



REVISED July 27, 2022

State Department of Housing and Community Development
C/O Land Use and Planning Unit
2020 W. El Camino Ave., Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Draft City of Menlo Park 2023-2031 Housing Element

Dear HCD:

We are pleased to submit the City of Menlo Park's draft Housing Element for the 2023-2031 planning period. As part of the Housing Element update, the City is also updating its Safety Element and preparing its first Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan.

Overview

The draft Housing Element updates the goals, policies and implementing programs contained in the City's current Housing Element (2015-2023 planning period) and other City policies and practices to address housing needs in the community. New for the 2023-2031 planning period is the emphasis on furthering fair housing. The overall focus of the Housing Element is to enhance community life, character, and vitality through the provision of adequate housing opportunities for people at all income levels. The following are some of the specific purposes of this Housing Element:

- Promote Equity;
- Maintain Quality of Life;
- Support Diversity of Population and Housing;
- Provide a Variety of Housing Opportunities;
- Comply with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA);
- Address Affordable Housing Needs;
- Address the Housing Needs of Special Needs Groups; and
- Remove Potential Constraints to Housing.

Since initiating efforts to update the Housing Element in May 2021, the project team has held seven community meetings; administered a citywide survey; facilitated numerous focus groups, individual interviews, and pop-up events; and presented key components of the Housing Element at public meetings with the Housing Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Circulation of Public Review Draft Housing Element

Pursuant to Government Code 65585(b)(1), the draft Housing Element was initially circulated/released for public review on May 11, 2022. The release of the draft Housing Element began a 30-day public comment period, which closed on June 10, 2022. During the public comment period, two public meetings were held (May 16, 2022 and June 6,

2022) to further promote the availability of the draft Housing Element and to provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission, Housing Commission, City Council, and the public to provide comments.

Review of Comments Received for Public Review Draft Housing Element

The start of the required 10-business day review period for the City to review/incorporate revisions to the draft Housing Element in response to comments received began on June 13, 2022 and concluded on June 24, 2022. With the intent to garner as much feedback as possible, the City continued to receive and consider comments for the draft Housing Element up through July 5, 2022. Over 100 written comments were submitted and collected by City staff between May 11 and July 5, 2022. These written comments are provided with this transmittal and have been considered along with the verbal comments provided at the May 16 and June 6, 2022, public meetings.

In consideration of all the comments received for the public review draft Housing Element, the major themes of the feedback are noted below, accompanied by a summary of how the City made revisions to the draft Housing Element in response to the feedback.

- **Removing Constraints on Development of Affordable Housing**
 - Programs have been refined to modify regulations in order to support the development of affordable housing development. (Programs H1.A, H4.A, and H4.D)
 - New Programs have been developed to make affordable housing development easier. (Programs H4.U and 4H.V)

- **Increasing Housing Equity**
 - Policy H1.3 was refined to seek funding for the development of transitional housing.
 - Program H5.C was refined to place greater emphasis on training/education regarding equity and past discriminatory practices.
 - Programs have been refined to place greater emphasis on inclusionary housing and anti-displacement. (Programs H2.E, H4.A, H4.B, and H4.D)

- **Support for Special Needs Populations**
 - Program H3.M was added for wheelchair visitability.
 - Program H4.D was refined to consider outlining development targets for special needs populations.

- **Increase coordination with Schools**
 - Policy H4.17 was added to increase coordination with developers and schools.

- **Increase opportunities for childcare facilities**
 - Program H2.F was added to increase allowance for childcare.

- **Development of former Flood School Site as an opportunity site**
 - Various comments were provided for this site. City Council direction for this site was to modify density of the site and remove it from the Affordable Housing Overlay in order to align with the proposal developed by

Ravenswood City School District.

- **Other comments**

- There were a number of comments that did not necessitate edits to the Housing Element. Some of the comments received pertained to the Safety and Environmental Justice Elements and will be addressed in those documents.

On behalf of the City of Menlo Park, thank you for the review of this draft Housing Element. We look forward to receiving your feedback. Should you have questions during the review, please do not hesitate reach out and contact Tom Smith, Principal Planner, at tasmith@menlopark.org or 650-330-6730.

The City of Menlo Park would like to respectfully request Hillary Prasad as our reviewer. Ms. Prasad previously participated in a virtual tour with the Menlo Park team and other 21 Elements meetings, and is likely the most familiar with the Menlo Park Housing Element update.

Sincerely,

Deanna Chow
Assistant Community Development Director