



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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DATE: March 25, 2026

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

2025 GENERAL PLAN & HOUSING ELEMENT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego (County) is committed to meeting the housing needs of all residents. In compliance with State law, this Board item presents the 2025 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (GP APR), detailing the County's efforts to implement housing policies and track housing development within the County's unincorporated area. The State of California (State) requires all local governments, including the County, to adequately plan to meet the housing needs of everyone in the community, at all income levels. The County meets this requirement by adopting a housing plan, known as the Housing Element, as part of the County's General Plan. The General Plan serves as the County's blueprint for growth and development. Within the State's regulations for the General Plan, the County must plan for its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). This allocation reflects the amount of housing planned for in the unincorporated area within the County's land use jurisdiction between 2021 and 2029. To meet local housing needs, the County's Housing Element includes an implementation plan, with actions it has committed to, that will support housing development at all income levels.

The State requires all local governments to submit a GP APR each year. This report supports transparency and helps ensure the community's housing needs are met by informing decision makers about the impact of the County's programs and initiatives that facilitate the production of housing, especially affordable housing. The 2025 GP APR was prepared by Planning & Development Services (PDS) in collaboration with other County teams including Housing & Community Development Services (HCDS) and the Department of General Services (DGS). The report focuses on key data required to be submitted to the State (Attachment A). This includes details about the amount of housing being developed in the unincorporated area during the year, as well as details about the County's progress on implementing the actions listed in the Housing Element. Overall, the County has already exceeded its RHNA for permitting housing affordable for low, moderate, and above-moderate income households. However, the County is significantly behind with very-low income housing, with only 28% being met. At the current rate, the County will not have enough very low income housing to meet the 6th cycle RHNA by 2029. This report provides more details below on housing development in the unincorporated area.

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Government Code Section 65400 requires the GP APR to be provided to the Board of Supervisors in a public hearing to ensure transparency. Today's request is for the Board to accept the 2025 GP APR.

**RECOMMENDATIONS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

Planning & Development Services recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the proposed project is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project as defined in Section 15378(b)(5) of CEQA Guidelines.
2. Accept and file the 2025 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (Attachment A, on file with the Clerk of the Board).

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Annual reporting on the County's implementation of the General Plan and Housing Element increases transparency about the impact of the County's programs and initiatives on providing equitable solutions to local issues. The General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (GP APR) provides information on the County's efforts to meet the housing needs of individuals and families from all economic segments of the unincorporated communities, including those with very low incomes (households with up to 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI)) and low incomes (households with 51 percent to 80 percent of the AMI). These affordability levels are defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) based on surveys of local AMI and family size. The GP APR is an aggregate of land use planning and key housing data for the unincorporated county that can be used to inform policies and programs that improve outcomes related to equity, including those that increase access to affordable housing and improve conditions for people experiencing homelessness, low-income communities, and communities of color.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (GP APR) accounts for the County of San Diego's (County's) progress in implementing the goals, policies, and programs outlined in the General Plan and Housing Element. The GP APR is an aggregate of land use planning and key housing data for the unincorporated county that can be used to inform policies and programs that promote equity and environmental sustainability, as well as ensure the community's well-being. This effort supports the County's "Sustainability" strategic initiative to align the County's available resources with services that promote economic stability. The GP APR promotes economic stability by providing transparent data, equitable access to information, operational accountability, and enterprise-wide collaboration.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's recommendation for the Board to accept and file the 2025 General Plan Annual Progress Report (GP APR). There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

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BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (GP APR) documents the County of San Diego's (County's) implementation activities during the 2025 calendar year. County departments work collaboratively to assess progress toward General Plan implementation and to ensure that County actions advance General Plan goals and are compliant with State requirements. Housing implementation is reported in greater detail given the significance of housing as a key planning issue and priority for the Board, and enhanced State requirements for tracking and monitoring.

This year's GP APR includes new requirements from recently enacted State laws: tracking of housing in additional lower affordability categories of Acutely Low and Extremely Low; noting when sites have historic designations for applications for housing developments; and whether approved and disapproved projects are in high or low opportunity areas based on the State's criteria. In addition, the GP APR includes expanded details on the progress of implementation actions identified in the Housing Element.

The County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from 2021 through 2029 in the unincorporated area is 6,700 housing units. Housing affordability is measured using the federal Area Median Income (AMI) for households in the San Diego region, which in 2025 was \$130,800. Each affordability category reflects a percentage of the AMI. The report introduced two new income categories: Acutely Low- and Extremely Low-income, added by Assembly Bill (AB) 3039 in 2025. Previously, all units affordable to households earning under 50% of AMI were reported in the Very Low-income category. The addition of these two affordability categories was intended to require regions and local governments to develop targeted programs and strategies in their Housing Element that cater to the needs of Californians at the lowest end of the income spectrum, including people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. The new affordability categories were not included in the current 6th cycle RHNA, so the County will not have an assigned allocation for these categories until the 7th cycle RHNA. Table 1 shows the full list of affordability categories, along with how they are defined based on AMI and the County's overall 6,700 housing unit allocation.

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Table 1: County of San Diego 6th Cycle RHNA

Affordability Category	Income Percentage of AMI	RHNA
Acutely Low	15% or below	No allocation for 6 th cycle
Extremely Low	30% or below	No allocation for 6 th cycle
Very Low	50% or below	1,834 units
Low	80% or below	992 units
Moderate	120% or below	1,165 units
Above Moderate	Above 120%	2,709 units

The number of housing units that have been issued building permits (referred to as *permitted housing units*) is the metric used for tracking housing development progress. Once issued permits, these housing units can move forward with construction and are deemed completed they are ready for move-in upon passing the final inspection. As Table 2 notes, in 2025 there were 932 housing units that were issued building permits to start construction.

As of 2025, the County has met the allocations for Low, Moderate, and Above Moderate affordability categories. The only category that falls short of the County’s assigned allocation is the Very Low category, with only 28% of the goal being met so far after the fifth year of this RHNA cycle. Producing new housing in the Very Low-income category faces unique financial challenges and almost always relies on public subsidies, grants or other financial assistance to make developing Very Low-income housing feasible. The County will need to continue to increase affordable housing efforts over the next four years to make progress in meeting this goal.

In addition, 943 housing units were built and ready for move-in (referred to as *completed housing units*) in 2025. Homes that are issued building permits in a given year may not be fully built within the same calendar year.

As we look at housing in the unincorporated areas, we can see the trend of housing over the past 15 years. Generally, the number of homes permitted has been increasing since 2010. However, there is a slight decrease across the past several years. On the other hand, funding for affordable housing projects and changes in State law to make housing development easier may be contributing to an upward trend in certain types of housing, like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

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Table 2: Permitted Housing Units in Unincorporated Area (2021-2025) By Affordability Category

<i>Income Category</i>	<i>Extremely/ Very Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Above Moderate</i>	<i>Total Permitted Units</i>
<i>County RHNA</i>	1,834	992	1,165	2,709	6,700
<i>Permitted Housing Units for 6th Cycle</i>					
<i>2020 (Jul-Dec)</i>	12	27	169	193	401
<i>2021</i>	46	318	398	663	1,425
<i>2022</i>	132	181	235	963	1,511
<i>2023</i>	101	174	215	730	1,220
<i>2024</i>	149	285	224	430	1,088
<i>2025</i>	76	165	94	597	932
<i>Total Units</i>	516	1,150	1,335	3,576	6,577
<i>RHNA Progress</i>	28%	116%	115%	132%	98%

Note 1. RHNA = Regional Housing Needs Allocation

Note 2. Extremely Low housing units are combined with Very Low housing units, as a separate allocation for the Extremely Low affordability category has not been made for the current 6th cycle RHNA.

Note 3. A portion of the totals from 2020 was allowed to be counted towards the 6th cycle RHNA progress.

In addition to reporting permitted and completed housing units, the GP APR reports on the number of discretionary housing applications that were submitted and/or approved in 2025. All homes built in the unincorporated county require a building permit, while only some housing projects require discretionary review. Discretionary housing projects require a review process that ensures compliance with County policy and associated environmental regulations. The relevant approving authority (i.e., Director of the Planning & Development Services Department (PDS), Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors (Board)) ultimately considers whether to approve or deny discretionary project applications.

- A total of eight discretionary applications for housing projects were approved by the County in 2025, which proposed a total of 471 housing units.
- A total of 30 discretionary applications for housing projects were submitted to the County in 2025, which proposed a total of 489 housing units.

It is noted that the housing units associated with discretionary projects are considered “anticipated,” as projects, including the number of housing units may change over the course of the permitting process. Various factors at the local, state, and national levels may also impact whether and when a project is completed. Economic factors, like rising interest rates, material and labor costs, as well as fire and litigation risks and land costs (among other factors) may impact housing production in the unincorporated county, contributing to year-to-year shifts in housing production totals.

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Over the past several years, due to County initiatives and new State legislation, more housing projects are being processed ministerially (also referred to as “by right”). These ministerial processes, which are reviewed and approved based on objective criteria, allow for streamlined project review and ensure housing projects can be approved more efficiently, at lower cost. One of these State laws, Senate Bill (SB) 9, which went into effect in 2022, created a ministerial process to split single family properties into two parcels.

- In 2025, three SB 9 applications for lot splits were approved, which proposed a total of five anticipated housing units.
- Eight SB 9 applications for lot splits were submitted for an additional 15 anticipated housing units. In 2025, the County did not receive or approve any applications for the other State laws that allow for streamlined housing approvals.

Housing Element Implementation

Beyond tracking data on housing development, the GP APR also monitors the County’s implementation of actions outlined in the Housing Element Implementation Plan, which specifies the programs and initiatives to be completed during the current Housing Element cycle. In 2025, the County advanced multiple Housing Element implementation actions aimed at supporting housing development by removing systemic barriers to housing, diversifying homeownership opportunities, and supporting tenants and affordable housing. Throughout 2026, the County will continue developing programs to provide housing for all. Projects that will be coming to the Board this year include the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, Housing Unlocked, and the Sustainable Land Use Framework. Through all these projects and others, the County is engaging with stakeholders including environmental groups, housing advocates, and local developers.

Overall, the County is making progress on implementing the Housing Element and continues to permit housing in the unincorporated area. The County maintains capacity for housing development in the unincorporated area to sufficiently meet its share of regional housing needs. There continues to be a need to support housing development that is affordable to lower income residents and special needs populations including seniors and formerly homeless. Further details on the County’s goals and progress can be found in the full GP APR Report in Attachment A, “General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report.” Staff from HCDS will return to the Board for a housing workshop summer 2026 with updates on progress towards housing goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The 2025 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report (GP APR) is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project as defined in Section and 15378(b)(5) of CEQA Guidelines. While the GP APR identifies actions taken by the County of San Diego (County) to implement the General Plan, the GP APR itself will not result in a direct or indirect physical impact on the environment. Actions taken by the County to implement the General Plan undergo CEQA review when required.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2025 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report supports the Strategic Initiatives of Equity, Empower, and Community in the County of San Diego's (County's) 2026-2031 Strategic Plan by tracking the status and achievement of the programs and policies of the General Plan and Housing Element. Providing this update increases transparency and keeps the public informed about the impact of the County's programs and initiatives to provide equitable, sustainable solutions to local issues.

Respectfully submitted,



DAHVIA LYNCH

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Note: Due to the size of the attachments, the documents are available online through the Clerk of the Board's website at www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bosa.html.

Attachment A – 2025 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Progress Report