

# SUTTER COUNTY HOUSING ELEMENT

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUMMARY

MARCH 2021

### Overview

The County of Sutter is currently conducting its 6th Cycle Housing Element Update for the 2021 – 2029 Planning Period. As part of the community engagement effort, County staff and the consulting team, Ascent, hosted a virtual stakeholder roundtable discussion to gather input from various stakeholders, including the building industry, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, and public agencies, on key housing issues. The virtual stakeholder roundtable discussion was held using Zoom on January 27, 2021 at 2:00 pm. Stakeholders were invited to the meeting through an email notification as well as targeted phone calls.

In addition to the stakeholder roundtable discussion, County staff and the consulting team facilitated a virtual community workshop to inform the public of the Housing Element Update and to gather input on strategies to promote housing production in the County. The community workshop was held using Zoom on January 27, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The public was notified of the community workshop through the County website and stakeholders invited to the roundtable discussion were encouraged to spread the word. The community workshop was also recorded and posted to the County website along with a survey. The survey was available on the County website from February 1, 2021 through March 2, 2021. No survey responses were received.

Both meetings began with a brief presentation providing background on the housing element process and housing-related information for Sutter County. During the stakeholder roundtable, the consulting team facilitated a discussion asking participants for input on housing in Sutter County. The following questions were asked to prompt the discussion:

1. What are the biggest housing issues facing Sutter County?
2. What are some effective strategies to address those issues?
3. What are some effective strategies you've seen work in other similar jurisdictions?
4. What efforts are already happening that are effective but may need more support?
5. How can the County support housing?

The community workshop presentation included polling questions asking where participants lived, if they owned or rented their home, what housing issues they experience, and which housing issue the County and other partner agencies should focus resources on.

The feedback received from each meeting will be incorporated into the Housing Element Update and will be used to guide new policies and programs for housing in Sutter County. Participants have been added to the project interest list and will be included on publicity efforts and project updates.

### Feedback Summary

The following is a summary of the feedback provided by participants:

**Impact Fees.** Participants voiced the importance of streamlining the permitting process to encourage affordable housing rather than increasing inclusionary housing fees. In addition, converting the County's impact fees to a square foot-based system was also discussed. Participants shared that other jurisdictions have changed their fee structure to be based on the size of the unit in order to reduce fees on smaller units.

**Funding for Affordable Housing.** One participant suggested allocating general fund dollars to affordable housing development. The participant expressed that this was an effective strategy used in another jurisdiction. Another participant suggested establishing a community investment fund that would provide funding dedicated for affordable housing. A participant representing the Alta California Regional Center encouraged the use of gap funding and collaboration with Alta California Regional Center to provide multifamily affordable housing, specifically for persons with disabilities. Participants agreed that funding is the largest barrier to building affordable housing.

**Accessory Dwelling Units.** Participants supported the use of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to meet the affordable housing need and suggested the County consider preparing pre-approved plans for ADUs, providing financial support for ADU construction, and removing design standards that may constrain ADU development. County staff advised that grant funding has been received to prepare pre-approved plans for ADUs, that the County does not require design review for ADUs, and that the County has removed parking requirements for ADUs.

**Zoning Changes.** Participants suggested that the County contact property owners of commercial land that has not been developed, to see if property owners are interested in redesignating and rezoning land for multifamily residential uses. Participants also suggested that the County consider a zoning amendment that would allow permanent housing on land owned by religious or faith-based institutions. County Staff advised that supportive and temporary housing is already permitted in conjunction with a religious or faith-based use.

**Sutter Pointe Specific Plan.** A participant representing the Regional Housing Authority expressed interest in developing affordable housing within the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan. County Staff advised that, in order to meet the affordable housing requirement, the Lakeside at Sutter Pointe development dedicated 11 acres of land to the County for affordable housing. The representative from the Regional Housing Authority encouraged the County to collaborate with them in order to develop affordable housing in the plan area. The representative also voiced the importance of County support in its efforts to request fee waivers or deferrals from special districts (e.g., school, water, sewer) for affordable housing development.