Introduction

This chapter introduces the Housing Element: its purpose, content, public outreach process, and relationship to other City planning efforts.

OVERVIEW

Incorporated in 1886, the City of Santa Ana has a rich historical and cultural heritage. The City of Santa Ana is the county seat, and it boasts an eclectic urban environment, burgeoning employment centers, transit hub, historic neighborhoods and downtown, and a rich history dating back to the mid-1800s. These features distinguish Santa Ana as Orange County’s downtown.

The City of Santa Ana has seen significant changes in its housing market and housing conditions during the last decade. Housing prices tripled from 1998 to 2007, and now are significantly declining with the market downturn. Housing and apartment rents have increased steadily during this time. As an urban center, the revitalization of housing and neighborhoods is also a critical concern. At the same time, the City of Santa Ana has one of the most diverse international populations of all communities in the County of Orange.

The Housing Element recognizes the community’s housing needs and the complexity of programs needed to address them. The vision, goals, policies, and programs are designed to address the following issues:

- Adapting to changing housing market conditions.
- Meeting state-mandated regional housing needs goals.
- Furthering quality housing and neighborhoods.
- Accommodating social and economic diversity.
- Assisting residents with special housing needs.
- Supporting the City’s long-term economic development.

The Housing Element seeks to address each of these planning issues, while balancing them with other City goals and objectives that will further the City’s long-term vision as “Downtown Orange County.”
PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF ELEMENT

California law (Government Code Section 65580 et seq.) requires that cities develop housing programs to meet their fair share of housing needs for the community. A key part of this goal is addressing the regional housing needs assessment (RHNA) and state law requirements to plan, facilitate, and encourage housing production commensurate with their assigned need. The City of Santa Ana has been assigned a planning goal of accommodating 204 housing units for the housing element planning period of 2014 to 2021.

To comply with state law, Santa Ana prepares a housing element every five years. The Santa Ana Housing Element must contain goals, policies, and programs to facilitate the development, improvement, and preservation of housing. State law prescribes the scope and content of the housing element pursuant to Section 65583 of the California Government Codes.

The Housing Element is organized into the following sections:

- **Housing Element Framework.** This introduces Santa Ana’s housing needs and contains an analysis of resources to address those needs. This is followed by the Policy Framework, which is a series of goals and policies, and a Housing Plan of implementation programs.

- **Appendix A: Housing Needs.** This appendix contains an analysis of demographic, economic, neighborhood, and housing characteristics; special needs of residents; and other housing needs in the community.

- **Appendix B: Housing Constraints.** This appendix contains an analysis of potential and actual market, government, and environmental constraints to the development, maintenance, and improvement of housing.

- **Appendix C: Housing Resources.** This appendix contains an inventory, analysis, and assessment of the City’s resources to address its housing needs, including land, preservation opportunities, and financial resources.

- **Appendix D: Program Evaluation.** This appendix contains a summary of progress toward meeting the City’s 2006–2014 housing goals, and contains an evaluation of the appropriateness of those goals and programs.

- **Appendix E: Public Outreach.** This appendix details the venues provided to residents and stakeholders to discuss housing needs and opportunities, including workshops, stakeholders groups, study sessions, and visioning.
PUBLIC OUTREACH

California law requires that local governments make a diligent effort to achieve participation from all economic segments of the public in the development of the housing element. As part of the Housing Element planning process, the City provided a wide array of venues to solicit input and participation in housing discussions with residents, businesses, stakeholders, advocates, civic leaders, and other interested parties. Opportunities were also offered in multiple languages, reflecting the diversity of Santa Ana residents.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

Some of the key efforts undertaken during this period were:

- **Community Workshops.** To capitalize on the City’s goals related to the intersection of housing and transportation, two public outreach workshops were coupled with outreach for an update to the Circulation Element. The City held community workshops on April 27, 2013, and May 9, 2013, at City senior centers. These evening and weekend workshops provided an overview of the Housing Element process and community needs. Attendees participated in facilitated sessions to provide input on housing issues of greatest concern to them. To maximize participation, notices were published in Spanish, and translation services were available at both meetings.

- **Health and Fitness Fair.** Promoting health and wellness is a priority of the City. The City’s Parks and Recreation and Community Services Agency hosted a health and fitness fair on Saturday, June 1. The Planning Department sponsored a booth at this event to solicit feedback for the Housing Element through a survey and interactive games.

- **Survey.** A bilingual English and Spanish survey was available during the months of June and July to collect additional community feedback. The survey was available on the City’s website and advertised through the neighborhood community link meetings.

Santa Ana held multiple venues for residents, stakeholders, and businesses to participate in the Housing Element.
Stakeholder Workshops. The City held a special workshop (June 20, 2013) with community-based organizations (nonprofit legal advocates, service organizations, interested parties, developers, stakeholders, etc.). This workshop focused on the topic of healthy communities and the integration of policies and programs into the City’s Housing Element to support “healthy housing.” The purpose of this workshop was to discuss integrating health and wellness into the Housing Element and to solicit input from the diverse and specialized perspectives of each of the participants.

Housing Commission Workshop. The City held a study session (October 1, 2013) with the Community Redevelopment and Housing Commission to provide an overview of the Housing Element update. The study session took place during their regularly scheduled monthly meeting time and was open to the public.

Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions. The City conducted study sessions with the Planning Commission (September 23, 2013) and the City Council (October 7, 2013). These sessions provided an overview of the Housing Element and key community needs, and then solicited input on issues of concern from each respective commission. All commission meetings were duly noticed to the public.

Appendix E contains a summary of the results of the outreach.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION

Participants at the community workshops, study sessions, stakeholder meetings, and other gatherings provided a wealth of information regarding the City’s future direction and the most pressing needs, program ideas, and priorities for action. Key themes included:

Santa Ana’s Future. The City Council’s vision for Santa Ana is to strengthen the City’s historic role as Downtown Orange County, benefitting from its location, employment centers, rich heritage, and diversity. Participants voiced a desire for the City to continue its commitment to job creation and to provide desirable places for people to live and work. Santa Ana is recognized as a unique and diverse City in Orange County, and its future will depend on leveraging its wealth of resources. The City’s housing vision supports the notion of uniqueness, inclusiveness, and sustainability through housing policy and programs.

Housing Santa Ana’s Residents. Housing plays an important role in achieving the City’s vision. Participants at workshops clearly emphasized the need for encouraging the widest possible choices of housing—single-family, apartments, townhomes, senior housing, housing for people with disabilities, and housing for homeless people affordable at all levels. Improved housing conditions and neighborhood safety were also important topics to the City’s residents. In response to increased interest in the relationship between health and housing, a focused stakeholder meeting explored health and wellness.
The Housing Element supports offering the broadest range of choices and includes programs to facilitate affordability for people of all income levels.

- **Preserving Neighborhoods.** Participants provided compelling testimony of the need to improve and maintain their neighborhoods—their housing, streets, parks and open space, and other important features that contribute to the livability of their neighborhoods. Additionally, residents were concerned about preserving their historic neighborhoods.

The Housing Plan sets forth various programs to improve housing and neighborhoods, and affirms the role of neighborhood associations in participating in civic affairs and improving their neighborhoods in partnership with the City.

- **Balancing City Goals.** An update to the City’s Circulation Element and expansion of OCTA Bus Rapid Transit lines gave residents a chance to explore the intersection between housing and circulation at two joint workshops. Participants understood that housing goals must be balanced with other City goals and objectives.

These include the need to support the economy and our workforce, provide for adequate parks and recreational opportunities, promote sustainability, facilitate greater mobility and improve air quality, and protect public health and safety. Although programs to address these concerns are detailed in other General Plan chapters, the Housing Element contains policies and programs to support these efforts.

The above themes are incorporated into the City’s housing goals, policies, and programs of this document. Appendix E provides a detailed description of each venue, and the notes for each meeting can be found by referring to the City’s website.
INTRODUCTION

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

CITY VISION

As expressed by the City Council, Santa Ana is to be the dynamic urban center of Orange County, acclaimed for its investment in children, neighborhood pride, enriching cultural experiences, appreciation of diversity, thriving economic climate, quality governmental services, and leadership among California cities. This vision underpins the General Plan, the blueprint for community development, and the Housing Element, and guides decisions regarding how resources should be allocated to different priorities.

GENERAL PLAN

State law requires that a General Plan be internally consistent, so that no conflicts exist among its chapters. Goals, policies, and implementation measures in the General Plan Elements must support and be consistent with one another. The Housing Element builds on the other 11 elements in the General Plan and is consistent with goals and policies set forth therein. The City will continue to maintain consistency between General Plan elements by ensuring that proposed changes in one element are reflected in other elements through amendment of the General Plan.

SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Santa Ana has adopted a series of implementation tools—specific plans, overlay zones, and other plans—to guide future development in focused areas. These include the Metro East Mixed Use Overlay Zone, Transit Zoning Code, Specific Development Districts, and other similar efforts. The Housing Element is designed to serve as an overarching policy document that bridges specific implementation plans with the goals and policies in the General Plan. Whereas the Housing Element provides a guiding framework for housing Citywide, specific implementation tools provide guidance for specific areas of the City.

HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The City implements other plans that relate to the Housing Element. The Consolidated Plan guides the expenditure of federal funds for housing and community development activities, particularly low and moderate income households and persons with special needs. The Redevelopment Implementation Plan governs the expenditure of tax increment funds for the rehabilitation, construction, and improvement of housing. The Santa Ana Housing Authority has two plans (Annual Plan and Five-Year Plan) that guide the expenditure of federal monies for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

ROLES OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Ana oversees funding the City receives for the Housing Choice Voucher program from the Department of
Housing and Urban Development. The Housing Authority (SAHA) is a governmental body created and authorized by state law to develop and operate housing and housing programs for low-income families. The mission of the SAHA is to, “provide safe, decent and sanitary housing conditions for very low-income families and to manage resources efficiently. SAHA supports personal, economic and social upward mobility to provide families the opportunity to make the transition from subsidized to non-subsidized housing. SAHA also assists the City of Santa Ana in its goal to maintain its housing stock.”
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