



Housing Element Programs Report

City of Merced

February 18, 2025





6th Cycle Housing Element Programs

Categories of Housing Programs:

Housing production

Housing preservation

Housing protections

Housing access

Fair housing

Background



Review and update goals, policies, programs, and objectives from the previous housing cycle



Specific commitments to action and timelines



Remedy identified constraints to housing development and compliance with new state laws



Accommodate special needs groups such as seniors, persons experiencing homelessness, college students, farmworkers, and persons with disabilities



Reduce fair housing issues and improve adverse conditions

Program 1: Regional Collaboration

Collaborate regionally on housing, funding, best practices, and efforts addressing housing, transit, economic development, and homelessness.

- Participate in regional meetings
- Partner with regional agencies to:
 - Address homelessness
 - Management and implement transit and services
 - Provide a public forum
 - Implement a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

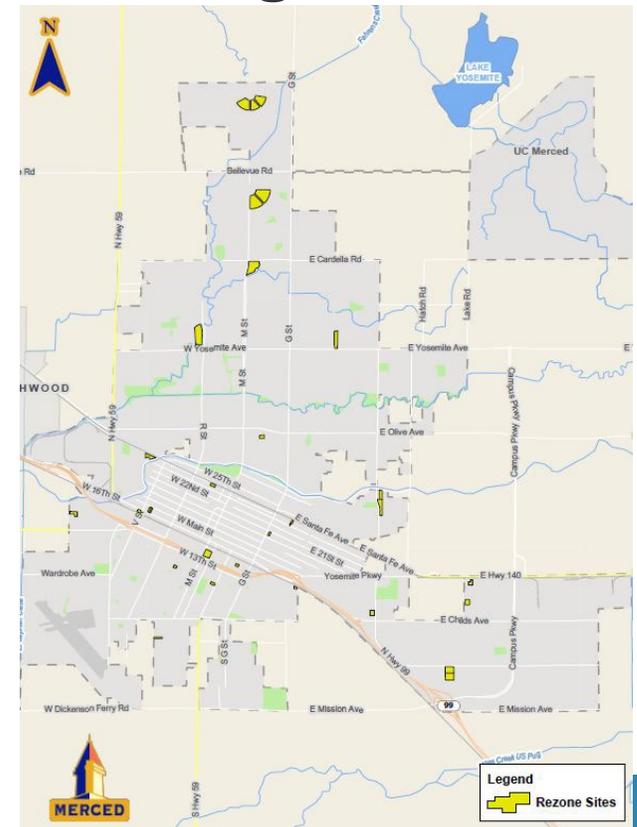


Program 2: Adequate Sites for RHNA and Monitoring of No Net Loss

Ensure there are adequate sites at appropriate densities during the planning period to accommodate City's share of regional housing need.

- Facilitate development*
- Rezone*
- Maintain an inventory of prospective sites*
- Meet with property owners
- Monitor no net-loss*

**Strictly required by state law*



Program 3: By-Right Approval

If a site has been used in the City's inventory in prior housing element cycles and meets certain criteria, projects on those sites are subject to by-right approval when a project includes 20 percent of the units affordable to lower-income households and no subdivision is proposed.

- Update zoning code to reflect state law

Strictly required by state law

Program 4: Replacement Housing

Development on non-vacant sites with existing residential units is subject to replacement requirements, pursuant to AB 1397.

- Amend the zoning code to address replacement requirements

Strictly required by state law

Program 5: Accessory Dwelling Units

Continue to encourage the production of ADUs and work to provide affordable units for lower-income households.

- Facilitate development—provide Technical assistance, resources, and education
- ADU amnesty program
- Pursue funding sources to enhance ADU affordability



Program 6: Zoning Code Amendments

Remove constraints to housing development by amending the Zoning Code to facilitate a variety of housing types, especially housing for lower-income households and those with special needs.

- Allow for emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, and other resources for low-income families and people experiencing homelessness*
- Revise development standards
- Allow for farmworker and employee housing*

**Strictly required by state law*

Program 7: Facilitating Affordable Housing Development

Expand affordable housing options for households of all income levels using development tools such as density bonus provisions, waiving development fees and streamlining the application process.

- Pursue funding
- Conduct outreach to affordable housing developers



Program 8: Preservation of At-Risk Housing

The City will work to preserve assisted units and will proactively monitor to encourage continued affordability beyond existing covenants and work proactively with owners of affordable units to assist in rehabilitation needs.

- Monitor at-risk units
- Work with property owners to ensure tenants are properly notified

Strictly required by state law

Program 9: Housing Preservation and Rehabilitation

The City works cooperatively with citizens to ensure Municipal Code compliance and explore funding for housing rehabilitation.

- Track where rehabilitation needs are heightened
- Conduct a housing conditions survey
- Public education



Program 10: Lower-Income and Special Needs Housing

Assist in the development of housing to meet the needs of extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households.

- Connect residents to resources
- Collaborate with the Housing Authority
- Develop and inventory of affordable housing
- Work with UC Merced to complete a Student Housing Plan
- Density bonus for senior housing

Program 11: Farmworker Housing

Merced had 2,781 farmworkers in 2021, representing 22.6 percent of the total farmworker population across the county.

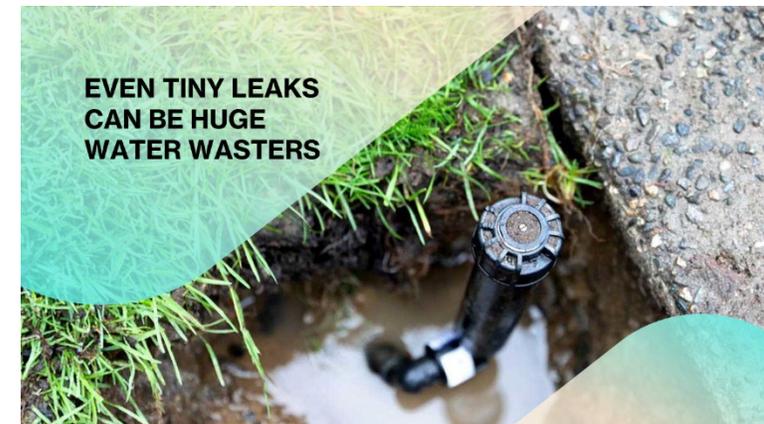
- Apply for funding for farmworker housing
- Work with farm owners to identify farmworker housing needs
- Facilitate development through expedited review and development standard concessions

Program 12: Water and Sewer Service

The City of Merced is the provider of water and sewer services within city limits. Adequate water and sewer services are available to fully accommodate the City's share of the RHNA.

- Adopt a policy to prioritize water/sewer services to affordable housing projects if capacity is limited*
- Update master plans
- Conduct outreach on conservation measures
- Rehabilitation assistance for conservation

**Strictly required by state law*



Program 13: Community and Economic Development

Develop and maintain infrastructure for economic growth and equal access to essential services.

- Review the City's Capital Improvement Projects
- Work with MCAG on transportation plans
- Connect street and pedestrian/bicycle networks

Program 14: Fair Housing Outreach and Enforcement

Assist residents with fair housing issues

- Provide and disseminate information and resources
- Conduct workshops
- Support homeownership opportunities

Public Input and Suggestions for Programs

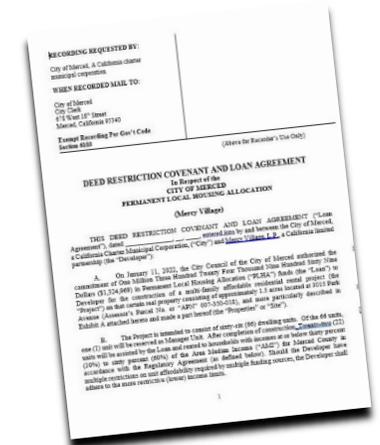
Some of the suggestions are already priorities and pending zoning ordinance amendments

- Remove parking requirements *
- More economic development *
- Invest in the Merced Senior Center and Boys & Girls Club *
- Add housing as a use for commercial properties *

Public Input and Suggestions for Programs

Some suggestions are familiar:

- Establish permanent rental assistance program
- Rent stabilization program
- Establish a rental registry
- Establish a right to legal counsel
- Invest in infrastructure in food deserts



Public Input and Suggestions for Programs

New Ideas for Programs

- Zoning amendments to attack urban sprawl and increase higher density housing
- Upzone residential areas that are R1, to allow small houses, and tiny house villages
- Allow small businesses in residential zones
- Tiny homes on wheels in villages should be allowed
- More investments in seniors

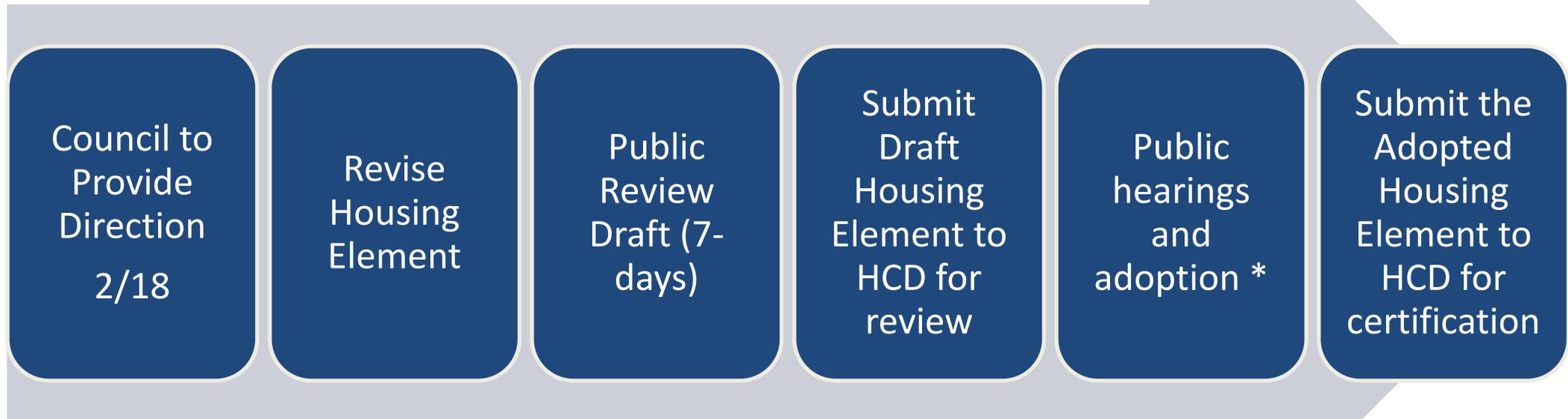


Public Input and Suggestions for Programs

More Ideas for Programs

- Incentivize rental property owners to rent their units, to avoid vacant units sitting for extended periods of time
- Invest in infrastructure in food deserts
- Limit conversion of homes to offices, especially in the downtown
- Regulate air – bed and breakfast rentals (short term rentals)
- Do more to encourage affordability for those rentals with expiring affordability covenants
- Establish policies limiting or removing rental application fees

Next Steps



* Rezones to meet RHNA must occur before HE will be in compliance.

Questions,
Discussion,
Direction,
Thank you!