



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Planning and Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: June 24, 2025
Placement: Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time: 25 minutes
Continued Item: Yes
If Yes, date from: May 20, 2025
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Director(s): Lisa Plowman, Director
Contact: Alex Tuttle, Deputy Director, Long Range Planning Division
SUBJECT: Emergency Shelters Zoning Ordinance Amendments

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors (Board) consider the recommendations of the County Planning Commission and approve Case Nos. 24ORD-00021 and 24ORD-00022 to comply with new State laws and implement Program 9 of Chapter 5 of the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (HEU).

The Board's action should include the following:

- a) Make the required findings for approval, including CEQA findings, for the Emergency Shelters Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Case Nos. 24ORD-00021 and 24ORD-00022 (Attachment A);
- b) Determine that the ordinance amendments (Case Nos. 24ORD-00021 and 24ORD-00022) are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15265 (Attachment B);
- c) Approve the Emergency Shelters Zoning Ordinance Amendments by taking the following actions:
 - i) Adopt an Ordinance amending Section 35-1 (Case No. 24ORD-00021) of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the Santa Barbara County Code; and
 - ii) Adopt an Ordinance amending Article II, the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (Case No. 24ORD-00022) of Chapter 35, Zoning, of the Santa Barbara County Code.
- d) Adopt a resolution (Attachment H) authorizing P&D to submit the Emergency Shelters Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Attachment C, Case No. 24ORD-00021 and Attachment D, Case No.

24ORD-00022) to the California Coastal Commission (CCC) for review and certification as an amendment to the Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Program; and

- e) Direct the P&D Department to transmit the adopted resolution to the Executive Director of the CCC.

Summary Text:

The purpose of the proposed Emergency Shelters Zoning Ordinance Amendments (Project) is to comply with new and existing State laws regarding emergency shelters and to implement Program 9 of the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (HEU). In part, new State laws require that jurisdictions demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to accommodate their need for emergency shelters throughout the current housing element cycle (2023-2031). Program 9 directs the County to amend its zoning ordinances, as necessary, to comply with current State laws regarding emergency shelters.

Based on an assessment of existing emergency shelter facilities, staff determined that the County currently has sufficient capacity to accommodate its emergency shelter needs and comply with State law. Consistent with other State laws, the proposed amendments to the Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and Article II, the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) would update the definitions of “emergency shelter” and “low barrier navigation center” and add objective development standards for new emergency shelters.

Discussion:

The County Planning Commission held two public hearings on the Project before making their recommendation to the Board (January 29 and March 12, 2025). At the hearing on January 29, 2025, staff initially recommended that the County comply with new State laws by expanding the zone districts where emergency shelters would be allowed and streamlining the permit process. Based on feedback from the County Planning Commission, staff re-examined existing and new State laws concerning emergency shelters and found that cities and counties may forgo allowing emergency shelters with a ministerial permit in zones that allow residential uses if existing emergency shelters within their jurisdiction have sufficient capacity to accommodate their need to house homeless persons. Based on an assessment of existing emergency shelter facilities, at the hearing on March 12, 2025, staff recommended that the County fulfill the State requirements for emergency shelters through existing emergency shelters, rather than amending the LUDC and CZO to allow emergency shelters with a ministerial permit. As a result, the Project is limited to amendments to the Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and Article II, the Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) to update the definitions of “emergency shelter” and “low barrier navigation center” and add objective development standards for new emergency shelters.

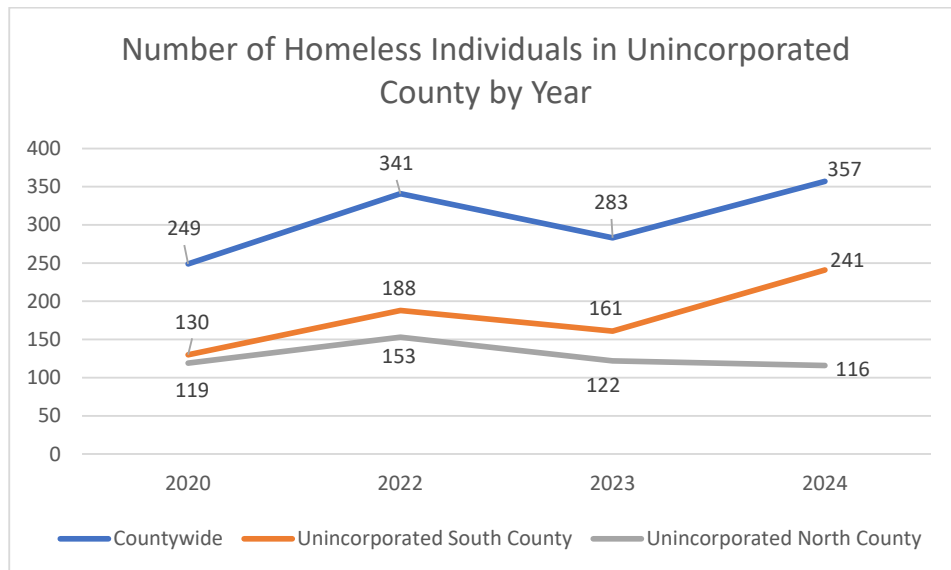
Background:

Staff docketed a Board Letter and intended to present this item to the Board on May 20, 2025. However, prior to the hearing, staff received new information and discovered discrepancies in the Point in Time (PIT) Count statistics for persons experiencing homelessness, and, therefore, requested a continuance to correct the information. This Board Letter supersedes the original a Board Letter. It incorporates the new information and corrects the discrepancies but does not change the recommended actions.

As explained in the County Planning Commission staff report for January 29, 2025, new State laws require that jurisdictions demonstrate they have sufficient emergency shelter capacity to meet their most recent homeless PIT Count throughout the 2023-2031 housing element cycle.

The 2024 PIT Count shows that the homeless population in the unincorporated county totals 357 persons. Table 1, below, displays the number of homeless persons in the unincorporated county over time and by subregion (i.e., Unincorporated North County and Unincorporated South County).

Table 1 – Santa Barbara County Point-in-Time Count (2020 - 2024)



¹Unincorporated South County includes homeless persons in Isla Vista.

Government Code (GC) Section 65583(a)(4)(A) states that the County may accommodate its most recent PIT count by allowing emergency shelters with a ministerial permit in zoning designations that allow residential uses. State law also includes two alternative means to meet the most recent PIT count without allowing emergency shelters with a ministerial permit:

- “The existence of one or more emergency shelters within its jurisdiction ... that can accommodate that jurisdiction’s need” (GC Section 65583(a)(4)(F)), and
- “On sites owned by the local government if it demonstrates with substantial evidence that the sites will be made available for emergency shelter during the planning period, are suitable for residential use, and are located near amenities and services” (GC Section 65583(a)(4)(J)).

Existing Emergency Shelter Capacity

At the County Planning Commission hearing on January 29, 2025, staff recommended that the County satisfy State law by allowing emergency shelters with a ministerial permit in certain zones, pursuant to GC Section 65583(a)(4)(A). Upon further review of the existing facilities and the 2024 PIT Count, staff altered its recommendation. At the second County Planning Commission hearing on March 12, 2025, staff recommended that the County fulfill the State requirements for emergency shelters through existing emergency shelters, rather than amending the LUDC and CZO to allow emergency shelters with a ministerial permit, pursuant to GC Section 65583(a)(4)(F). The County Planning Commission supported staff’s recommendation.

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, below, P&D and Community Services Department (CSD) staff compiled an inventory of the following:

- Existing emergency shelters on sites owned by the County within incorporated cities and unincorporated areas, and
- Existing emergency shelters owned/managed by non-governmental organizations (e.g., Good Samaritan and Santa Barbara Street Village) within unincorporated areas.

Table 2
Existing Emergency Shelters on Sites Owned by the County
within Incorporated Cities and Unincorporated Areas

Operator/Manager	Project Name	City/ Unincorporated Area	Contract Termination Date	Beds
Good Samaritan Shelter	Santa Barbara Street Village	City of Santa Barbara	06/30/2027	34
Good Samaritan Shelter	Hope Village	City of Santa Maria	12/31/2028	97
Good Samaritan Shelter	Hedges House of Hope	Isla Vista (unincorporated)	-	45
Good Samaritan Shelter	Rainbow Village (at Bridgehouse)	Lompoc Area (unincorporated)	-	20
Good Samaritan Shelter	Bridgehouse	Lompoc Area (unincorporated)	-	70
Good Samaritan Shelter	La Posada	Goleta Valley (unincorporated)	03/31/2029	80
Total				346

Table 3
Existing Emergency Shelters Owned/Managed by Non-governmental Organizations
within Unincorporated Areas

Owner/Manager	Project Name	Unincorporated Area	Contract Termination Date	Beds
Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County	Santa Barbara Emergency Shelter	Goleta Valley (unincorporated)	-	25

The seven existing emergency shelters listed in the tables above operate year-round and have a total capacity of 371 beds, which exceeds the 2024 PIT Count by 14 beds. However, Santa Barbara Street Village is scheduled to close by June 30, 2027. Excluding Santa Barbara Street Village, the six remaining emergency shelters have a capacity of 337 beds, which falls short of the 2024 PIT Count by 20 beds.

Hope Village and La Posada are scheduled to close by December 31, 2028, and March 31, 2029, respectively. By December 31, 2028, the remaining five emergency shelters would have a capacity of 240 beds, at which point the County would have a shortfall of 117 beds. By March 31, 2029, the remaining four emergency shelters would have a capacity of 160 beds, at which point the County would have a shortfall of 197 beds.

To comply with State law and its need for emergency shelters throughout the housing cycle, staff recommends that the Board, through P&D, review its emergency shelter capacity by early 2027 and take one or more actions if it lacks sufficient capacity to fully accommodate its 2024 or later PIT count from early 2027 through February 15, 2031. These actions may include, among others, the following:

1. Identify one or more County-owned sites for an emergency shelter(s); to comply with GC Section 65583(a)(4)(J), the County will ensure any site(s) "... will be made available for emergency shelter during the planning period, they are suitable for residential use, and the sites are located near amenities and services that serve people experiencing homelessness ...";
2. Extend existing contract(s) for emergency shelters located on County-owned sites; and/or
3. Amend the LUDC and/or CZO to allow emergency shelters in a select zone(s) with a ministerial permit; to comply with GC Section 65583(a)(4)(A), the County will ensure that the selected zone(s) "allow residential uses and ... are suitable for residential uses."

Definitions and Objective Standards

The County Planning Commission staff report for January 29, 2025, explains that the County must update the definitions of "emergency shelter" and "low barrier navigation center" to match new definitions in State law. The County may also apply up to eight objective development standards in GC Section 65583(a)(4)(B) to new emergency shelters. The proposed LUDC and CZO amendments include the following:

- Amend the definition of "emergency shelter" to include other interim interventions, such as navigation centers, bridge housing, and respite or recuperative care (GC Section 65583(a)(4)(C));
- Amend the definition of "low barrier navigation centers" to allow them to be non-congregate and relocatable (GC Section 65660); and
- Add the following four objective development standards that would apply to new emergency shelters in addition to other existing development standards that apply to residential development within the same zone: (1) sufficient parking, (2) size/location of waiting/client intake areas, (3) onsite management, and (4) proximity to other emergency shelters. (Note – staff determined that the other four potential objective standards were unnecessary or already addressed through existing regulations).

Environmental Review

The proposed LUDC and CZO amendments are exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15265. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) provides an exemption for projects that will have no possibility of significant effect on the environment. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15265 statutorily exempts local agency activities involving the preparation and adoption of Local Coastal Program amendments from environmental review. Please see Attachment B for more details.

Planning Commission Recommendations

On March 12, 2025, the CPC voted 3-1 (Martinez no, Cooney absent) to recommend the Board adopt the LUDC and CZO amendments, with no recommended changes.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The time and costs associated with this project have been anticipated and included in P&D's Long Range Planning Division 2024-25 annual workplan, that was presented and approved by the Board on June 13, 2024. The 2024-25 County Adopted Budget FY 2024-2025, page 321, includes funding for zoning ordinance amendments and maintenance as part of P&D's Long Range Planning Division Budget Program and these costs don't exceed the budget. There are no facilities impacts.

Special Instructions:

P&D will fulfill noticing requirements.

The Clerk of the Board shall provide a copy of the signed ordinance and resolution, and minute order, to P&D, attention: David Villalobos and Lila Spring.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Findings for Approval

Attachment B – CEQA Notice of Exemption

Attachment C – County Land Use and Development Code Ordinance Amendment for Adoption
(Case No. 24ORD-00021)

Attachment D – Article II, the Coastal Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Adoption
(Case No. 24ORD-00022)

Attachment E – County Planning Commission Action Letter and Resolutions

Attachment F – County Planning Commission Memorandum, dated March 4, 2025

Attachment G – County Planning Commission Staff Report, dated January 21, 2025

Attachment H – Resolution Authorizing Submittal of LCPA to CCC

Contact Information:

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