

# Appendix A

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Public Outreach

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# 1 Summary of Public Participation

The Housing Element must reflect the values and preferences of the community. Accordingly, community participation is an important component of the development of this Element. Government Code Section 65583(c)(8) states that the local government must make “a diligent effort to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element.” This process not only includes community members, but also participation from local agencies and housing groups, community organizations, and housing sponsors.

Bakersfield solicited input from stakeholders and community members through interviews, surveys, a project-specific website, a housing sites survey tool, community events, and public meetings. To jumpstart the outreach process and to inform the community about the Housing Element Update, the City compiled and contacted more than 340 stakeholders and organizations that serve special needs households and renters, provide affordable housing, and offer fair housing services. Staff asked organizations to forward the information to their own stakeholders and requested assistance and partnership in community outreach.

These entities were included in all notifications associated with the Housing Element update, including community events, housing survey, and a housing map tool. A summary of the public participation is detailed below. Detailed information on the public engagement program is outlined below. Copies of community engagement materials are provided in this appendix.

## 1.1 Public Noticing

To reach the largest and broadest spectrum of community members and stakeholders, Bakersfield utilized the following notification methods throughout the Housing Element update process:

- The project was covered in the Kern County Farm Bureau E-Newsletter and in various local media outlets including KGET-17, 23ABC, Bakersfield.com, and KERO 23 ABC News.
- Regular posts to the City’s social media accounts, including Facebook and Instagram, announcing project website launch, survey, and a housing sites survey tool, public meetings, and release of the Draft Housing Element for public review.
- Broadcasts on the local public access television station.
- Email lists of community and advocacy groups, non-profits, faith-based organizations, school-based organizations, mobile home park associations, homeowners associations, disability advocates and neighborhood groups to provide outreach and regular updates on the project. In addition, the City is maintaining an “interested parties” list for those who have requested regular updates about the General Plan update.
- The City developed flyers in English and Spanish advertising the project. Specifically, the City developed and circulated a bilingual, introductory flyer inform residents about the Housing Element, the need for adequate housing in Bakersfield, how to plan for new housing, types of housing, a project schedule, and contact information. More than 1,300 flyers were distributed to government facilities and pop-up events.

## 1.2 Community Outreach

### 1.2.1 Affordable Housing Strategy

As part of creating the City of Bakersfield Affordable Housing Strategy, a series of community engagement efforts were conducted in 2021 and 2022. Community outreach efforts included partner focus groups, a planning commission presentation, a City Council presentation, a community survey and a community workshop, and a project website. Four focus groups were organized around existing, emerging, and potential partners.

To support broad community engagement in multiple languages, an online “self-paced workshop” about housing issues and opportunities in Bakersfield was hosted from December 15th, 2021 through February 4th, 2022. It was accessible via the project webpage and promoted through multiple City communication channels. A news segment on 23ABC News (KERO TV) also helped encourage community participation. The workshop attracted 182 participants who were able to view three short videos and answer a series of 15 questions in English, Spanish, or Punjabi.

On April 27, 2022, the City hosted a community workshop to present draft strategies and get feedback from the community. The workshop was held at the community center at MLK Park. The city provided on-site translation services in Spanish and background materials were translated into Spanish and Punjabi. The workshop was promoted on the project website and through partnership with the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability. 23ABC News (KERO TV) covered the event and broadcast a segment on the evening news along with an online print story. Comments were received in English and Spanish from community participants.

Community input from these efforts include the following themes:

#### ▪ Housing Issues

- Need more housing and more diverse housing choices (e.g., small to mid-size multi-family buildings; duplexes/triplexes/fourplexes; and ADUs) in every neighborhood. There is significant interest in creating a more walkable and well-connected community through transit and infill housing.
- Lack of affordable housing, to rent and to own, is a growing issue. Gentrification is also a concern, with many seeing longtime residents being priced out and unable to purchase a home.
- Existing “friction” and costs associated with development review
- Community opposition is an obstacle to housing production
- Lack of community information in landlord and tenant issues, with landlord tensions, tenants are fearful of eviction. More education is needed throughout the community regarding what affordable housing is, who it serves, and why it’s important for everyone.
- The most urgent housing needs include housing for the homeless (including transitional housing and permanent supportive housing), housing for smaller households, housing for seniors, and housing for people with special needs.
- Many residents cited a path to home ownership in addition to a desire to see more affordable housing constructed and rehabilitated for all income levels and household sizes.
- Housing size and type was brought up as an issue, with residents looking for more options beyond single family homes, and those with families wanting more affordable

options in neighborhoods that are high in opportunity. Barriers to housing for specific groups, such as youth transitioning from foster care, those formerly incarcerated, and unhoused populations.

- Rental housing is in poor condition and in areas that feel unsafe and lack access to everyday amenities.
- **Housing Policy Opportunities**
  - Community-based organizations, nonprofits, employers, educational institutions and others are eager to partner with the City and each other on proactive housing solutions.
  - Public sector entities with land resources are a key potential partner for the City and affordable housing developers.
    - Community-based nonprofits have land and the interest in supporting affordable housing development, but additional capacity building is needed for these groups.
  - Ongoing partnerships are needed to coordinate on defining funding priorities.
    - “Third-Sector” funding strategies involving nonprofit trust funds and community development financial institutions are intriguing but additional due diligence and capacity building is needed.
  - Community members support reducing the cost of building and creating incentives for building affordable housing in order to create more housing affordability.
  - A desire for the city to explore new local funding sources that are tied to market rate development, specifically linkage fees and impact fees.
  - A desire to have public input into the disposition of Affordable Housing Trust Fund resources.

An extensive summary of the community engagement efforts and community input for the Affordable Housing Strategy are available in Appendix G.

### **1.2.2 Informational City Council Meeting**

On April 6, 2022, City staff presented at a City Council meeting that was open to the public. City staff presented an introduction to the housing element, the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA), state legislation, and the project timeline. While members of the public attended the meeting, there were no public speakers on the item.

### **1.2.3 Introduction to the General Plan Workshop Series**

The City of Bakersfield hosted a series of “Introduction to General Plan Workshops” to kick-off its comprehensive General Plan update effort in March 2022. Three workshops (two in-person workshops and one virtual workshop) were conducted to introduce new General Plan goals and requirements to the community, educate the community on housing element requirements, and increase public understanding of the decision-making process and importance of public participation.

A variety of noticing methods were used in advance of the workshop series to encourage public attendance and participation. All forms of noticing methods provided meeting details (dates, times, locations, zoom links), the General Plan Update website and email, and were bilingual (English and Spanish). Notification methods included flyer distributions at community pop-up events, electronic distribution (e-blasts), social media posts, phone calls

and e-mails to community organizations and community postings from the Greenfield Walking Group on their Facebook page. The public workshops were announced and reported by Bakersfield.com, KGET-17, and 23ABC.

In-person workshops were hosted on March 22 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Community House and March 23 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Silver Creek Community Center. Each workshop featured interactive stations including a kid's activity station placed around the meeting room and audience style seating for a presentation.

More than 50 combined participants attended the in-person Intro to General Plan workshops; a total of 27 attendees signed in during the March 22nd workshop and 20 attendees during the March 23rd workshop.

The following recurring themes emerged from comments received.

- Affordable housing
- Affordable rental options
- Safe communities
- Education and assistance programs for renters and new homeowners
- Housing options for homeless
- Mixed-use housing options (businesses on lower level and housing on upper level)
- Mixed income housing
- Quality housing (energy efficient, materials and design)

An Introduction to General Plan Workshop was conducted on April 14, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. virtually via Zoom to provide an alternative to the in-person meetings. Ten community members participated in the virtual workshop.

Attendees participated in answering polling questions during the workshop. The workshop included two breakout sessions following the presentation. Participants were assigned to the breakout rooms automatically. One breakout room focused on the housing element update and the second breakout room focused on all remaining elements of the general plan.

The following themes emerged from comments received.

### **What are opportunities to build new housing in Bakersfield?**

- Utilize open spaces and empty lots in rural areas
- Create balance with housing development and open space with more emphasis on parks
- Great opportunities to provide starter homes in both up-and-coming and low income areas – consider pet-friendly developments
- Would like to see new housing in central Bakersfield (e.g., Oleander area, along California Avenue and Union Avenue), Downtown Bakersfield, and East Bakersfield
- Build diverse types of housing – consider mixed use retail and housing (Ming Avenue between Stein Road and H is a good corridor) and smaller square footage like townhouses, etc.
- Strive to discourage urban sprawl
- Bridge housing with neighboring unincorporated areas/pockets if there are plans for annexation
- Provide a mixture of affordable and market rate rental and ownership opportunities

### **What are opportunities to maintain current housing in Bakersfield?**

- Consider using existing vacant housing and invest more in rehabilitation/community development to create opportunities for low-income homes and take a block-by-block approach versus one home at a time (e.g., Virginia Ave)
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can provide development opportunities
- Mill Creek expansion is a great opportunity to maintain housing in older neighborhoods
- Look at connectivity issues in older areas and make improvements. Kentucky Street project is a great example.
- Existing housing rehabilitation programs would benefit homeowners and recommend looking into stock quality assessment and secure grants to help

### **What types of housing are needed in Bakersfield?**

- Apartments for families with green spaces and parks
- Affordable housing including providing incentives to developers
- Low- and moderate-income renters and buyers
- Zero lot line and smaller footprint

### **Which housing topics are most important to you?**

- Housing costs – and a need to provide more affordable options
- Revitalization of dilapidated, vacant homes to improve the community
- Inclusion of active transportation and projects to help encourage density

#### **1.2.4 Visioning Workshop Series**

City staff implemented a series of interactive Visioning Workshops to receive vital community input that helped establish the vision and values that guide the General Plan update. A total of four workshops (two in-person and two virtual) were held between May and July 2022 creating opportunities for Bakersfield community members to engage in the process and provide feedback. More than 68 members of the public participated in the Visioning Workshop series.

A variety of noticing methods were used in advance of the workshops to encourage public attendance and participation. All forms of noticing methods provided meeting details, project description, the General Plan website and e-mail address, and were multi-lingual (English, Spanish, and Punjabi). Information for all workshops was posted on the City of Bakersfield General Plan website ([www.bakersfield2045.com](http://www.bakersfield2045.com)), advertised on the City of Bakersfield website ([www.bakersfieldcity.us](http://www.bakersfieldcity.us)), Facebook page and other social media accounts, distributed through eblasts, flyer placement at City public counters at the East Bakersfield Festival, direct e-mails to community organizations and postings from the Community Action Partnership of Kern via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Kern County Farm Bureau shared the information via newsletter. The public workshops were announced and/or reported by KERO 23 ABC News.

In-person workshops were hosted on May 24 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the RiverLakes Ranch Community Center and June 22 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Friendship House Community Center to provide opportunities for the community to receive information on the General Plan and Housing Element updates and to solicit meaningful input on the General Plan vision and guiding principles. Feedback was gathered during focused discussion and interactive activities.

More than 37 combined participants attended the in-person Visioning workshops. Eleven attendees signed in during the May 24th workshop and 26 attendees signed in during the June 22nd workshop.

Participants identified diverse housing opportunities, including more affordable housing, multifamily and multi-generational housing, and other innovative options for all income levels, as Bakersfield's assets.

Visioning Workshops were conducted on June 7 and July 12, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. virtually via Zoom to provide an alternative to the in-person Visioning workshops. Spanish translation was available during each of the virtual workshops. Approximately 31 combined community members participated in the virtual Visioning Workshops; a total of 10 participants logged on during the June 7 workshop and 21 participants logged on during the July 12 workshop.

The July 12 workshop was promoted in a story by KABC 23, in a Facebook post by the Community Action Partnership of Kern, and by the Kern County Farm Bureau through their E-News to their memberships and service audiences.

During the visioning exercise, participants identified equitable and affordable housing, including providing city-wide locations not just downtown, and emergency housing options, as an opportunity to improve Bakersfield in the future.

### **1.2.5 *Housing Opportunities Virtual Workshop***

On October 11, 2022, the City hosted a virtual workshop on housing site opportunities in Bakersfield. The workshop consisted of an informative PowerPoint presentation on housing sites and an online map survey tool and a public discussion period. During the public discussion period attendees were encouraged to describe and identify where future housing should be planned. The PowerPoint presentation was available in Spanish via written translation. Live Spanish translation was available upon request. The event was marketed on the City's social media accounts, the project website, and a distribution of flyers. All marketing materials were available in English and Spanish. The workshop was attended by 10 community members. The comments made during the meeting were clarification comments on the instructions for the online map survey tool.

### **1.2.6 *Housing Opportunity Public Comment Workshop***

On October 18, 2022, the City hosted an in-person open house event specifically for housing site opportunities in Bakersfield. The workshop was hosted by the City of Bakersfield Development Services department. The workshop consisted of an informative PowerPoint presentation on housing sites and an online map tool, and a public discussion period. During the public discussion period attendees were encouraged to describe and identify where future housing should be planned. The PowerPoint presentation was available in Spanish via written translation. Live Spanish translation was available upon request. The event was marketed on the City's social media accounts, the project website, and a distribution of flyers. All marketing materials were available in English and Spanish. No community members attended this event.

### **1.2.7 *Individual Meetings and Focus Group Interviews***

A series of virtual stakeholder interviews were hosted October 11-13, 2022, and on October 17, 2022. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders and experts to identify key issues and expectations for the General Plan update process, including the housing element. Stakeholders were identified through an iterative process with City staff and Rincon Consultants, and represented a variety of



organizations, businesses, and segments of the community. Interviews were organized based on specific topics of the General Plan.

Nine affordable housing developers were invited to attend, and four representatives were able to participate. Additionally, seven market rate housing developers were invited to attend, and five representatives were able to participate.

### Market Rate Housing Developers: Key Findings

There was agreement that the City is helpful and supportive of housing development, including higher density housing and smaller units. Existing and potential State regulations, as well as local zoning restrictions and development standards, were identified as impediments to housing production. Other considerations for the General Plan update process included: streamlining CEQA, reassessing impact fees, streamlining permit processes, and identifying opportunities for infill development outside of Downtown Bakersfield.

Additional comments from participants included:

- First city to approve smallest, most compact plans – “buyers are still warming up to our smaller product”
- Track ADUs separately from single-family housing units
- Went through process to better streamline permitting and plan check procedure but limitations on what can be done given State processes and anti-housing climate
- Critical housing issues include State regulations, supply chain issues, labor shortages, and anti-housing sentiments
- Opportunities to amend the zoning code to allow more housing type diversity
- Housing has been dominated by locally founded and owned companies; publicly owned companies are more interested in diversity of housing and density
- There is a consumer demand for higher density housing and more affordable product types
- Attached ADUs are popular options for families due to the desire for multigenerational housing types
- Uncertainty from State climate change and energy policies, such as increased requirements for energy efficiency, which could add cost to housing
- Opportunity for infill housing development and lot consolidation outside of downtown, especially for missing middle housing types developed by smaller developers – utility owned land could be cleaned up and made available
- Developments in Downtown Bakersfield need to have 100+ units to be practical, but there are difficulties making the land available
- Bakersfield does not yet have a transit-oriented market for housing
- Opportunities exist for reducing impact fees and streamlining the permit process – reduce the number of department reviews and steps
- Consider providing a project advocate on City staff that can walk the developer through the entire development process
- Consider allowing multifamily housing on properties zoned for commercial by-right. North and West Bakersfield has a lot of empty lots because they are zoned commercial

### Affordable Housing Developers: Key Findings

Stakeholders identified issues and opportunities for affordable housing development. The general consensus is the City has proven to be a good partner for affordable housing and has committed to funding, and staff are found to be highly cooperative. Many issues were identified to be found outside of the City's control, such as State formulas for tax credits, but there were opportunities identified at the local level to improve project viability.

- It is difficult to locate land in high-resource TCAC areas to qualify for State tax credits
- The northwestern side of Bakersfield is more reluctant to add affordable housing
- It is difficult to get larger landowners to subdivide and to get smaller properties to consolidate
- Having a single point of contact at City staff for the affordable housing development process would be beneficial to expedite projects
- Landowners want to sell as quickly as possible, so it would be beneficial for affordable housing developers to know the status of the project under City review
- Competition for tax credits is Fresno and Merced – City funds help affordable housing projects be more competitive
- The biggest issue is cost. Reducing development impact fees in targeted areas could be a potential way to encourage affordable housing development
- Reducing CEQA requirements for housing would be helpful because environmental studies slow down the process significantly and require a large cost
- It is good to have an option for market-rate developers to have an option to provide in-lieu fees versus inclusionary housing
- City should consider developing standard criteria and ranking projects for funding (see State tax credit application scoring criteria)

#### 1.2.8 Equity Task Force

To gather local expert-level knowledge and input on the Housing Element and General Plan Update, an Equity Task Force (ETF) was convened with nine representatives of local and regional organizations that focus on the needs of lower-income and special housing needs populations. The purpose of the equity task force was to inform the development of equitable and meaningful General Plan policies and approaches, including those included in the Housing Element Update. The ETF consisted of members of the following organizations:

- Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
- Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homelessness Collaborative (BKRHC)
- Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Inc. (GBLA)
- Bakersfield Senior Center
- MLK CommUNITY Initiative
- ShePower Leadership Academy
- Dolores Huerta Foundation

Two ETF meetings were conducted prior to the release of the public draft Housing Element on February 22, 2023, and March 17, 2023. All meetings were completed virtually. The intention of the first meeting was to establish task force expectations, provide introductory information for the general plan and housing element, and discuss housing policies.

The following housing equity issues were identified:

- Increased housing cost
- Need rent control and rental assistance due to high rental costs
- Lack of affordable housing and general lack of quality affordable housing, not just deed-restricted affordable housing
- Lack of senior affordable housing
- Need additional resources to help affordable housing projects pencil out for non-profit and market rate developers, possible use of Measure N funds
- Need to prioritize landlord tenant rights and education (i.e., need to provide education for tenants on their rights and resources)
- Need resources to ensure that AB 1482 (tenant protections) is enforced
- Agencies like GBLA have funding/staff restrictions to take cases, however there is a lack of resources for outreach and assistance generally.
- Long wait time for affordable housing
- Housing discrimination, including non-explicit “redlining”
- Landlords do not rent to section 8 participants
- Inclusionary Zoning would be helpful to develop affordable housing
- Existing habitability problems and safe/sanitary home issues (roof leaking, etc.) - need Code Enforcement to address, and access to legal assistance for tenants
- Converted motels sometimes less safe for housing due to lack of amenities
- Selective annexation processes have resulted in resource inequity between residents of the city and residents of the county

The following existing public housing resources were identified:

- The Housing Authority is the main resource for affordable housing development, but additional resources would be helpful to augment resource capacity
- Experience challenges when development and rehabilitation projects are not implemented. Recommend the City be proactive to potential developers to support rehabilitation costs, but not competing for grant funding that may not come through in the end. Recommend using more nimble funding streams, such as Measure N, to support private investors.
- Timing and gap funding is an issue for affordable housing development

The following additional services, amenities, and other resident resources were identified:

- Need more services to repair and address habitability
- Housing development for lower-income residents is needed on the western side of Bakersfield and Riverwalk area
- Need education on available resources
- More outreach needed to residents in and near areas proposed for annexation

### **1.2.9 Project Website**

To further facilitate the distribution and gathering of information, the City created a project website dedicated to the General Plan update. The project website provided detailed background information on the Housing Element, answers to frequently asked questions, links to upcoming and past event materials, links to articles and videos on the general plan topics, including the Housing Element. Educational materials included an introduction,

informational flyers, and frequently asked questions specifically on the housing element (<https://bakersfield2045.com/housing-element/>). Project materials associated with the Housing Element update were regularly posted on the project website, including documents available for public review, information for upcoming events, and virtual workshop PowerPoint presentations and video recordings. A link on the website enabled people to sign up for project email updates and provide comment at any time throughout the project process.

Community members also had the opportunity to provide input via online forms. People posted general comments through the website that encompassed the following themes:

- Identified a need for affordable rental housing (less than \$1,800/month).
- Desire to allow ADUs and tiny homes with no extensive parking restrictions.
- Desire to have more homeownership opportunities with development of more condominiums and townhomes.
- Desire to build all high-density housing in areas outside Downtown.
- Desire to build transit-oriented development, including higher density residential development near transit stops (e.g., bus stops, high speed rail).

### ***1.2.10 Housing Opportunity Sites Public Comment Survey***

The City made available on the project website a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based housing opportunity sites survey from October 11, 2022 to November 15, 2022. The sites survey gave the public an opportunity to provide comments and recommendations relating to the housing opportunity sites. The activity was sent out via email lists to interested parties and was advertised on the City's social media and website. 11 public comments were received. The following key themes were collected from community input:

- Support for new multifamily housing in the Northwest Bakersfield, Southwest Bakersfield, Northeast Bakersfield, and Central Bakersfield neighborhoods.
- Recommend the City take possession of abandoned properties for redevelopment or restoration of existing structures.
- Recommend including more housing projects within the sites inventory that appear to be in the project permitting pipeline.

Input gathered through this activity was used to guide the City's site selection process.

### ***1.2.11 Online Housing Needs and Opportunities Survey***

The City prepared and distributed surveys inquiring about housing, access to resources, and experiences with discrimination to all individuals in the City of Bakersfield. The project website hosted an online housing survey for 52 days (from May 16 to July 7, 2022). The surveys were translated into Spanish. The surveys were available online and in paper form. There were 268 survey participants (266 surveys completed in English and 2 surveys completed in Spanish). The input provided by the participants included the following major themes:

- Important aspects of housing include quality and size of housing, affordability, and close to work and/or school were the most important aspects when choosing housing.
- Biggest barriers to housing are that the cost of quality housing is too high, low supply of housing, and cost of housing is too high in areas with good jobs and services were the biggest barriers to affordable desirable housing.

- Urgent housing issues include affordability of desired housing, homelessness, and availability of desired housing were identified as the most urgent housing issues in Bakersfield.
- Housing type needs include housing with 1-2 bedrooms, housing with 3 or more bedrooms, and emergency, transitional or permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness were ranked as the top housing types needed in Bakersfield.
- Desired areas for new housing include areas near public transit stops, employment and shopping centers as well as land that can be converted from commercial (office/store) residential or mixed use (e.g., apartments or condominiums with ground floor store or restaurant, are the best areas to develop housing.
- Half of the survey participants expressed interest in developing an ADU on their current or future property.
- General recommendations for housing included equitable housing, diversified housing types, and housing connected to services, infrastructure, and transit.

### ***1.2.12 Draft Housing Element Available for Public Input***

Bakersfield's Draft 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element was available for public review for 30 days from April 17, 2023, through May 17, 2023. Comments from the public will be incorporated into the revised Draft Housing Element.

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