



City of Rancho Santa Margarita 2021-2029

Housing Element Update

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is in the process of preparing the 2021-2029 Housing Element. This Fact Sheet is intended to answer commonly asked questions, provide information about the update process, and let you know how to get involved.

What is a Housing Element?

The Housing Element is a section of the City's General Plan that looks at housing needs and conditions within Rancho Santa Margarita. It is a policy document that identifies goals, policies, and programs that the City uses to direct and guide actions related to housing.

Why is the City updating its Housing Element?

Each city and county in California is required to have a Housing Element and update it at least every eight years. Updating the Housing Element gives the City a clear picture of housing-related issues such as: housing supply and demand, the types of housing available within the City, housing affordability, and homelessness. Once the Housing Element is updated, it must be approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Updating the Housing Element will ensure that the City meets State requirements, and makes Rancho Santa Margarita eligible for State grants and other funding resources. It will also give our elected and appointed officials clear guidance on housing issues facing Rancho Santa Margarita.

Some key features of the Housing Element include:

- Demographic and housing characteristics
- An assessment of fair housing
- An evaluation of housing constraints and existing resources
- An analysis of potential sites appropriate for new housing
- An evaluation of existing policies and programs
- Development of policies and programs to support housing production

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What is the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)?

The State of California is facing a housing shortage. As such, the State requires that every city and county must help accommodate new housing growth. Since people often live and work in different places, housing needs are assessed at a regional level based on population trends and other factors to determine how much growth each local jurisdiction will need to accommodate. This is called the "Regional Housing Needs Allocation" or "RHNA" for short. The RHNA quantifies the need for housing on a regional level, and then allocates a portion of new growth to each city and county.

**RHNA stands for:
Regional Housing
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Rancho Santa Margarita's RHNA allocation for the 2021-2029 planning period is 680 units. This means that the City of Rancho Santa Margarita is responsible for identifying areas that can accommodate 680 new housing units. Rancho Santa Margarita's RHNA allocation is divided into income categories as seen in the table below. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is NOT responsible for building new homes. However, Rancho Santa Margarita must demonstrate to HCD that there is enough land zoned for housing to accommodate the allocated share of new homes. Furthermore, a special focus is placed on planning for affordable housing.

City of Rancho Santa Margarita 2021-2029 RHNA Housing Needs Allocation

INCOME GROUP	% OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	INCOME RANGE (4-PERSON HOUSEHOLD)	RHNA ALLOCATION (HOUSING UNITS)
		Min.	Max.
Very-Low Income	<50% of AMI	<\$64,050	209
Low Income	50- 80% of AMI	\$64,051 - \$102,450	120
Moderate Income	80- 120% of AMI	\$102,451 - \$123,600	125
Above-Moderate Income	>120% of AMI	\$123,601+	226
Total			680

AMI: Area Median Income. Orange County Area Median Income (AMI) for 2020 is \$103,000 (California Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2020).



How does the Housing Element impact me?

The availability and cost of housing impacts all of us and has direct impacts on our residents' quality-of-life. Having a healthy mix of housing types and price ranges ensures that our community will continue to thrive by creating a healthy business and civic environment, and promoting well-being.

Some of the benefits of a healthy housing mix include:



Businesses are better able to attract or relocate potential employees



Rent and mortgages are a manageable percentage of monthly income



Rancho Santa Margarita community members are able to live closer to their jobs



Seniors and those on a fixed-income can afford to stay in their homes



Kids that have grown up in Rancho Santa Margarita can afford to rent or buy here



A reduction in homelessness

Project Timeline

PUBLIC OUTREACH	PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT	PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP	FINALIZE HOUSING ELEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARINGS	SUBMIT TO STATE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
January- March 2021	April- May 2021	May- June 2021	July- September 2021	August- September 2021	September 2021

How can I get involved?

There are many ways that you can get involved and provide input. The success of the Housing Element depends on residents, like you, giving input and insight. It is important that the Housing Element reflects Rancho Santa Margarita's values and priorities. Community input will be an important factor in determining how to accommodate the RHNA. Visit the City's website to get involved including:

- » Join the email list to stay informed
- » Participate in our outreach events
- » Complete a community survey



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