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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 multifamily 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), advertised on the City of Bakersfield website (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 Rezone Outreach

In order to accommodate the RHNA and fulfill Program 7 of the 6th Cycle Housing Element, a rezoning initiative is necessary. City Staff have recommended changes to the zone classifications of certain parcels to allow for construction of various and innovative types of housing units. In addition, this rezoning effort will provide provisions to require sites identified in the Site Inventory to achieve minimum and maximum densities.

Three stakeholder engagements (held April 17, 2023, January 26, 2024, and February 1, 2024) have been conducted to give the development community and interested parties an opportunity to share questions and concerns on the ability to implement the proposed Amendments. At the April 17th meeting, developers stated their concerns against density minimums and the removal of parking minimums, and a single-family residential developer stated that the community does not want density. Comments shared at the January and February 2024 stakeholder engagements were minimal.

In addition, a public workshop was held in front of the Planning Commission on January 18, 2024. The following input was gathered:

- Opposition and support with comments that the City should rely on the developer and economic market to determine the number of minimum parking spaces
- Support for a requirement that ADA parking spaces be required regardless of parking minimums
- Opposition to requiring amenities based on a point system for multi-unit development;
- Opposition for objective standards; opposition to establish new mixed-use zones vs. allowing residential in all current commercial zones
- Support for lower "floor" density for R-1 zone and higher "ceiling" density for R-4 and R-5 zones.

City staff also conducted outreach efforts with individuals who own property that could be a candidate for rezoning. The City sent a total of four mailings to property owners notifying them of the rezoning effort and requested their input. As part of those mailings, a Frequently Asked Questions pamphlet and a Descriptive Guide of the various zone districts was included. In the third mailing a Consent to Rezone form was included, with many property owners returned the form affirming support for the proposed rezoning.

Property owners also initiated contact with staff requesting their property be included in these efforts as options for providing all types of housing opportunities for all types of income levels throughout the City of Bakersfield. The City included these properties with the rezoning effort whenever appropriate and at no cost to the property owner.

- A public hearing was held on February 29, 2024 that provided an opportunity for property owners and the community to share their opinions on the proposed rezoning. Sandra Plasencia representing Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability provided comment supporting an inclusionary zoning ordinance and in-lieu fee option, clear metrics for housing programs for the Housing Element Update, and review of impacts on development costs, permit times, and other factors for increasing housing development for lower-income households. Two commenters, including Max Bacerra, board member of the Housing Authority of the County of Kern, and commercial developer Eric Mora, spoke in favor of the proposed rezone and noted that the ability to provide mixed use and higher allowable densities would add value to properties. Another commenter, Jess Federick, representing WZI, Inc., stated concerns about high-density development on properties with commercial uses, and potential environmental health concerns in the Westchester neighborhood with increased density and high-speed rail.
- The City Council completed the introduction of the rezoning ordinance on April 10, 2024, and the second reading on April 24, 2024. The completion of this rezoning effort signaled the introduction of higher density and mixed-use zones as new zoning classifications into the City's zoning matrix, ensuring new opportunities for a broad range of housing types at varying densities throughout the community.

1.3 Themes in Community Input

During community outreach, community members identified the following overarching themes regarding housing in Bakersfield. Each one is discussed with how it is addressed in the Housing Element.

Need more affordable housing for both renters and buyers.

How addressed:

- The City will accommodate at least 30,572 units affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. The City will accommodate these units on sites that are currently vacant or underutilized, including 229,297 sites that will be rezoned to allow higher residential densities. Of the sites to be rezoned, 145,106 sites that currently allow commercial or industrial uses will be rezoned to allow multifamily housing.
- At least 25 percent of moderate and above-moderate housing units can be accommodated on sites that support multifamily housing, encouraging the development of townhomes and condominiums for more affordable homeownership opportunities.
- Housing Program 4 directs the City to provide financial and technical support for the development of at least 400 subsidized affordable housing units for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households.
- Housing Program 13 includes actions to encourage the development of at least 248-320 accessory dwelling units (ADUs) during the planning period by creating standard plans and streamlining the permit process. ADUs often provide relatively affordable rental options.

- Although the City does not control the housing market, the City can assist homebuyers. The City will support workshops on homebuying education, direct counseling services, and financial assistance to residents as directed through Housing Program 14.
- The City will develop the Community Land Trust as described in Housing Plan Program 20. to increase available affordable housing options.

Need to increase the variety of available rental and for-sale housing types, including apartments and townhomes, and more options for studio, one, and two-bedroom units.

How addressed:

- Housing Program 8 directs the City to develop web-based tools and resources to inform community members of housing development opportunity sites, current major residential housing developments, and the step-by-step process for residential development, in order to encourage development for a variety of housing types.
- Housing Program 8 also directs the City to provide technical assistance for lot consolidation, maximize density potential of land resources, particularly within 0.25-mile of public transit stops, and continue to provide incentives and technical assistance to acquire and construct market-rate and affordable infill residential projects in Downtown Bakersfield and along strategic corridors, including Chester Avenue, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Panama Lane.
- Housing Program 8 also directs the City to encourage the development of both smaller rental and owner units (studio and one-bedroom) and larger rental units (3 to 4-bedroom units) in residential and mixed-use development through conversations with developers, identifying and providing incentives and reduce constraints to encourage the construction of these housing types.

Need increased resources and housing options for people experiencing homelessness.

How addressed:

- Housing Program 11 directs the City to continue identifying and pursuing federal, state, and regional funds for homeless service providers that operate temporary, permanent, and emergency shelters in the city that assist persons experiencing homelessness and at risk of becoming homeless.
- Housing Program 11 directs the City to annually assess and report the capacity to accommodate individuals experiencing homelessness including existing shelter beds, new shelter beds, identify if those shelter beds are available on a year-round or seasonal basis, average number of shelter beds that are unused on a monthly basis, and number of those exiting shelter to permanent housing.
- Housing Program 11 directs the City to develop a program with the County of Kern and the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC) to incentive property owners/managers with available units to rent to formerly homeless individuals and families.
- Housing Program 11 directs the City to provide financial support to organizations, such as the County of Kern's Building Blocks Program and BKRHC.

Need increased access and services for education on housing rights and resources for tenants and landlords.

How addressed:

- Housing Program 16 directs the City to provide educational opportunities and resources including facilitating informational seminars, working with tenants and tenant advocates to identify violations, and providing trainings for property owners/managers on the requirements of federal and State fair housing laws to prevent discrimination.
- Housing Program 17 directs the City to continue and potentially expand information and referral services that direct families and individuals to financial resources for housing rental or purchase, locating suitable housing, and obtaining housing with special needs facilities such as disabled-accessible units.
- Housing Program 17 also directs the City to expand and improve access to public meetings by conducting public meetings at suitable times (using information from public feedback and survey results), using both in-person and online methods such as Zoom. In-person meetings must accommodate persons with disabilities, be accessible to nearby transit centers, and provide resources such as childcare, translation, and food services. Develop an outreach guide that will be used for all outreach campaigns.
- Housing Program 17 implements programs designed to affirmatively reduce barriers to housing and increase equitable conditions across neighborhoods, addressing issues, such as historic and existing racial and economic inequities, housing mobility and access, community investment and engagement, and environmental health. This program also implements meaningful actions, metrics, and milestones identified in the AFFH analysis to promote inclusive communities, increase housing opportunities, and address racial/ethnic and economic disparities in the city.

Support for building housing throughout all neighborhoods in Bakersfield.

How addressed:

- As described in Appendix E, Housing Resources, the Sites Inventory (list of housing opportunity locations) accommodates new housing in strategic areas across the city as part of a larger effort to stimulate economic development and focus infrastructure improvements. The inventory identifies residentially zoned vacant and underutilized properties to accommodate housing at all income levels. These housing opportunity sites accompany rezoning strategies to increase allowable residential densities and/or add housing as an allowable use in places that previously only allowed non-residential uses.
- The Sites Inventory identifies housing opportunity sites to intensify residential densities around the planned high-speed rail (HSR) station, as well as along several existing commercial corridors including Chester Avenue, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Panama Lane. Opportunity sites in Northwest Bakersfield include vacant and underutilized parcels along Rosedale Highway and Stockdale Highway as well as Allen Road and Old Farm Road. The City also identified housing opportunity sites in Southwest Bakersfield around the CSU Bakersfield campus, adjacent to several large retail centers, and on larger vacant parcels to the south of Panama Lane.
- Housing Program 13 directs the City to promote the development of ADUs to add housing in lower-density neighborhoods.

Support for transit-oriented development and increasing density in areas with existing services.

How addressed:

- Housing opportunity sites were prioritized by location, including proximity to transit, job centers, and community services. Site selection focused heavily on infill development of vacant and nonvacant sites along strategic corridors and in neighborhoods with existing services.
- Housing Program 19 directs the City to promote transitioning single-family neighborhoods, at appropriate locations, into 15-minute walkable neighborhoods by integrating neighborhood-serving uses, and live/work spaces with residential uses. This approach enhances housing options by introducing medium density housing into single-family neighborhoods, providing the middle-income housing that is missing in the City's range of housing choices.
- Housing Program 8 directs the City to maximize density potential of land resources, particularly within 0.25-mile of public transit stops and continue to provide incentives and technical assistance to acquire and construct market-rate and affordable infill residential projects in Downtown Bakersfield and along strategic corridors, including Chester Avenue, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Panama Lane.

Need for quality of life and community development initiatives with increased density particularly in Central and Southeast Bakersfield and for annexation sites.

- Housing Program 15 supports infrastructure for public transit and active transportation such as walking and biking in areas designated for housing opportunities, prioritizing Central and Southeast Bakersfield, and an urban tree management plan that reduces the heat island effect and increases connectivity for walking and biking paths.
- Housing Program 17 directs the development of a 7-foot-tall sound wall on the Golden State Mall and City Serve sites to protect, stabilize, and enhance the Westchester neighborhood immediately beyond.
- Housing Program 17 implements programs designed to affirmatively reduce barriers to housing and increase equitable conditions across neighborhoods, addressing issues such as historic and existing racial and economic inequities, housing mobility and access, community investment and engagement, and environmental health. This program also implements meaningful actions, metrics, and milestones identified in the AFFH analysis to promote inclusive communities, increase housing opportunities, and address racial/ethnic and economic disparities in the city.
- Housing Program 17 directs the City to work with commercial property owners and developers to identify sites for new grocery stores in Southeast Bakersfield and provide technical assistance and permit streamlining.
- Housing Program 18 ensures that infrastructure plans, including community infrastructure needs, are included with any Specific Plan or Master Plan for annexation sites, and directs the City to identify potential funding needs and sources to ensure adequate community infrastructure for annexed sites during the planning period.

4.31.4 Draft Housing Element Available for Public Input

Bakersfield's Draft 6th Cycle Housing Element was available for public review for 30 days from April 17, 2023, through May 17, 2023. The City received comment letters via email and the project website from 30 individuals and organizations.

In response to public comments, City staff made changes to the site inventory, enhanced the analysis, and revised the housing policies and programs to reflect public input on the

Draft Housing Element. A comment matrix with the general comment themes and City response is provided in [Table A-1](#) below.

Table A-1 Summary of Comments and Responses

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Concerns relating to the Sites Inventory and rezoning effort, such as requests to include or rezone specific properties (letters from B. DeBranch, W. Jackson, S. Patel, and Y. Singh)</p>	<p>The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is a State mandate and the City must comply with State law by planning for future residential development through the identification of sites that can accommodate the assigned RHNA. Development of the City’s Site Inventory is detailed more in Appendix E, Housing Resources, and public input was provided on Site Inventory and the rezoning strategy.</p> <p>The City undertook a number of additional engagement efforts related to the Site Inventory. As detailed in Chapter 1, multiple engagement events were held between November 2021 and March 2022, as the City was developing the Affordable Housing Strategy. In addition, stakeholder meetings, community workshops, an online survey, and the Site Inventory interactive activity gave the public additional opportunities to provide input on the Site Inventory. The Site Inventory interactive survey was available on the City’s Housing Element website from October 2022 to November 2022, and the public was invited to review sites proposed for inclusion in the inventory and provide comment on individual sites or groups of sites. The City honored all requests from property owners who asked that their property(s) be removed from the Site Inventory through this process, and additional requests received more recently, including one received during the 30-day Draft Housing Element public comment period, have been honored.</p> <p>The City is obligated to rezone land suitable to facilitate development and to accommodate the RHNA. The rezone effort, occurring concurrently with adoption of the Housing Element update, is not limited to the sites included in the Site Inventory. The rezone effort can include additional sites, such as those requested by property owners. The City will consider requested properties for the rezone effort. There was an inquiry about the specific land use and zoning designations of an annexation site included in the Site Inventory (letters from M. Wade). Information on the progress of the annexation and proposed rezone strategy for that site has been added to the description of the Zerker and 7th Standard annexation on page E-35, and an updated zoning map for that site has been included in Attachment A.</p>
<p>Concerns relating to environmental and infrastructure constraints such as road and sidewalk improvements, water and air quality, fire, transit, and infrastructure funding, specifically in Central and Southeast Bakersfield (comments submitted via the project website, and letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>Development of the Site Inventory took into consideration potential environmental constraints that may limit housing development on specific sites or areas of the city. Future development projects on specific sites will be required to assess environmental impacts through the City’s development review process.</p> <p>Program 15 includes actions to improve infrastructure, especially in areas with proposed housing development, such as public transit, walking and biking paths, and energy and water efficiency in new buildings. Housing Plan Programs 15.3 and 15.5 were revised to prioritize Central and Southeast Bakersfield.</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Policies and programs should reflect Bakersfield redlining history and rectify past injustices (letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>The Draft Housing Element is required to analyze local data and knowledge to analyze local fair housing issues. Appendix D, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, includes information on historic and current segregation patterns in Bakersfield and measurable actions the City will take to address fair housing issues. The sources of information provided in Appendix D include historic research on redlining and use of racial covenants. Policies and programs were developed to address inequities among communities and population groups, especially Program 17, which includes Meaningful Actions the City will implement during the planning period. Several program actions were revised or added to prioritize in Central and Southeast Bakersfield (communities in greatest resource need that have been historically neglected through redlining), including community planning, infrastructure investments, and public outreach and education.</p>
<p>Policies and programs should reflect the needs of the city and respond to issues such as affordable housing, homelessness, special needs populations, displacement, and fair housing (comments submitted via the project website, and letters from S. Pelz, Housing Authority of the County of Kern, and S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>The Draft Housing Element includes programs to address the city’s needs. Each program contains specific actions, timelines, and objectives to achieve the City’s goals. Specific programs include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>Program 2: Continuation of the City’s Code Enforcement Division to promote safe and sanitary housing.</p> <p>Program 5: The City will promote the development of a variety of housing for special needs populations.</p> <p>Program 11: The City will continue to provide services for homeless individuals and facilitate the development of permanent supportive housing.</p> <p>Program 17: The City will support fair housing services and education.</p> <p>Program 6: The City will provide assistance to vulnerable communities to ensure that tenants can remain</p> <p>The Housing Element has been updated to address comments as followed:</p> <p>Action 5.9 was added to create a report on potential funding sources for rental assistance for special needs populations.</p> <p>Additional analysis on farmworker households was included and the need for additional farmworker housing units was clarified in Appendix B, Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Clarification of the effect of short-term rentals may have on the supply and price of long-term rentals was added to Appendix C, Housing Constraints</p> <p>The displacement analysis in Appendix D, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, was updated to reflect housing affordability as a driving factor.</p> <p>Clarification was added in Appendix D, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, on which residents would be the most impacted from deteriorating housing.</p> <p>Additional analysis on foreclosure trends was added as a constraint to housing Appendix C, Housing Constraints.</p> <p>Some requests for additional analysis were outside the scope of the Housing Element and were therefore not included in revisions.</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Appreciation for, and desires to strengthen the efforts by the City to enhance affordability by providing fee waivers, expediting project review, rezoning areas for residential uses, and developing standards supportive of higher densities, especially in proximity to transit and to develop "missing middle housing" (comments submitted via the project website, and letters from S. Pelz, Housing Authority of the County of Kern, and S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and L. Mendibles, Caltrans)</p>	<p>The Draft Housing Element has been updated to address comments as followed: Appendix C, Housing Constraints, was revised to reflect the rezoning effort that was adopted by the City in spring 2024, including reduction in parking requirements, creation of higher-density and mixed-use zoning districts, and allowance for smaller housing typologies particularly near transit corridors. include the following information: The City is reviewing the exclusive Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zone to determine if it is a constraint, and if so, will include changes in the proposed zoning code update.</p> <p>Appendix E, Housing Resources, was revised to include the following information: Clarification of the smaller sites included Sites Inventory in Southeast Bakersfield.</p>
<p>Concerns relating to the availability and ability to achieve development of affordable housing, especially for special housing needs groups such as farmworkers (comments submitted via the project website, and letters from E. Pelz, Housing Authority of the County of Kern, S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, D. Omohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)</p>	<p>The Housing Element includes programs to facilitate the development of affordable housing, such as preparation of a study to support consideration of an inclusionary housing ordinance, provision of technical and financial support for the production of regulated affordable housing, and preservation of affordable housing at risk of conversion to market rate. The City has a goal of supporting the development of 1,000 units of rent-restricted affordable housing. The City will also support the development of market rate housing that is affordable to moderate and lower-income households by increasing the allowable densities of several parcels in the city through the rezone effort, and promoting the development of multifamily housing on large vacant parcels.</p> <p>In Program 5, the number of housing units that the City will support for farmworkers during the housing element planning period has been increased from 30 units to 240 units. The following language was added to Action 5.3. The City Council has established an Affordable Housing Trust Fund that includes an annual Notice of Funding Availability. The City commits to prioritizing funds for units for farm laborers. The City also added Program 30 to fulfill the goals of the newly established Community Land Trust, which will create affordable housing opportunities for lower-income and special housing needs groups such as farmworkers.</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Public participation should be fair and equitable to all (letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>The Housing Element contains a detailed summary of the public engagement program implemented for this project in Appendix A, Summary of Public Participation. Additionally, the City conducted an extensive public outreach process to develop the Affordable Housing Strategy prior to the outreach efforts for the Housing Element from November 2021 through March 2022, which analyzed constraints and opportunities for housing development throughout the city and guided several of the policies and programs for the Housing Element. The outreach for the Housing Element and the Affordable Housing Strategy included direct outreach to community-based organizations, stakeholder focus groups, multiple advertising platforms, several virtual and in-person engagement efforts, and opportunities for input in multiple languages. All public engagement events were advertised in multiple ways, and in multiple languages.</p>
<p>Implement a fee structure to offset the impact of short-term rentals and waiving of fees to facilitate supportive housing and analyze the effects of short-term rentals on housing pricing, affordability, and other factors (letters from S. Pelz, Housing Authority of the County of Kern, and S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>As noted in Chapter 2 of the Draft Housing Element, Program Action 6.8 tasks the City with developing a report on the impacts of short-term rentals. To address this comment, Action 6.8 has been amended to include consideration of a short-term rental fee if the study concludes that short-term rentals impact on the availability and/or affordability of rental housing in the city. The City currently has not adopted any ordinance specific to short-term rentals</p>
<p>Advocate for state and federal level policy reform to facilitate affordable housing development (letter from S. Pelz, Housing Authority of the County of Kern)</p>	<p>While this is outside the scope of the Draft Housing Element, the City's goals and objectives aim to increase affordable housing opportunities and reduce constraints such as development impact fees.</p>
<p>Tenant protection policies and resources and landlord education efforts should be strengthened (comments submitted via the project website, and letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>Tenant protection and landlord education efforts are encompassed in Chapter 2, Program 6: Strengthening Tenant and Owner Protections and Support and Program 3: Preservation of At-Risk Affordable Housing to ensure that property owners and managers adhere to fair housing laws and to provide education and access to resources such as legal assistance. This includes providing rental support to low-income households, tenant/owner counseling, information on tenants' rights, and tenant relocation assistance.</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Strengthen efforts to improve the energy efficiency of new housing (comments submitted via the project website)</p>	<p>This recommendation is encompassed in Chapter 2, Program 15: Support Climate Change Resiliency in Buildings and Neighborhoods which incentivizes energy-efficient and water-efficient building development.</p>
<p>Support for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) can as a valuable addition to the city's housing stock, and concerns regarding issues related to ADUs, especially for lower-income households (comments submitted via the project website, and letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>The City will support and encourage the development of ADUs as described in Chapter 2, Program 13.</p> <p>Program 17: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing was amended to include information on tenant and landlord rights for ADUs, and now reads as follows: "Coordinate with GBLA to provide educational workshops/trainings to tenants and landlords on fair housing rights and responsibilities, including information on ADUs."</p>
<p>Support for the policies and programs in the Housing Element including construction of a variety of housing types, supporting affordable home ownership, and reducing barriers to housing development (comments submitted via the project website and D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)</p>	<p>The City's completion of a rezoning effort introduced higher density and mixed-use zones as new zoning classifications into the City's zoning matrix, ensuring new opportunities for a broad range of housing types at varying densities throughout the community, including townhomes. This objective is encompassed in Chapter 2, Program 8, which aims to reduce barriers and incentivize housing development. Additionally, Program 14 aims to facilitate homeownership opportunities and education efforts. Action 8.19 was added to the Housing Element to encourage developers to build condominium projects in the city.</p>
<p>Areas such as the Southeast, Eastside and Central areas of Bakersfield, Rexland Acres, Greenfield, and Casa Loma are identified as R/ECAPs under SB 535 and are areas that must be meaningfully included in the development of the Housing Element (comments submitted via the project website and letter from S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>A discussion of R/ECAPs and Southeast and Central Bakersfield is provided in Appendix D, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. The Housing Element does not address communities that are outside of the City limits. Annexation requests encouraged. Applications are forwarded to the Local Agency Formation Commission for processing. However, the City can address future plans for lands within the City's Sphere of Influence in the General Plan Update that is currently underway.</p>

1.5 Revised Draft Housing Element for Public Review

Following preliminary HCD review and subsequent revision of the draft 6th cycle Housing Element, the City held a second public review period for seven days, from September 5 to September 12, 2023. Three comment letters were submitted.

The Home Builders Association of Kern County submitted a public comment letter on September 7, 2023. The Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability (Leadership Counsel) submitted a public comment letter on September 12, 2023 and a supplemental letter on September 15, 2023. In response to those letters, the City requested a meeting with Leadership Counsel, which was held on November 1, 2023. During this meeting, Leadership Counsel identified their priority concerns, which are included in Table A-2. The Leadership Counsel also submitted a comment letter to the City on April 11, 2024.

In response to these comments, City staff made changes to the analysis and revised the housing policies and programs to reflect public comments on the Draft Housing Element. A comment matrix with the general comment themes and City response is provided in Table A-2 below.

Table A-2 Subsequent Public Draft Summary of Comments and Responses

Comment Theme	Responses
Concern about the high cost of market-based constraints to housing development, including availability of labor, supply chain issues related to building materials and infrastructure, high interest rates, high cost of insurance for attached housing and homeowners associations, limited access to capital, energy efficiency building code updates to the cost of constructing housing (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)	Market and governmental constraints are detailed in Appendix C, Housing Constraints. The City will implement programs to increase flexibility of development standards and provide technical assistance and streamlining where possible, especially to support the development of housing affordable to lower-income and special needs households, to mitigate some of the costs associated with development, as described in Chapter 2, Programs 4, 5, 8, 9, and 12.
Infill sites often feature aging and inadequate backbone infrastructure such as sewer and water mains, and electrical service that are extremely costly to replace or upgrade to accommodate higher densities (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)	The City will support development of infill sites in Downtown Bakersfield and along strategic corridors with incentives, technical assistance, and grant funding when possible, as detailed in Chapter 2, Program 8.

Comment Theme	Responses
<p>Consider appointing a staff permit process expediter/trouble shooter for larger projects. Also, seek regular customer feedback on the effectiveness and user friendliness of the new electronic permit system (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)</p>	<p>As a result of this comment, the following action was added to Action 9.1: The City will ensure a streamlined process for large site development projects that provides a singular staff contact throughout the entirety of the development process to navigate all procedures.</p>
<p>Concern that new high-density zones with minimum densities will not be supported by market demand or financial feasibility (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)</p>	<p>A detailed list of recently developed multifamily projects is provided in Appendix E, Housing Resources, beginning on page E-10. In a review of development trends across 25 multifamily projects developed or pending construction in Bakersfield within the last 10 years, there were 12 projects in high-density zones (C-C and R-4 zones) which achieved an average of 63 percent of allowable density. The City will support development in high-density zones through flexible development standards, technical assistance, and grant funding when possible, as described in Chapter 2, Programs 4, 5, 8, 9, and 12.</p> <p>The City has received several inquiries from property owners to increase allowable densities for residential use, some of which are included as comment letters in Appendix A. The City sent letters to all property owners of sites proposed for rezone informing them of the rezone effort and advertised the planning effort in the newspaper. Property owners had the opportunity to comment on the rezone to the City directly via phone or email, or at the public hearing.</p>
<p>Referring to Program 15, there is concern that retrofitting existing homes for energy and water savings will be expensive (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County)</p>	<p>Program 15 supports access to state and local programs for energy and water improvements, including financing opportunities and financial incentives, with a focus on outreach to low- and moderate-income households. There is no mandate for residents to participate in such programs.</p>
<p>Support for, and opposition to, an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (D. Dmohowski, Home Builders Association of Kern County, S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>Under Program 10, the City will conduct a feasibility study for an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that will take into account data on potential effects, as well as input from the housing development and real estate community, residents, and other stakeholders. The process will be guided by a third-party objective consultant to conduct an economic feasibility and affordable unit in-lieu fee/nexus study.</p> <p>The Housing Element was revised to include the following discussion in Appendix C, Housing Constraints: Even in the absence of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, the City has demonstrated consistent support for affordable housing development. By analyzing the average number of affordable units developed annually compared to similarly-sized cities, it becomes evident that the City has made noteworthy strides in addressing housing affordability concerns. The City supported the construction of 12 projects with 743 deed-restricted units in the 5th housing cycle and brought the number of total deed restricted units to 4,882. The City will soon add another 126 affordable units with the approval of the CityServe project. The City's adoption of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in 2021 leverages available federal and state funds and will streamline affordable housing development. The City's approach thus far is characterized by strategic planning and stakeholder engagement, which underscores the City's commitment to navigating the</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
	<p>complexities of affordable housing without the mandate of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.</p>
<p>Residents need counsel support during eviction processes and more protections (S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>City added a description of the pilot Eviction Prevention Program in AFFH section 3.2 Ability to Address Complaints.</p> <p>City added the following text to Action 17.1: "In FY 2023-2024, the City committed funds for a pilot Eviction Prevention Program to include outreach and education on tenant rights and landlord responsibilities." The City added this text for Actions and objectives for Action 17.1: "Present results from the reporting collected from year one of the pilot Eviction Protection Program to City Council by January 2026, and make recommendations to continue and if possible, expand the program. If approved, enact recommendations within one six months of the approval date." The program will provide multi-lingual educational public awareness and public education workshops, meetings with residents to discuss tenant rights, legal assistance to act as a liaison between tenants and landlords, negotiate settlement agreements, and attend dispossession hearings as necessary.</p> <p>Additionally, the following text was added to Action 6.9: Assess potential for a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) or Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA) Policy which would give tenants and/or qualified organizations advance notice that the landlord intends to sell the building, along with specified timelines to exercise the "right of first offer" and "right of first refusal."</p> <p>Prepare and present a report on the development of TOPA or COPA policy to the City Council by January 2026. If a policy is approved, develop the policy by May 2026.</p>
<p>The City had a rental assistance program during COVID that should be brought back (S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>Action 6.6 was changed from "Assess the need for a rental assistance program" to "Review potential funding sources for a rental assistance program."</p> <p>The following text was added to the description of Program 6: Tenant and Owner Protections and Support in the Housing Plan (Chapter 2): "During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the City, in partnership with HACK, enacted the Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance program through the CARES Act Emergency Rental Assistance, to provide relief funds to lower-income residents. The CARES Act funding was temporary, and the City is no longer able to continue the assistance program. The City recognizes that rental and utility assistance may still be needed to support lower-income residents and prevent homelessness. Therefore, the City will review potential funding sources for a long-term program to provide relief to tenants to avoid the displacement."</p>
<p>The metrics are too low for rehab and repair programs to address habitability issues that they witnessed during field visits (S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability)</p>	<p>The following text was added to Appendix B Section 1.5.5: "In response to the negative public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City assisted homeowners through a Home Repair and Weatherization Program. The program provided grants, up to \$15,000 per household, to homeowners disproportionately impacted by the pandemic that needed improvements to preserve the health and safety of their homes. The program was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the funds have since been exhausted. In a continued dedication to these efforts, the City continuously partners with Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) to provide emergency and supportive services for residents. CAPK's energy programs provide approximately 1,000 eligible households per year in the county with free weatherization services, including households in Bakersfield. CAPK's Home Repair and Weatherization Program targets approximately 150-200 in Bakersfield per year. Services include caulking doors and windows, adding weatherstripping and insulation, refrigerator replacement, installing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, checking gas appliance safety, and minor home repairs. Although the City does not directly fund</p>

Comment Theme	Responses
	<p>this program, the City's support of other CAPK programs and initiatives allows CAPK to provide this program at no charge. The City additionally partners with the Golden Empire Habitat for Humanity (HH). HH has an Aging in Place program that provides critical home repairs to our aging population. The City does not directly fund this program; however, through its CDBG grant, the City supports other HH programs, including a construction trade workforce development program that provides hands on experience through HH resources such as the Aging in Place program. The City's support to HH programs allows HH to provide the Aging in Place program.</p> <p>The following text was added to Program 1 Residential Rehabilitation and Repair Program in Chapter 2: "Additionally, as described in Appendix B, Housing Needs Assessment, the City continuously partners with Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) to provide emergency and supportive services for residents. CAPK's Home Repair and Weatherization Program serves approximately 150-200 in Bakersfield per year. The City will increase resident participation in programs designed to reduce household energy costs, particularly home weatherization programs."</p>
<p>Support current discussions on community land trusts. Would like to see a land trust that specifically benefits farmworkers (S. Plascencia-Rodriguez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability).</p>	<p>The City recently adopted a resolution to establish the Bakersfield Community Land Trust to provide affordable housing options that will benefit lower-income residents, including farmworkers. Program 20 was added in the Housing Plan to evaluate best practices and develop a framework for the CLT.</p>