

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

**Staff Report for
the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report**

Hearing Date: March 4, 2026

Staff Report Date: February 24, 2026

Case No.: N/A

Environmental Document: Notice of Exemption, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5)

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1.0 REQUEST, RECOMMENDATION, AND PROCEDURES

Staff requests that the County Planning Commission receive and file the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* and follow the recommendations and procedures outlined below to provide the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* to the Board of Supervisors (Board), Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and City of Santa Barbara. The County Planning Commission's motion should include the following:

1. Receive and file a staff report regarding the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* (Attachment A);
2. Determine that the County Planning Commission's actions regarding the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(3) and 15378(b)(5); and
3. Direct staff to provide the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* to the Board of Supervisors (Board), Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), pursuant to Government Code 65400, and to the City of Santa Barbara, pursuant to the Board's action to adopt the *Mission Canyon Community Plan* (April 1, 2014).

Please refer the matter to staff if your Commission takes other than the recommended actions for the development of appropriate materials.

2.0 JURISDICTION

Government Code Section 65400(a) states that each city and county planning agency shall:

(2)... [p]rovide by April 1 of each year an annual report to the legislative body, the Office of Planning and Research, and the Department of Housing and Community Development that includes all of the following:

(A) The status of the plan and progress in its implementation.

(B) (i)(I) The progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs ... and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing ...

(F) The degree to which its approved general plan complies with the guidelines developed and adopted pursuant to Section 65040.2 and the date of the last revision to the general plan.

For purposes of Government Code Section 65400(a), Santa Barbara County Code Section 2-25.69 establishes the Board as the legislative body for the County of Santa Barbara (County), and Section 2-25.1 establishes the County Planning Commission as the planning agency on matters that affect the entirety of the unincorporated county. As a result, the County Planning Commission must review, file, and provide by April 1st of each year the annual progress report to the Board, LCI, and HCD.

3.0 ISSUE SUMMARY

The *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* serves two key functions. First, it summarizes the projects that the Planning and Development Department (P&D) undertook in 2025 to maintain and implement the Comprehensive Plan, including the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update, which was adopted by the Board on December 5, 2023, and received its final compliance determination from HCD on January 22, 2024. The 2023-2031 Housing Element Update contains 25 programs and 99 actions to help meet the housing goals and needs of the unincorporated county. The County made significant progress implementing several of these programs in 2025. The County continued work on updates to the Open Space, Circulation, Seismic Safety and Safety Elements, and the new Environmental Justice Element. The County also initiated and completed several zoning ordinance amendments, including cannabis odor ordinance amendments, senior mobile home park overlay amendments, and emergency shelter zoning ordinance amendments in 2025.

Second, the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* discusses the County's progress in meeting its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) in the third year of the current 2023-2031 planning period. The allocation for the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County for the 2023-2031 RHNA projection period is 5,664 housing units. For the first time, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) apportioned the County's RHNA into two sub-regions – the South Coast and North County. The County must accommodate 74 percent (4,142 units) of its RHNA in the South Coast and 26 percent (1,522 units) of its RHNA in the North County. Section 4.3, below, further discusses the County's RHNA progress by income level.

4.0 PROJECT INFORMATION

4.1 Comprehensive Plan Implementation

The *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* shows that the County continues to make progress toward maintaining and implementing the Comprehensive Plan. In 2025, the County continued to maintain and implement the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update and advanced work on multiple Comprehensive Plan updates, including continued work on the Safety, Circulation, and Open Space Elements and progress toward adoption of the new Environmental Justice Element. In addition, the County advanced several zoning ordinance amendments and related Comprehensive Plan implementation efforts, such as annual ordinance amendments to maintain consistency with State law, the comprehensive ordinance amendment package to streamline the code and accommodate higher density multifamily housing and mixed-use development, cannabis odor enforcement amendments, a senior mobile home park overlay, continued processing of the Utility-Scale Solar Ordinance Amendments and Program EIR, and implementation of the Agricultural Enterprise Ordinance. For more information on the Comprehensive Plan updates, see Attachment A, *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report*.

In 2025, the County also continued to make significant progress in implementing several of the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update’s programs and actions. In particular, Table 1 below lists and summarizes a selection of the Housing Element programs and actions that the County initiated or completed through 2025. Please note that programs that are reported on annually will have their status marked as “Completed” each year. An asterisk following a program’s action and status indicates that the program’s Inland Area component is complete, but the Coastal Zone component is still pending.

Table 1		
Selection of Programs and Actions Initiated or Completed through 2025		
Program	Action	Status
1	Select County-owned sites to accommodate RHNA plus buffer.	Completed
1	Rezone sites to accommodate RHNA plus buffer.*	Completed*
1	Revise development standards to ensure maximum densities.	In Progress
1	Establish minimum densities for residential rezones.*	Completed*
1	Develop RHNA/No Net Loss tracking tool.	Completed
1	Adopt a zoning ordinance to allow lower density with environmental constraints.*	Completed*
2	Update zoning ordinances to allow use by right (GC 65583.2(c)).*	Completed*
3	Update zoning ordinances unit replacement requirements.*	Completed*
4	Update and amend the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO).	Completed
4	Develop 26 new units under the IHO.	In Progress
4	Annually, report on the effectiveness of the IHO.	Completed
5	Annually, review funding applications and promote incentives for affordable housing.	Completed
5	Annually, evaluate and award IHO In-Lieu, HOME, PLHA, and other funds for affordable housing.	Completed

Table 1
Selection of Programs and Actions Initiated or Completed through 2025

6	Annually, collaborate with developers and employers for workforce housing.	Completed
6	Pursue 100 affordable housing units to meet the needs of farmworkers.	In Progress
7	Develop at least 90 units of permanent and interim housing with Homekey.	In Progress
7	Annually, coordinate with stakeholders to secure funds from Project Homekey.	Completed
8	Increase permanent units and rental subsidies for homeless persons.	In Progress
8	Annually, coordinate/improve scoring on multifamily funding applications.	Completed
8	Increase funding for housing and services, with healthcare partners.	In Progress
8	Create a potential site inventory for homeless housing projects.	Completed
8	Centralize landlord engagement to secure rental units with vouchers.	Completed
9	Amend definition, standards, and procedures for emergency shelters.*	Completed*
9	Develop and adopt Objective Standards for emergency shelters in all zones.*	Completed*
9	Expand the current definition of “emergency shelter” per GC 65583(a)(4).*	Completed*
10	Annually permit approx. 100 ADUs.	Completed
10	Amend zoning ordinances to comply with new ADU laws.*	Completed*
10	Update the ADU webpage to ensure complete information for applicants.	Continuous
10	Develop pre-approved plans for ADUs.	In Progress
10	Develop a Fair Housing Fact Sheet to be included in ADU applications.	Completed
11	Adopt ordinances to implement Senate Bill 9.*	Completed*
11	Develop a Fair Housing Fact Sheet to be included with SB 9 applications and resources.	Completed
12	Select County-owned sites for development.	Completed
12	Prioritize County-owned sites for development.	In Progress
12	Track the disposal of surplus County land.	Completed
12	Facilitate permitting and assist with funding.	In Progress
12	Issue building permits.	In Progress
12	Annually, document the development schedule of County-owned sites.	Completed
13	Amend zoning ordinances to comply with the new SDBL.	Completed
13	Annually, promote density bonus provisions to developers.	Completed
13	Consider a density bonus program for moderate-income housing.	In Progress
14	Annually, participate in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan.	Completed
14	Annually, support water conservation for new and existing developments through RWEP.	Completed
14	Annually, support water purveyors in securing water for future housing.	Completed
14	Annually, partner with water/wastewater service providers in augmenting supplies.	Completed
15	Provide the 2023-2031 HEU to public water and sewer providers.	Completed
16	Amend ordinances per new state laws; special care homes, shelters.	Completed
16	Amend MLUDC and CZO to provide ministerial approval per SB 35.*	Completed*
16	Add Objective Design/Development Standards to MLUDC and CZO.	Completed

Table 1		
Selection of Programs and Actions Initiated or Completed through 2025		
16	Annually, amend zoning ordinances to comply with new state laws.	Completed
16	Remove findings related to rural and scenic character and neighborhood compatibility for reasonable accommodation approvals.	In Progress
16	Facilitate/streamline multifamily housing in commercial zones.	In Progress
16	Suspend the Montecito Growth Management Ordinance.	Completed
17	Annually, promote fair housing choice and outreach programs.	Completed
17	Annually, require fair housing legal services to include outreach.	Completed
17	Annually, assist 75 residents with fair housing/dispute services.	Completed
18	Annually, monitor the status of at-risk rental housing projects.	Completed
18	Annually, pursue funding to extend affordability covenants.	Completed
18	Conduct outreach to acquire units aging out of low-income use.	Continuous
18	Provide fact sheets on tenant rights and relocation assistance.	Continuous
20	Annually, process grant applications to maintain/rehab low-income housing.	Completed
20	Annually, assist in the rehabilitation of 30 units.	Completed
21	Study the development of a local preference ordinance.	In Progress
22	Consider reduced development impact fees.	In Progress
22	Adopt the Recreation Master Plan.	In Progress
23	Complete a workforce housing study.	Completed
24	Create a program to incentivize the development of rental housing.	In Progress
25	Annually, implement the EJE, ATP, and Recreation Master Plan.	Completed
25	Seek funding for the revitalization of low-income communities.	Completed

In addition, the Community Services Department’s Housing and Community Development Division continues to coordinate with P&D to maintain and implement Housing Element programs. The County’s Housing and Community Development Division is assisting in the implementation of 50 actions for this eight-year cycle. Table D in Attachment A of this annual progress report provides information on their progress.

4.2 Reporting Requirements and HCD Data Tables

Government Code Section 65400(a)(2)(B) requires that annual progress reports use tables and forms adopted by HCD to summarize housing activities throughout the reporting period. These tables set forth the following planning and building permit information:

- Housing development applications received;
- Units included in all development applications;
- Units approved and disapproved;

- Sites rezoned to accommodate that portion of the County’s share of its RHNA for each income category that could not be accommodated on sites identified in the housing element site inventory;
- New units that have been issued a completed entitlement, building permit, or certificate of occupancy thus far in the housing element cycle, and the income category of each unit; and
- Information on all housing development applications submitted, including the location and income category of developments approved, building permits issued, and units constructed pursuant to Government Code Section 65913.4.

See Attachment A, *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report*, for this reporting data.

4.3 RHNA Progress

Annual progress reports track annual housing production to show the County’s progress in meeting its RHNA. Tables 2 and 3 below list the number of building permits the County issued in this cycle which started in 2023 for new residential units (organized by income category) within the unincorporated areas of the South Coast and North County. The second to last row of the tables lists the County’s 2023-2031 RHNA. In 2025, the County issued building permits for 612 units. Of the 612 units, 452 were located in the South Coast and 160 were in North County.

In the South Coast, these building permits included 11 manufactured homes, 103 ADUs, four multi-family buildings totaling 234 units (San Marcos Ranch), one multi-family building totaling 35 units (Hollister Lofts), one single-room occupancy building totaling 28 units (St. George), and 41 one-family dwellings. In the North County, these building permits consisted of five manufactured homes, 123 ADUs, and 32 one-family dwellings. In total, P&D has issued 297 building permits for ADUs in the North County, and 289 in the South Coast from 2023 to 2025.

Table 2 South Coast 2023 to 2031 RHNA Projection Period Residential Units by Income Category (Issued Building Permits)					
Year	Lower		Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
	Very Low	Low			
2023	0	0	0	85	85
2024	3	54	3	230	290
2025	111	195	0	146	452
Total Units	114	249	3	461	827
RHNA	809	957	1,051	1,325	4,142
	1,766				
<i>Permits as % of RHNA</i>	14.1%	26.0%	0.3%	34.8%	20.0%

Table 3 North County 2023 to 2031 RHNA Projection Period Residential Units by Income Category (Issued Building Permits)					
Year	Lower		Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
	Very Low	Low			
2023	0	68	9	80	157
2024	0	85	10	15	110
2025	0	101	2	57	160
Total Units	0	254	21	152	427
RHNA	564	243	229	486	1,522
	807				
<i>Permits as % of RHNA</i>	0.0%	104.5%	9.2%	31.3%	28.1%

As of 2022, annual progress reports are now required to account for all units, not just net-new units. Therefore, demolished units that are associated with or replaced by a new housing development are now included and reported to HCD.

In 2025, the County issued 18 building permits to reconstruct or replace existing units. Of these units, five of the building permits were for replacement mobile and manufactured homes in the North County. The remaining 13 replacement units were located in the South Coast. In the South Coast, the County issued 11 building permits to replace mobile homes and two building permits to replace single family dwellings

that were demolished and rebuilt. These 18 issued building permits for reconstructed or replaced housing are included in the totals reflected in Tables 2 and 3 above.

4.4 Government Code Section 65913.4 Streamlined Ministerial Approval Process (SMAP)

In addition to amending annual progress report requirements, Government Code Section 65913.4 (Senate Bill (SB) 35/SB 423) established a streamlined, ministerial approval process for qualifying housing developments in jurisdictions that have not met their pro-rata share of regional housing needs. In part, qualifying developments must be located on an urban infill site zoned for residential or mixed uses and provide at least 10 or 50 percent of the units for lower-income households depending on the jurisdiction’s SMAP status. For example, jurisdictions that did not adopt a housing element found to be in compliance by HCD are subject to streamlining of housing projects having at least 10 percent affordability, whereas jurisdictions with a compliant housing element that have not met their pro-rata share of lower-income units are subject to streamlining of housing projects having at least 50 percent affordability. Other key factors that trigger mandated project streamlining include the jurisdiction’s timely submission of their APR and progress toward their above moderate-income RHNA.

As of June 2025, HCD determined that, based upon data from the *2024 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report*, the County had not met its pro-rata share of very low- and low-income housing. As a result, the County is subject to the streamlining provisions for proposed developments with at least 50 percent affordability [Government Code Section 65913.4(a)(4)(B)(ii)]. In 2025, the County did not issue a building permit for an affordable housing project using SB 35 (as of 2023 referred to as SB 423). The County remained subject to these streamlining provisions throughout 2025 and is expected to remain so through 2026.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) states that an activity is not subject to CEQA if the activity is not a project as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Section 15378(b)(5) specifies that projects do not include organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. Preparation of the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* is an administrative activity that does not authorize new development or otherwise result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. Therefore, this report is not a project, as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), and is not subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3).

6.0 NEXT STEPS

Staff will submit the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report* to LCI and HCD by April 1, 2026. The CPC will forward the annual progress report to the Board, which will receive and file the report at its next meeting.

Upon adoption of the Mission Canyon Community Plan in April 2014, the Board directed the Planning and Development Department “... to provide an annual report to the City of Santa Barbara detailing the major housing units that were approved or completed in the Mission Canyon Community Plan Area during the

reporting year.” Therefore, staff will also provide a copy of the *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report*, containing this information, to the City of Santa Barbara by April 1, 2026.

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

- A. *2025 Comprehensive Plan Annual Progress Report*

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