.
- In November 2015, draft design guidelines and proposed zoning code changes were presented to the public for review and comment. The foundation for these standards and guidelines are in the significant community engagement process in fall 2014; the subsequent City Council direction, with input of the Planning Commission, in winter and spring 2015; and State housing element law. The zoning standards and design guidelines were prepared to accommodate needed housing in a manner that reflects community-supported solutions.

Key milestones and opportunities to participate was made available in a variety of ways. In addition to putting everything on the website, a series of Community Dialogue Sessions were held, one in each of the five communities. Community Dialogue Sessions and the availability of the draft design guidelines and proposed zoning code changes online were publicized in a number of ways:

- E-newsletters were sent in September, October, and November 2015 to all members of the public that had participated in the first phase of outreach, and our interested parties list.
- City staff made presentations to community groups and attended events to share information about upcoming Community Dialogue Sessions and information available online. Over 40 briefings and presentations were made throughout fall/winter 2015.
- An advertisement ran online from mid-October through mid-November on the *Encinitas Advocate* website to promote the Community Dialogue Sessions.

- Flyers promoting the Community Dialogue Sessions and website were distributed to parents through the Cardiff School District and Encinitas Union School District. The San Dieguito Union High School District provided a link to information on their website and social media.
- The Community Dialogue Sessions and website were promoted through Encinitas' social media channels.

Community Dialogue Sessions, Phase 2 Results Summary

In the month of November 2015, City staff conducted five Community Dialogue Sessions (CDS), one in each community. Overall, the five CDS events were well attended, with approximately 268 total community members attending. During these events, the public could view information and speak with staff at five different workstations that included information about housing needs and housing types, proposed strategies for meeting housing needs, and draft design guidelines and proposed zoning code changes that will help ensure that future development is compatible with existing communities. Each station included a series of easy-to-read boards with information about these topics, including background information about the planning process and details on the draft zoning standards and design guidelines.

- *Station 1: Inform*
Explains why we need to plan for future housing, what housing options are available, and how new development can fit in existing neighborhoods.
- *Station 2: Engage*
Provides a summary of the process and outcomes of the previous housing plan outreach efforts.
- *Station 3: Implement*
Identifies how new housing and mixed use sites would be regulated through Zoning Standards, which define how a property may be used and developed.
- *Station 4: Quality*
Describes how the look and feel of new housing and mixed use places are addressed with design guidelines, ensuring quality and compatibility.
- *Station 5: Next Steps*
Your voice counts! Share your thoughts about the draft Zoning Standards and the draft Design Guidelines.

Upon entering the CDS event, attendees were asked to sign-in (optional) and were provided a "Passport." The Passport served as a guide to the CDS event, as well as a tool for attendees to provide feedback on the proposed zoning standards and design guidelines. The passport asked the participant to rank the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the approach.

Four statements were posed, and participants were asked to rank – on a scale of 1 to 5 – how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. They were also provided an opportunity to share additional comments on the passport. A total of 130 CDS Passports were collected.

Reactions to the overall approach and the *At Home in Encinitas* meeting materials were generally mixed in passport feedback, with respondents expressing slightly more overall support. About 42 percent of the responses ranked the overall approach favorably or somewhat favorably. Only 26 percent of the responses specified general disagreement with the overall approach. A summary of the results was provided to the Planning Commission at their January 7, 2016 meeting.

Relevant Commission or Council Meetings/Hearings:

July 8, 2016 Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting – Review the approach for developing new zoning standards and design guidelines and how the community will be engaged in the second phase of outreach.

November 2, 2016 Planning Commission meeting – Introduction to the draft zoning standards and design guidelines

January 7, 2016 Planning Commission meeting – *At Home in Encinitas*, Phase 2 results