



To: Planning Commission

From: Ande Flower, Principal Planner; Lauren Hoerr, Associate Planner, EMC Planning Group

Date: March 15, 2022

Re: Introduction to Housing Element Update process & Preparation for Mapping Exercise

SUMMARY

This memorandum introduces the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update Process and provides context for the Belvedere Community Workshop on the evening of April 13th, 2021 (5 – 7 pm).

1. HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE - OVERVIEW

Why does Belvedere have to update plans for future housing in their General Plan?

The Housing Element of the General Plan is required by State law to include an inventory of land suitable and available for a target number of units for residential development. The Housing Element chapter of the General Plan must be updated every 8 years. The City of Belvedere doesn't build housing, but it is responsible for making sure that the zoning in place enables the capacity for the number of housing units allocated to the City (see question 3). The Housing Element chapter of the General Plan also includes programs and policies to incentivize construction of housing units at several affordability levels.

2. LEADING WITH EQUITY – BACKGROUND

Who will be part of the planning process, and why are people's stories important to the process?

The State adopted new legislation (AB 686), also known as Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), for this 6th Cycle Housing Element update process. This new law requires public agencies to examine existing and future policies, plans, programs, rules, practices, and related activities; and to create *meaningful actions* through policy to promote more inclusive communities. Meaningful actions can only be created through consistently prioritizing and incorporating inclusivity in every step of the Housing Element update process. This includes welcoming, listening to, and incorporating the feedback of a wide swath of regional community members—particularly those who may have not historically been able to or those who may not have felt comfortable contributing to policy development efforts.

3. REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION - RHNA

How many housing units are required to be planned to be built in Belvedere's future?

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) allocates specific numbers of needed housing unit goals to each county and municipality according to their detailed methodology. The total draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for Belvedere's existing and future housing need is 160 housing units, at varying levels of affordability: 49 very low-income units, 28 low-income units, 23 moderate-income units, and 60 above moderate-income units.

4. SITES INVENTORY - INTRODUCTION

What is a sites inventory for a Housing Element?

The purpose of the Housing Element's Site Inventory is to identify and analyze specific land (sites) that is available and suitable for residential development in order to determine the jurisdiction's capacity to

accommodate residential development and reconcile that capacity with the jurisdiction's RHNA (160 housing units). Sites are suitable for residential development if the City's regulations (zoning) allow enough residential development to accommodate the RHNA during the eight-year planning period (2023-2031). If there are not enough existing sites to accommodate the RHNA for each income category, the City must identify additional sites until there are enough sites.

With approximately 2,100 residents living in less than one square mile, the City expects that capacity for the 160 new housing units can be accommodated through past Housing Element sites as well as new locations and possibly policies that encourage housing types such as secondary units for existing single-family lots. Changes to the City's regulations (rezoning) and/or adopting programs and policies may be necessary to accommodate the full amount of housing needs allocated with RHNA.

5. PROJECT SCHEDULE AND KEY MILESTONES

How long will we be working on this update process?

The deadline for all Bay Area jurisdictions to submit a Council-adopted Housing Element update is January 2023. In order to meet that deadline, a series of milestone goals must first be reached. The sites inventory analysis is the first step in the process because it will help us understand what kind of environmental review may be necessary. Next, we will discuss policy options that relate the opportunity sites with incentives for housing construction at different levels of affordability options within this next eight-year cycle of the Housing Element update.

6. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

What is the best way for the public to stay informed of progress with this update process?

Belvedere's dedicated Housing Element website www.blueprintforbelvedere.com is a key resource for the community to learn about the Housing Element update process, find out about upcoming events, and participate in online engagement opportunities, such as surveys, polls, and the Balancing Act mapping tool. The website is available in English and Spanish. Residents can subscribe on the website to receive regular updates on the progress of and opportunities to contribute to this update of the Housing Element.

The website was launched at the beginning of February, with a corresponding email announcement sent to the City's News & Announcements listserv. The weekly Ark newspaper also highlighted the website launch. A postcard is in the process of being mailed to all Belvedere residents that promotes the Blueprint for Belvedere website and the upcoming Community Workshop.

NEXT STEPS

Our first Housing Element Community Workshop will take place via Zoom from 5:00 – 7:00 pm on Wednesday, April 13th, 2022. The focus of the Workshop will be providing an overview of the Housing Element update process for Belvedere, outlining optional strategies for the Belvedere community to approach the Sites Inventory, and showing the Balancing Act mapping tool that allows the public to create and contribute their own housing plan for Belvedere. We look forward to this opportunity to discover a shared vision to meet these state standards. Please share your ideas and impact this process!