

# CITY OF CALISTOGA

## STAFF REPORT

**TO:** CHAIRMAN MANFREDI AND MEMBERS OF THE  
PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** KEN MACNAB, SENIOR PLANNER

**MEETING DATE:** JANUARY 14, 2009

**SUBJECT:** GENERAL PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

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### REQUEST

General Plan Amendment (GPA 2009-01): Consideration of a work program for updating the Housing Element of the City's General Plan.

### BACKGROUND

The Housing Element is one of seven mandated elements of the General Plan - the comprehensive, long-term plan that guides the physical growth and development of the City. Housing Element law requires cities and counties to adequately plan to meet their existing and projected housing needs, including their share of the regional housing need. The law recognizes that the most critical decisions regarding housing development occur at the local level within the context of the General Plan. In order for the private sector to adequately address housing needs and demand, the City must adopt land use plans and regulatory schemes that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development for all income groups.

Unlike the other mandatory elements of the General Plan, the Housing Element is subject to detailed statutory requirements regarding its contents and must be updated every five years. The Housing Element is also subject to mandatory review by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This reflects the statutory recognition that the availability of housing is a matter of statewide importance and that cooperation between the government and private sector is critical to attainment of the State's housing goal of "decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family."

The City's current Housing Element was adopted on October 31, 2003 and found to be in full legal compliance by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on March 9, 2005. Adoption of the current Housing Element occurred as part of the City's General Plan Update program

32 which concluded in the middle of the then-current State defined planning period  
33 of 1999 to 2006. HCD has since set a new planning period (2007 to 2014) and is  
34 requiring all local governments within the regional jurisdiction of the Association  
35 of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to update their Housing Elements by June 30,  
36 2009 (Government Code Section 65588(e)(2)).

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## 38 **DISCUSSION**

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40 The purpose of the Housing Element Update program is to produce an updated  
41 Housing Element that is accurate, complete, understandable, and meets all the  
42 requirements of State law. The updated Housing Element will provide an overall  
43 strategy and schedule of actions needed over the seven-year planning period to  
44 achieve the City's housing goals and objectives. Staff is not anticipating that  
45 there will be major changes to the 2003 Housing Element and views the update  
46 program as an opportunity to review, evaluate and "fine tune" the City's current  
47 housing programs and policies and to incorporate changes that have occurred in  
48 Housing Element law.

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### 50 Overview of Work Program

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52 A detailed work program has been prepared by staff and is attached to this report  
53 (Attachment 2). There are three major focus areas of the work program: (1)  
54 develop an understanding of current housing conditions and needs within the  
55 City; (2) assess current housing policies and programs, identified housing sites,  
56 and constraints to developing those sites; and (3) update the goals, policies,  
57 actions and programs contained in the 2003 Housing Element. A general  
58 description of the tasks to be performed in each of these areas is provided below.

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#### 60 *Current Housing Conditions*

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62 To establish a baseline from which to evaluate current conditions and needs,  
63 staff will collect and develop data on population and employment growth,  
64 household demographics, special housing needs, the number, type and condition  
65 of the City's current housing stock, and the number of housing units that are at-  
66 risk of converting from affordable to market-rate.

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68 Staff will rely upon a number of sources in developing this information, including  
69 use of statistical data from the 1990 and 2000 Census and from Federal, State  
70 and regional government agencies. Staff will also seek information from local  
71 professionals in the housing industry, including real estate professionals, non-  
72 profit agencies, developers, contractors and building professionals.

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74 In addition to these sources, staff will prepare an existing land use survey that  
75 will identify the current land use of every property in the City. Staff will also

76 conduct a windshield survey of residential areas within the City to gauge the  
77 physical condition of the City's housing stock.  
78 Finally, a household survey will be conducted to develop an up-to-date  
79 demographic profile of Calistoga households and household characteristics.

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81 *Assessment of Programs, Sites and Constraints*

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83 The assessment of programs, sites and constraints involves: (1) a review of the  
84 2003 Housing Element to evaluate the effectiveness of its goals, policies and  
85 programs in contributing to the attainment of the City's housing goals; (2) a  
86 review of the inventory of land available to meet the City's housing needs within  
87 the current planning period; and (3) a review of governmental and non-  
88 governmental constraints on production of housing, including land use controls  
89 and land development costs. The assessment will be performed by staff in  
90 consultation with professionals in the housing industry as needed.

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92 *Update Housing Element Goals, Policies and Programs*

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94 The information and outcomes of the work described in the previous two sub-  
95 sections will be used to guide the refinement of housing policies and programs in  
96 the 2003 Housing Element. As noted earlier, Staff does not foresee that the  
97 result of this work will lead to major policy or program changes. However, staff  
98 believes that the outcomes will elucidate a need for refocusing and refinement of  
99 current programs and strategies. A draft updated Housing Element will be  
100 prepared and released for public review and comment prior to formal review and  
101 adoption proceedings before the Planning Commission and City Council. The  
102 updated element will retain the same general format used in the 2003 Housing  
103 Element.

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105 Program Management

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107 The Housing Element Update program will primarily be carried out by City staff  
108 under the supervision and direction of the Planning of Building Director. Staff  
109 believes that it would be appropriate to have other individuals involved in guiding  
110 the Housing Element Update program and is seeking input from the Planning  
111 Commission on how to best achieve this. Below is a range of possible  
112 alternatives (which should not be considered definitive) for the Planning  
113 Commission's consideration:

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- 115 1. Ad-Hoc Committee consisting of one or two representatives from both  
116 the Planning Commission and City Council.
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  - 118 2. Steering Committee consisting of one or two representatives from the  
119 Planning Commission, City Council and one or two community

120 members with demonstrated experience in housing, development or  
121 real estate matters.

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123 3. Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the Planning  
124 Commission, City Council, one or two community members with  
125 demonstrated experience in housing, development or real estate  
126 matters, and one or two general residents of Calistoga ("at-large"  
127 members).

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129 In considering what an appropriate level of involvement might be, the following  
130 program characteristics should be noted:

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- 132 • The Housing Element update is a focused program with a scope  
133 that is mostly defined by statutory requirements of State law.
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  - 135 • No major changes are anticipated to current housing goals and  
136 programs.
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  - 138 • The involvement of individuals with expertise in the housing  
139 industry could bring needed insight and knowledge to the program.
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  - 141 • The program has been designed to provide opportunities for public  
142 input outside of formal proceedings at key points in the program  
143 (e.g., determination of baseline conditions and release of  
144 preliminary draft update to Housing Element).
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146 Technical Assistance

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148 Assistance in collecting background information and statistical data will be  
149 provided by Calistoga Affordable Housing, Inc., who is under contract with the  
150 City to provide general services on housing-related matters. To be clear,  
151 Calistoga Affordable Housing, Inc., will not be advising on the formulation of or  
152 revision to Housing Element goals, policies or programs that could either benefit  
153 or hinder the development interests of their organization. Staff also anticipates  
154 utilizing the expertise of other housing-related organizations, including: the City of  
155 Napa Housing Authority; Fair Housing Napa Valley; the Technical Advisory  
156 Committee of the Napa County Transportation Planning Agency; HCD; and the  
157 American Planning Association.

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159 In addition to the aforementioned organizations, staff anticipates informally  
160 consulting with local professionals in the housing industry, particularly in the  
161 areas of land value, market conditions and construction/development costs. It is  
162 possible that paid consultation may be needed in areas where staff does not  
163 have expertise.

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Schedule

A tentative schedule for completing the tasks identified in the work program is attached to this staff report (Attachment 3). The schedule assumes completion of the Housing Element Update program in November, 2009. This could change depending on modifications made by the Planning Commission or City Council during review and approval of the work program.

The Planning Commission will note that the anticipated completion date is past the June 30, 2009 deadline for submitting an adopted updated Housing Element to HCD for review and certification. While it may be possible to execute a streamlined work program that meets the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline, staff concluded that because housing issues are of interest to many segments of the community an expanded (but still modest) program with some opportunity for public input would be more appropriate.

Staff has advised HCD of the timing of the City's Housing Element update and will continue to communicate with HCD as progress is made.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

It has been determined that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) which states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the action being contemplated, recommendation(s) on adoption of a work program to update the Housing Element of the City's General Plan, will have any impact on the environment.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Planning Commission Resolution PC 2009-03 recommending to the City Council adoption of the proposed work program for updating the Housing Element of the City's General Plan.

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

I move that the Planning Commission adopt Planning Commission Resolution PC 2009-03 recommending to the City Council adoption of the proposed work program for updating the Housing Element of the City's General Plan.

208 **ATTACHMENTS**

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210 1. PC Resolution 2009-03

211 2. Draft Work Program – Housing Element Update

212 3. Draft Schedule – Housing Element Update