



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: April 7, 2026
Placement: Set Hearing
Estimated Time: 45 minutes on April 21,
2026
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director(s): Lisa Plowman
Contact: Alex Tuttle, Deputy Director, Long Range Planning
SUBJECT: Local Housing Marketing Program, New County Code, Chapter 52

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

Set a hearing on the Departmental Agenda of April 21, 2026, to consider an ordinance adding Chapter 52 to the Santa Barbara County Code, titled Local Housing Marketing Program (Case No. 26ORD-00003), included as Attachment A, which affects portions of Supervisorial Districts 1, 2, and 3; and

On April 21, 2026, take the following actions:

- a) Consider and approve the introduction (first reading) of an ordinance adding Chapter 52 to the Santa Barbara County Code, titled Local Housing Marketing Program (Case No. 26ORD-00003), included as Attachment A;
- b) Read the title and waive further reading of the Ordinance in full;
- c) Determine that the ordinance, Local Housing Marketing Program (Case No. 26ORD-00003), is not a "project" as defined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5) because it consists of an organizational or administrative activity of government which will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and, therefore, is not subject to CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c); and
- d) Continue the hearing to the Administrative Agenda of May 5, 2026, to consider recommendations as follows:

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

That the Board of Supervisors on May 5, 2026:

- i) Consider the adoption (second reading) of the ordinance adding Chapter 52 to the Santa Barbara County Code, Local Housing Marketing Program (Case No. 26ORD-00003), included as Attachment A; and
- ii) Determine that the ordinance, Local Housing Marketing Program (Case No. 26ORD-00003), is not a “project” as defined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 and, therefore, is not subject to CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c).

Summary Text:

The purpose of the proposed Local Housing Marketing Program is to provide persons who live and/or work within the South Coast Housing Market Area (HMA)¹ with greater opportunities to rent or buy new non-deed-restricted² housing units located within the unincorporated area of the South Coast HMA. The principal requirement is a local marketing plan. Specifically, housing developers would need to implement a local marketing plan with initial promotion activities that target persons who live and/or work within the South Coast HMA and, as a result, promote the rent or sale of housing units to those persons.

Discussion:

The proposed Local Housing Marketing Program would apply to the initial marketing of new non-deed restricted housing units in housing projects with five or more primary dwelling units in the South Coast HMA. Portions of Supervisorial Districts 1, 2, and 3 are within the South Coast HMA; the program would not apply in Supervisorial Districts 4 and 5. Attachment B is a map of the Santa Barbara County HMAs.

The program would require that developers prepare, submit, and implement a local marketing plan for affected housing projects. The plans would require the Director’s approval. The program’s requirements would only apply to the initial, or first time, rental or sale of housing units; they would not apply to subsequent rentals or sales. Local marketing plans would remain in effect for at least six weeks. The program would not apply to housing authority or other non-profit housing projects with financing or funding-related requirements that conflict with the proposed requirements.

Local marketing plans must describe how developers will promote and publicize the availability of the new housing units to persons who live and/or work within the South Coast HMA. At a minimum, the marketing components need to include advertisements in local newspapers; outreach to local jurisdictions, employers, and housing organizations; social media posts; and information flyers. By focusing the initial marketing efforts at the local level, it will help ensure that persons who live and/or work in the South Coast have a reasonable opportunity to secure housing when it becomes available.

¹ *Housing market area, or HMA*, means a geographic area that generally provides social and economic services to the community such that commuting to another housing market area to work or shop is elective. HMA boundaries generally coincide with county census divisions. Santa Barbara County has the following five HMAs: South Coast, Santa Ynez, Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Cuyama. The South Coast HMA extends south from the Gaviota Coast to the Carpinteria Valley.

² *Non-Deed-restricted housing* means residential units that are free from legally binding, recorded covenants which limit sale prices, rental rates, and occupant income levels to maintain long-term affordability.

The program would not require developers to rent or sell new housing units to persons who live and/or work within the South Coast HMA. Rather, it encourages developers to offer the housing units according to the following priorities when prospective renters or buyers have generally equal financial, personal, and other rental or home-buying qualifications:

1. First priority: Persons who work within the South Coast HMA but live outside the South Coast HMA;
2. Second priority: Persons who live and work within the South Coast HMA or work within the South Coast HMA and have experienced a no-fault eviction from housing in the South Coast HMA within the last two months;
3. Third priority: Persons who have been hired to work within the South Coast HMA but live outside the South Coast HMA;
4. Fourth priority: Persons who live within the South Coast HMA but work outside the South Coast HMA; and
5. Fifth priority: Persons who work and live outside the South Coast HMA.

Background:

The County of Santa Barbara 2023-2031 Housing Element Update includes 25 programs that the County must carry out between February 2023 and February 2031. In part, Program 21, Local Preference, states that the County will consider developing a program which prioritizes people who live and/or work within Santa Barbara County. Specifically, Program 21 states,

By June 2025, study the development of an ordinance or guidelines that establish a local preference for people who live and/or work within the county regions over other persons to rent or purchase affordable and upper moderate-income (120-200 percent of the AMI) housing units that are subsidized by the County or are provided through the IHO. The priorities that should be studied include, but are not limited to 1) eligible households that reside and work within the area (i.e., South Coast or North County) of the units being offered, 2) eligible households that reside within the area the units are offered, but work in another area of the county, 3) eligible households that work within the area the units are offered but reside in another area of the county, and 4) eligible households that work within the area the units are offered but reside outside of the County.

Staff initiated this program by reviewing the County's and several other jurisdictions' local preference housing programs. Research confirmed that other jurisdictions' programs apply to affordable housing projects, particularly housing that is subsidized in some manner.

The County's Inclusionary Housing Administrative Manual (Community Services Department, June 2014) contains the County's existing local preference housing requirements and served as the starting point for study. These existing requirements only apply to housing units subject to the County's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (Chapter 46A, Santa Barbara County Code). Furthermore, these requirements apply to deed-restricted affordable rental and for-sale units, not non-deed-restricted market rate units. However, they do require applicants to reside or work in Santa Barbara County. The County Community Services Department is concurrently proposing amendments to the Inclusionary Housing Administrative Manual and the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that would further implement Program 21. In part, these amendments would require that housing developers rent or sell deed-restricted lower-, moderate-, and workforce-income housing units located in the South Coast HMA according to the five local preference priorities listed under "Discussion," above.

Staff hosted three meetings with local housing developers to discuss the content of a possible local preference housing program. During the final meeting in mid-2025, staff outlined a program that would require housing developers to first offer non-deed-restricted rental and for-sale units to persons who live and/or work within the South Coast HMA. The developers opposed this type of program because lenders may view the requirements as an obstacle to renting and selling housing units and, as a result, may increase financing costs or deny construction and mortgage loans. Based on these concerns, the fact that staff could not find examples from other jurisdictions that target non-deed-restricted units or units that are not otherwise publicly subsidized, and in consideration of Fair Housing Law, the proposed program (1) applies solely to marketing of non-deed-restricted housing units, and (2) encourages, but does not require, housing developers to rent or sell housing units to persons who live and/or work within the South Coast HMA.

Staff considered applying the program throughout the unincorporated county. However, as discussed further in the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update, the South Coast HMA is unique among County HMAs for having a critical “jobs-housing imbalance.” That is, the South Coast has a high concentration of jobs but lacks sufficient housing for the workforce. Consequently, many workers cannot live where they work and must commute long distances from Ventura County, San Luis Obispo County, and communities in North County to jobs in the South Coast HMA. In contrast, other HMAs offer fewer jobs and more affordable housing. As a result, approximately 8,000 workers commute daily from the North County HMAs to the South Coast and the imbalance has been worsening. From 2010 to 2019, the number of workers on the South Coast traveling greater than 50 miles to work increased by nearly 33 percent. From 2010 to 2019, more than 75 percent of new jobs added to the South Coast were filled by residents living outside the South Coast. In addition, through County Community Services Department’s annual update to Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requirements, (e.g. 2025 Annual Adjustment to Inclusionary Housing Requirements, Attachment C) it has been recognized that the South Coast HMA has an uneven housing-cost-to-income relationship when compared to the other HMAs in the County. The South Coast HMA has a competitive housing market. Early awareness of local housing opportunities is critical in facilitating the rental or purchase of those homes by the local workforce. Although on its own, local marketing will not solve the jobs-housing imbalance of the South Coast HMA, it is an important piece of a larger set of initiatives identified in the Housing Element programs to improve housing opportunities across the county.

The proposed program is intended to provide social, environmental, and economic benefits, which, in turn, promote the overall public health, safety, and welfare of the community:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions: Approximately 27,000 workers commute daily into the South Coast HMA; allowing more workers to live closer to their job sites will reduce commutes and, as a result, reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Better quality of life: Many commuters spend more than two hours per day commuting to their job site. This program will help reduce long distance commutes. Shorter commutes will result in more time spent with family, community involvement, and overall quality of life.
- Improve local economy: People who live closer to their workplace will purchase more goods and services locally, which, in turn, will strengthen the local economy and businesses.
- Enhance Public Safety: Many police officers, fire fighters, and other public safety personnel live far from the South Coast HMA; living closer to job sites will increase their ability to quickly respond to local emergencies and disasters.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Funding for this ordinance amendment is budgeted in the Planning and Development Department Long Range Planning Budget Program of the County of Santa Barbara Adopted Budget, FY 2025-2026. No additional appropriations are required.

There are no facilities impacts.

Special Instructions:

Planning and Development will fulfill noticing requirements.

The Clerk of the Board shall provide a copy of the signed ordinance and minute order to the Planning and Development Department, attention: Lila Spring.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Local Housing Marketing Program

Attachment B – Housing Market Areas

Attachment C – 2025 Annual Adjustment

Contact Information:

Lila Spring
Senior Planner
Springl@countyofsb.org