

HOUSING PLAN



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HOUSING PLAN



This eight-year housing plan sets forth a comprehensive strategy and program of actions to address housing issues identified within the participating jurisdictions in Fresno County. The first section contains the shared goals and policies that the County of Fresno and the cities of Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger, and Selma will all strive to achieve. Appendix 1 contains the specific programs to be implemented by each of the jurisdictions over the eight-year planning period.

GOALS AND POLICIES

1. New Housing Development

Every jurisdiction in Fresno County must plan to accommodate its agreed upon fair share of the regional housing needs. As a region, the total housing needed over the 2023-2031 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) projection period is 58,298 units. For the jurisdictions participating in the Multijurisdictional Housing Element, the total RHNA is 49,321 units. This includes 12,666 very low-income units, 7,595 low-income units, 7,599 moderate-income units, and 21,462 above moderate-income units. This housing element reflects the shared responsibility among the cities and the unincorporated County to accommodate the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

Goal 1 **Facilitate and encourage the provision of a range of housing types to meet the diverse needs of residents.**

Policy 1.1 Provide adequate sites for new housing development through appropriate planned land use designations, zoning, and development standards to accommodate the regional housing needs for the 2023-2031 planning period.

Policy 1.2 Facilitate development of new housing for all economic segments of the community, including extremely low, very low-, low-, moderate-, and above moderate-income households.

Policy 1.3 Continue to direct new growth to urban areas in order to protect natural resources.

Policy 1.4 Promote balanced and orderly growth to minimize unnecessary development costs adding to the cost of housing.

Policy 1.5 Encourage infill housing development on vacant, by-passed, and underutilized lots within existing developed areas where essential public infrastructure is available.

Policy 1.6 Promote development of higher-density housing, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development in areas located along major transportation corridors and transit routes and served by the necessary infrastructure.

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- Policy 1.7** Ensure the adequate provision of water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, public facilities, and other infrastructure necessary to serve new housing.
- Policy 1.8** Approve new housing in accordance with design standards that will ensure the safety, quality, integrity, and attractiveness of each housing unit.
- Policy 1.9** Encourage development around employment centers that provides the opportunity for local residents to live and work in the same community by balancing job opportunities with housing types.
- Policy 1.10** Encourage developers and contractors to evaluate hiring local labor, hiring from, or contributing to apprenticeship programs, increasing resources for labor compliance and providing living wages.

2. Affordable Housing

The shortage of affordable housing is an issue facing most communities in California. In Fresno County, nearly half of all households are considered “cost burdened,” paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. For lower-income households, this rate is even higher – nearly three-quarters of lower-income households are cost-burdened. Building affordable housing has become even more challenging after the State eliminated redevelopment agencies, depriving jurisdictions of the largest source of local funding for affordable housing. At the same time, State and Federal funding for affordable housing has also been reduced. While the region faces many challenges in meeting their housing needs for lower-income residents, there are several actions jurisdictions can take to facilitate affordable housing.

Goal 2 Encourage and facilitate the development of affordable housing.

- Policy 2.1** Support innovative public, private, and nonprofit efforts in the development of affordable housing, particularly for the special needs groups.
- Policy 2.2** Continue to support the efforts of the Fresno Housing Authority in its administration of Section 8 certificates and vouchers, and the development of affordable housing throughout the County.
- Policy 2.3** Encourage development of affordable housing through the use of development incentives, such as the Density Bonus Ordinance, fee waivers or deferrals, and expedited processing.
- Policy 2.4** Provide technical and financial assistance, where feasible, to developers, nonprofit organizations, or other qualified private sector interests in the application and development of projects for Federal and State financing.
- Policy 2.5** Pursue grant funding to subsidize the development of affordable housing for low- and very low and extremely low income households through new construction, acquisition, and/or rehabilitation.
- Policy 2.6** Encourage the development of second dwelling units to provide additional affordable housing opportunities.

- Policy 2.7** Work to ensure that local policies and standards do not act to constrain the production of affordable housing units.
- Policy 2.8** Expand homeownership opportunities to lower- and moderate-income households through downpayment assistance and other homeownership programs.
- Policy 2.9** Encourage sweat equity programs as a means for increasing homeownership opportunities for lower-income residents.

3. Housing and Neighborhood Conservation

The existing affordable housing stock is a valuable resource and conserving and improving the existing affordable housing stock is a cost-effective way to address lower-income housing needs. Actions are needed to monitor the status of these units and work with non-profits and the private sector to preserve affordable housing. In addition, improvements are needed to maintain existing ownership housing and the quality of residential neighborhoods.

Goal 3 **Improve and maintain the quality of housing and residential neighborhoods.**

- Policy 3.1** Preserve the character, scale, and quality of established residential neighborhoods by protecting them from the encroachment of incompatible or potentially disruptive land uses and/or activities.
- Policy 3.2** Assist low income homeowners and owners of affordable rental properties in maintaining and improving residential properties through a variety of housing rehabilitation assistance programs.
- Policy 3.3** Continue code enforcement efforts to work with property owners to preserve the existing housing stock.
- Policy 3.4** Encourage and facilitate the improvement or replacement of unsafe, substandard dwellings that cannot be economically repaired.
- Policy 3.5** Invest in public service facilities (streets, curb, gutter, drainage and utilities) to encourage increased private market investment in declining or deteriorating neighborhoods.
- Policy 3.6** Preserve assisted rental housing for long-term occupancy by low- and moderate-income households.

4. Special Needs Housing

Within the general population there are several groups of people who have special housing needs. These special needs can make it difficult for members of these groups to locate suitable housing. Special needs groups include persons experiencing homelessness; single-parent households; seniors; persons with disabilities including developmental disabilities; farmworkers; and large households.

- Goal 4** **Provide a range of housing types and services to meet the needs of individuals and households with special needs.**
- Policy 4.1** Encourage public and private entity involvement early and often through the design, construction, and rehabilitation of housing that incorporates facilities and services for households with special needs.
- Policy 4.2** Assist in local and regional efforts to secure funding for development and maintenance of housing designed for special needs populations such as the senior and persons with disabilities.
- Policy 4.3** Support the use of available Federal, State, and local resources to provide and enhance housing opportunities for farm workers.
- Policy 4.4** Encourage development of affordable housing units to accommodate large households (three and four bedroom).
- Policy 4.5** Ensure equal access to housing by providing reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities.
- Policy 4.6** Working in partnership with the other jurisdictions and the private/non-profit sectors in Fresno County, facilitate the provision of housing and services for persons experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of becoming homeless.

5. Fair and Equal Housing Opportunities

Federal and State laws ensure all persons, regardless of their status, have equal opportunities to rent or purchase housing without discrimination. Mediating tenant/landlord disputes, investigating complaints of discrimination, providing education services, and improving public awareness are all part of a comprehensive program.

- Goal 5** **Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (Government Code Section (65583(C)(C)(5) & (10) by securing safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for all members of the community regardless of race, sex, or other factors.**
- Policy 5.1** Collaborate with state and federal agencies and local fair housing agencies to enforce fair housing laws addressing discrimination in the building, financing, selling or renting of housing based on race, religion, family status, national origin, disability, or other protected class.
- Policy 5.2** Collaborate with local and regional agencies to provide multilingual fair housing education services and regional efforts to affirmatively further fair housing.
- Policy 5.3** Work with federal, state, local and private entities to identify funding, financing and assistance programs throughout the planning period.

6. Energy Conservation and Sustainable Development

High energy costs have particularly detrimental effects on low-income households that do not have enough income or cash reserves to absorb cost increases and must choose between basic needs such as shelter, food, and energy. While new construction can help achieve energy conservation goals, more than half of the housing stock in the region was built before California's energy code was adopted in the 1980s. Consequently, the existing building stock offers considerable opportunity for cost-effective energy efficiency retrofits to decrease energy consumption.

Goal 6 **Encourage energy efficiency in all new and existing housing.**

Policy 6.1 Encourage the use of energy conserving techniques in the siting and design of new housing.

Policy 6.2 Actively implement and enforce all State energy conservation requirements for new residential construction.

Policy 6.3 Promote public awareness of the need for energy conservation.

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