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Appendix B: Housing Constraints

A number of factors may constrain the development of housing, particularly housing affordable to lower-income households. These factors can generally be divided into “governmental constraints,” or those that are controlled by federal, state, or local governments; and “nongovernmental constraints,” factors that are not generally created or cannot be affected by government controls. This chapter also looks at the “infrastructure and environmental constraints” facing Petaluma.

An analysis of these factors can help in the development of programs that lessen the effects of constraints on the supply and cost of housing.

B.1. Governmental Constraints

B.1.1. Transparency in Development Regulations

To increase transparency and certainty in the development application process as required by law, the City provides a range of information online for ease of access, some of which is as follows:

- City General Plan: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/general-plan/>
- Planning Documents: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/planning-documents/>
 - River Access and Enhancement Plan
 - Central Petaluma Specific Plan
 - Petaluma Smart Rail Station Areas: TOD Master Plan
- City Interactive Zoning Map: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/zoning-map/>
- Zoning Code: <https://petaluma.municipal.codes/ZoningOrds>
- Smart Code (for the TOD Master Plan areas): <https://petaluma.municipal.codes/SmartCode>
- Planning Applications: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/planning-applications/>
- Planning Fee Schedule: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/documents/planning-fee-schedule/>
- Permits and Planning Applications Hub – online tool for submitting and paying for applications and other research tools: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/planning-apply-online/>
- Site Plan and Architectural Review Guidelines: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/site-plan-architectural-review/>
- Historic District Guidelines: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/historic-districts/>

B.1.2. Land Use Controls

B.1.2.1. Urban Growth Boundary

In 1998, the citizens of Petaluma overwhelmingly approved (by 80 percent of the vote) an urban growth boundary (UGB) that represents the limit of urban development and the provision of city water and sewer services. The original expiration date for the UGB was December 31, 2018 but a voter-approved extension now means the boundary is in place through 2025. The UGB is intended to promote a compact urban form that ensures the efficient provision of services and infrastructure, and preserves agricultural and open space outside of the boundary. The boundary is essentially contiguous with the City’s Sphere of Influence except for a sewer service area that encompasses the Penngrove area and a water service area that serves a small rural area on the western edge of the city. Although most amendments to the UGB require a popular

vote, the City Council is empowered to amend the UGB to accommodate affordable housing projects under certain circumstances.

The City of Petaluma is actively promoting the development of higher-density housing to maximize the number of units that can be built within its UGB. In 2025, the City will review the UGB to potentially expand or modify it. The City expects that any modifications will be minor adjustments rather than large expansions.

Because there are ample areas within the UGB to more than accommodate Petaluma’s regional “fair share” of new construction during the planning period, the UGB is not a constraint on the ability of the City to meet its housing needs for the next eight years (2023-2031).

B.1.2.2. General Plan

In May 2008 the City adopted the Petaluma General Plan 2025. The General Plan 2025 included a comprehensive, parcel specific review of land use and infrastructure capacity. The General Plan includes a variety of goals, policies and actions addressing a wide range of topics. In addition to the Housing Element, two of the General Plan’s other elements directly affect the location, type, and timing of housing that may be developed: the Land Use, Growth Management, and the Built Environment Element (Chapter 1), and the Community Design, Character, and Green Building Element (Chapter 2).

B.1.2.2.1. Land Use, Growth Management, and the Built Environment Element

The Land Use, Growth Management, and the Built Environment Element establishes eight residential land use classifications, with the density ranges shown in Table B1. High-density residential uses are also allowed under the Mixed Use designation.

Table B1: Residential Land Use Designations

General Plan Designation	Type of Uses	Density (units/acre)
Rural Residential	Single-family residential development located primarily at the western perimeter of the City, along the Urban Growth Boundary	0.1 – 0.6
Very Low Density Residential	Single-family residential development applied primarily to the southern hillsides, with a minimum lot size of half an acre, and larger lots required for sloped sites.	0.6 – 2.5
Low Density Residential	Single-family dwellings. This classification represents the majority of the existing stock of detached single-family dwellings.	2.6 – 8.0
Diverse Low Density Residential	Single-family dwellings, duplexes, multi-family dwellings. This designation encompasses the diversity of housing types and densities in the older neighborhoods surrounding downtown Petaluma.	6.1 – 12.0

General Plan Designation	Type of Uses	Density (units/acre)
Medium Density Residential	Single-family dwellings, duplexes, multi-family dwellings.	8.1 – 18.0
High Density Residential	Multi-family dwellings. This designation would permit the full range of housing types, but is intended for multi-family housing in specific areas where higher density is considered appropriate.	18.1 –30.0
Mobile Homes	Mobile/Manufactured Homes. Residential home developments of eight or more units. Mobile or manufactured homes are the only allowed housing type.	8.0 – 18.0
Mixed-Use	Outside of the Central Petaluma Specific Plan. Multi-family dwellings and non-residential uses such as retail and office	up to 30.0
	Within the boundaries of the Central Petaluma Specific Plan	---
<i>Source: City of Petaluma: General Plan 2025, May 2008.</i>		

Minimum densities are included in the residential classifications in order to maximize residential development on a limited supply of land and achieve a balance and variety of housing types. A program in this Housing Element considers establishing minimum residential densities in mixed-use zones.

Residential uses occupy the largest share of land in the City limits (43.4%) and are generally represented in the form of low-density neighborhoods. Residential areas are distributed across the entire city, except along the far eastern riverfront. Single-family homes comprise the predominant housing type and span virtually all parts of Petaluma, while a mix of both low- and higher-density housing (e.g., multiplexes and apartments) is generally clustered in the downtown area, organized on a walkable street grid. A smattering of middle-density apartments are found throughout the City with larger master planned apartment communities found east of Highway 101, and some middle-density buildings (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes) found on the north end of the city near Sonoma Mountain Parkway. There are six mobile home parks in the city, totaling more than 120 acres and 660 dwelling units. These are primarily located in the north end of the city near Highway 101.¹

The City of Petaluma is considered a suburban jurisdiction. Government Code Section 65583.2(c)(3)(B) states that sites allowing at least 20 units per acre are deemed appropriate to accommodate housing for lower income households. In Petaluma, sites classified as High Density Residential or Mixed Use meet this

¹ City of Petaluma General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report: Land Use and Community Character, October 22, 2021.

definition and represent the greatest potential for development of affordable housing to very low and low income households.

B.1.2.2.2. Community Design, Character, and Green Building Element

The Community Design, Character, and Green Building Element of the General Plan is intended to strengthen Petaluma's unique identity, preserve and strengthen the quality of life in Petaluma, and preserve and enhance views of dominant features. The element divides the community into fourteen planning subareas providing more detailed policies specific to those subareas. The final section of the element relates to green building. Petaluma has a unique identity valued by residents and visitors alike. The Community Design, Character, and Green Building Element includes policies aimed at protecting and enhancing the physical elements (both natural and created) that have helped shape this identity. Included among these are the city's setting, general distribution of neighborhoods and land uses, landmarks, special neighborhoods, open space amenities, and historical and archeological resources. On a more detailed level, the discussion outlines policies for each of Petaluma's 14 planning subareas, as well as green building policies. Policies focus attention on the city's neighborhoods, on the creation of pedestrian-oriented activity centers, and linkages.

B.1.2.2.3. General Plan Update

Concurrent with this Housing Element update the City is updating the 2025 General Plan. The process began in late 2020 with community outreach and is anticipated to be adopted by the City Council in 2023. In addition to this Housing Element, the General Plan update will include the following elements, which may be combined or renamed: Land Use, Open Space, Conservation, Circulation, Noise, and Safety. Petaluma has experienced a great deal of change since the adoption of the current General Plan. High priority concerns include availability and affordability of housing, climate change, public health and sustainability. Climate action is an integral part of this update process and a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan will be included in the new General Plan. This Climate Action and Adaptation Plan will be both a technical document used to guide City decision-making and a visionary document used by the public to understand the direction of the community. This plan will include a greenhouse gas inventory, greenhouse gas reduction analysis, and a climate equity assessment that will serve as a foundation for the plan alongside community engagement and visioning.

B.1.2.3. Central Petaluma Specific Plan

The Central Petaluma Specific Plan (CPSP) covers approximately 380 acres of land immediately east of and adjacent to the City's historic downtown core; when the CPSP was adopted in 2003, much of the area was underutilized, having been an industrial core closely tied to transportation by river and rail. The intent of the plan is to redirect development from the fringes of the city to the central core, accommodate greater diversity and intensity of development and activities, and give the area identity and interest. To that end, the plan calls for: mixed use development with residential densities up to 60 units per acre, a pedestrian and river focus, and respect for existing industrial uses. It included lower and flexible parking requirements and opportunities for multi-modal transportation options, including a station site on the SMART rail corridor and the city's bus transit mall. With the amendment of the implementing SmartCode in 2013, there is no longer a limit to the number of units to the acre and building heights of up to six stories are possible in some areas..

Following adoption of the General Plan, updates to the CPSP may occur to implement direction in the newly adopted General Plan.

B.1.2.4. Petaluma SMART Rail Station Areas: TOD Master Plan

Adopted in 2013, the Station Area Master Plan provides a framework to guide future development and redevelopment around Petaluma's two Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) stations: (1) the Downtown Petaluma Station located at the renovated historic rail depot located adjacent to Lakeville Street and bounded by East Washington Street and East D Street; and (2) the planned Corona Road Station located in northwestern Petaluma in the vicinity of the Corona Road and North McDowell Boulevard intersection. In July 2022, \$10 million in funding was issued for construction of this station under the California Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP).. The Station Area Master Plan has several objectives including improving transportation and transit connectivity, implementing design standards that promotes walkable environments and creating an integrated development plan that capitalizes on the SMART rail system.

Following adoption of the General Plan, updates to the Station Area Master Plan may occur to implement direction in the newly adopted General Plan.

B.1.2.5. Zoning Ordinance

In conjunction with the adoption of the General Plan 2025, the City adopted an Implementing Zoning Ordinance designed to carry out the policies of the Petaluma General Plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the city. Providing consistency between land use and zoning facilitates residential development by eliminating the need for costly and time consuming General Plan amendments and/or rezoning.

The City's Implementing Zoning Ordinance specifies the zoning districts in which residential development may occur and under what circumstances. The districts that allow residential or mixed-use development are listed below:

RR (Rural Residential): The RR zone is applied to areas of single dwelling development with a minimum lot size of 2 acres. This zone would be applied primarily to areas at the western perimeter of the city along the Urban Growth Boundary that are developed with single dwellings at densities ranging from 0.1 to 0.6 units per acre. This zone is intended to maintain a rural character and provide a transition to unincorporated rural and agricultural lands. The RR zone is consistent with and implements the Rural Residential land use classification of the General Plan.

R1 (Residential 1): The R1 zone is applied to areas of single dwelling development, primarily the western hillsides, with densities ranging from 0.6 to 2.5 units per acre, and larger lots required for sloped sites. The R1 zone is consistent with and implements the Very Low Density Residential land use classification of the General Plan.

R2 (Residential 2): The R2 zone is applied to areas previously developed and intended for detached single dwellings on individual lots, at densities ranging from 2.6 to 8.0 units per acre. The R2 zone is consistent with and implements the Low Density Residential land use classification of the General Plan.

R3 (Residential 3): The R3 zone is applied to the older neighborhoods surrounding the downtown that are characterized by a variety of housing types and densities in a walkable context. Densities range from 6.1 to 12.0 units per acre. The R3 zone is consistent with and implements the Diverse Low Density Residential land use classification of the General Plan.

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R4 (Residential 4): The R4 zone is applied to areas intended for a variety of housing types ranging from single dwellings to multi-unit structures. Densities range from 8.1 to 18.0 units per acre. The R4 zone is consistent with and implements the Medium Density Residential land use classifications of the General Plan.

R5 (Residential 5): The R5 zone is applied to areas intended for the most urban housing types at densities ranging from 18.1 to 30.0 units per acre, but where existing lower density housing is considered conforming. The R5 zone is consistent with and implements the High Density Residential land use classification of the General Plan.

MH (Mobile Home): The MH zone is applied to existing mobile home parks throughout the city. The MH zone is consistent with the Mobile Home land use classification of the General Plan.

MU1A, MU1B, MU1C (Mixed Use 1): The MU1 zone is applied to areas intended for pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development with ground-floor retail or office uses adjacent to the Downtown Core, and in other areas of the city where existing auto-oriented commercial areas are intended for improvement into pedestrian-oriented mixed use development. The MU1 zone is consistent with and implements the Mixed Use land use classification of the General Plan, which establishes a maximum floor area ratio of 2.5 for both residential and non-residential uses within the classification, and a maximum density of 30 units per acre for residential.

- **Mixed Use 1A:** This zone is applied to parcels located along the East Washington Street, Petaluma Boulevard North and Lakeville Street corridors. The parcels in these zones vary in size and are typically located adjacent to residential zones.
- **Mixed Use 1B:** This zone is applied to larger parcels located primarily along major arterial roadways. The larger parcel size should allow for a mix of uses on the site.
- **Mixed Use 1C:** This zone is applied to smaller parcels located in West Petaluma. Most of these parcels are located in residential areas and the intensity of the uses permitted in this zone is limited.

MU2 (Mixed Use 2): The MU2 zone is applied to the Petaluma Downtown and adjacent areas that are intended to evolve into the same physical form and character of development as that in the historic downtown area. The MU2 zone is consistent with and implements the Mixed Use land use classification of the General Plan, which establishes a maximum floor area ratio of 2.5 for both residential and non-residential uses within the classification, and a maximum density of 30 units per acre for residential.

T4 (General Urban); T5 (Urban Center); T6 (Urban Core) Mixed Use: These zones apply to lands within the CPSP and are subject to the development standards as defined in the SmartCode© allowing for a mixture of uses and no stated maximum for residential density.

Following adoption of the General Plan, updates to the Zoning Ordinance may occur to implement direction in the newly adopted General Plan.

B.1.2.6. SmartCode

Developed to implement the Central Petaluma Specific Plan (CPSP) the SmartCode© is a form-based zoning code with an emphasis on the physical relationship between people, buildings, and public spaces. The SmartCode is a unified land development ordinance template for planning and urban design. It provides detailed regulations for development and new land uses within the specific plan area, and describes how

these regulations will be used as part of the City’s development review process. It is the zoning ordinance for properties located within the CPSP area – Transect Zones: T-4 through T-6.

The SmartCode was amended in 2013 to ensure that the development within the Downtown Station area is consistent with the community’s vision and the Master Plan document. These amendments included:

- Refinements to address procedural issues in the existing document raised by staff, developers, and community members.
- Refinements to development standards that have been found to be impediments to development.
- Expanded regulations to provide more certainty for the community and clarity for developers on the type and form of new development.
- Refinements consistent with the updating of the SmartCode template from the version that was adopted to the current version (v.9.2).

Following adoption of the General Plan, updates to the SmartCode may occur to implement direction in the newly adopted General Plan.

B.1.2.7. Overlay Zones

The City has developed three overlay zones for areas of special consideration and/or protection. A brief description of these zones are below:

Flood Plain Overlay: This zone is intended to protect life, health, property, and public facilities and utilities from damage resulting from floodwaters.

Theater District Overlay: This zone is intended to promote the development of movie theaters featuring: “first-run”, independent, and foreign films.

Historic District Overlay: This zone is intended to protect the character and integrity of areas, buildings, or other features with special historic and/or cultural aesthetic values.

B.1.2.8. Residential Development in Other Districts

Residential development is also allowed in three other zoning districts, all of which could accommodate the development of lower-income units.

Planned Unit District (PUD): This zone allows any and all compatible uses, although a property’s General Plan land use designation would determine its ultimate use and residential density.

Significant residential development in the City has taken place on residentially designated land that is rezoned to a PUD District as part of the project entitlement, most recently in order to vary from minimum site and/or yard standards set by the original residential zoning. For example, a single-family project used the PUD process to create 3,600-square foot “Z” lots with reduced side and rear yard setbacks.

While the frequency of rezoning properties to PUD as a component of a development application has declined with the reduction of some standards with the 2008 adoption of the IZO and as PUDs are no longer encouraged by staff as they once were, it remains the case that those projects seeking variations from development standards generally request rezoning to a PUD District, an expensive and lengthy process that requires project review by both the Planning Commission and City Council. Amending the PUD regulations to clarify what variations may be approved and under what circumstances could facilitate the

review and approval process for both applicants and the City. The Implementing Zoning Ordinance adopted in 2008 address many of the site standards that had led to the need for PUDs, and following adoption of the General Plan, additional updates to the Zoning Ordinance to further reduce the use of PUDs may occur. The City hopes to rely upon this district less in the future.

Commercial 1(C1) and Commercial 2 (C2): This zone allows residential uses above the ground floor as permitted uses. The process for approving residential uses in the C1 and C2 districts however is not straightforward because their corresponding General Plan land use designations (i.e., Neighborhood Commercial and Community Commercial) do not always specifically allow dwelling units and development standards, such as maximum densities, are not specified. Some C1 and C2 sites appropriate to mixed use have been designated as such in the General Plan 2025 . Following the adoption of an updated General Plan, updates to these zoning districts may be made to implement policy and/or to modify permit requirements for residential in these commercial zones.

B.1.3. Residential Development Standards

The Implementing Zoning Ordinance and SmartCode© prescribe minimum standards for residential lot sizes, yards, and in some zones, usable open space per unit and maximum lot coverage. Zoning regulations are designed to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of residents as well as implement the policies of the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance also serves to preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods. It sets forth the City’s specific residential development standards, which are summarized in Table B2:

Table B2: Residential Development Standards – Zoning Code and SmartCode

Zone District	Density (units/ acre)	Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Maximum Bldg Height (feet)	Minimum Lot Width (feet) (Interior/ Corner)	Minimum Yard Setback (feet)				Minimum Open Space (sq. ft.)
					Front	Side	Side – Street Side	Rear	
RR	0.1 – 0.6	2 acres	25	150/165	40	20	40	40	NA
R1	0.6 – 2.5	20,000	25	100/110	30	15	30	30	NA
R2	2.6 – 8.0	6,000	25	50/55	20	5	NA	20	NA
R3	6.1 – 12.0	4,000	25	40/45	15	3	NA	15	600/unit
R4	8.1 – 18.0	3,500	35	35/40	10	0	10	10	300/unit
R5	18.1 – 30.0	1,500	45	NA	0	0	0	0	400/unit
MU1	Max 30.0	NA	30	NA	0	0*	0	0*	30/unit
MU2	Max 30.0	2,000	45	NA	0 min/ 10 max	0min/ 10 max*	0 min/ 10 max	0*	30/unit
T4	CPSP	4,000 avg.	3 stories	NA	0 min/ 15 max	5 min/ 30 max	NA	20 no alley/0 alley	NA
T5	CPSP	none	4 stories max/2 min	NA	0 min/ 10 max	0 min/ 10 max	NA	5 no alley/0 alley	NA
T6	CPSP	none	6 stories max/3 min	NA	NA	0 min/ 10 max	NA	0	NA

Source: Petaluma Zoning Code Chapter 4.040, Petaluma SmartCode Section 4.20.

Notes: *Abutting an R district: 15 ft, plus 1 ft of additional setback for each foot of building height over 20 ft.
CPSP – densities in these districts correspond to the Central Petaluma Specific Plan

B.1.3.1. Lot Size, Setbacks and Building Height Standards

The Zoning Ordinance establishes minimum lot size, setbacks and building height standards. These standards have the potential to impact the size of structures which are permitted to be built, and the number of units on a particular site.

Within the residential zones in the Zoning Ordinance, the minimum lot size varies from two acres in the rural residential zone down to 1,500 square feet in the R5 zone. The MU1 zone does not have a minimum lot size and is consistent with and implements the Mixed Use land use classification of the General Plan, which establishes a maximum floor area ratio of 2.5 for both residential and non-residential uses within the classification, and a maximum density of 30 units per acre for residential.

The setbacks in the R2 through MU2 zones vary from 0 to 20 feet allowing for a variety of designs, layouts and mix of uses. For building height, 25 feet is the standard for the more traditional single-family and multi-family zones (RR – R3) while the higher density and mixed-use zones have height limits between 30 and 45 feet. A maximum height of 60 feet may be permitted in the R5 zoning district when the review authority is able to make specific findings.

The SmartCode Urban Standards for the T4, T5 and T6 zones shown in Table B2: regulate the aspects of each private building that affects the public realm, including building placement and façade design. The Urban Standards also regulate how certain land use types must be operated to ensure their compatibility with adjacent uses.

These standards are typical of many California suburban communities. The City of Petaluma has greater flexibility in medium to high density residential standards, including setbacks and building height, compared to the neighboring cities of Rohnert Park and Novato. While Petaluma allows residential in most zoning districts, the City acknowledges some development standards, such as its open space and parking requirements (see separate discussions below), when taken cumulatively, may impede development from reaching the maximum allowable density or may result in increased costs of construction. However, the City has a robust inclusionary housing program, which results in projects utilizing the density bonus parking requirements and providing concessions to development standards. As a result, many projects are able to exceed the allowable densities. Very often, developers choose to not build to maximum densities because of the product types (townhomes versus apartments). Furthermore, developments in the T5/T6 zones are not subject to density limits. These areas are governed by the Form-Based Code, which offers flexibility in development capacity. Many of the areas with potential for future redevelopment are also located near the transit stations and therefore not subject to minimum parking requirements.

Nevertheless, the City is working to expand housing opportunities in the community. Therefore, increasing building heights to facilitate shopping center conversions, reducing parking standards for small units, reducing private open space requirements, and limiting single-family detached development in multi-family zones can help facilitate the desired housing in Petaluma. The Housing Element includes actions to address these potential constraints.

B.1.3.2. Minimum Open Space Requirements

For residential zones, the Petaluma Zoning Code requires 600 square feet of usable open space per residential unit in the R3, and 300 square feet per unit in R4, 400 square feet per unit in R5. In mixed use development, 30 square feet per unit is required in the MU1 and MU2 zoning districts. This has not proven to be a constraint in that there are a range of ways to accommodate this requirement (including common

and private open spaces), especially for townhome and small lot single-family developments. None of the concessions requested as part of density bonus projects have requested a concession from this requirement which further indicates that it has not proven a constraint to residential development. However, the open space requirements may potentially constrain the development of rental apartments. This Housing Element includes a program action in Program 7 (Zoning Code Amendments) to review and revise the open space requirements as appropriate.

B.1.3.3. Parking Standards

Minimum residential parking standards in the Implementing Zoning Ordinance are as follows:

- Single-family dwellings (including condominiums and townhouses): 1 covered space plus two spaces which may be uncovered and located in the driveway.
- Duplexes: 1 covered space plus one space which may be uncovered and located in the driveway.
- Multi-family units: 1 space per bedroom, studio, or efficiency unit. The space may be covered or uncovered. In no case shall a project provide an overall parking ratio of less than 1.5 spaces per unit. The parking can be provided as covered or uncovered at the discretion of the project applicant. There is no code requirement for the parking associated with a multi-family development to be covered.
- Mobile_home parks and trailer parks: 2 spaces per unit.
- Senior housing and retirement homes: Parking requirements may be modified by the Zoning Administrator (Director) where it can be demonstrated that automobile use or ownership is significantly lower than for other dwellings or lodging houses.

To facilitate the development of senior housing options, the City will amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish specific parking standards for various types of senior housing. The Ordinance also allows existing covered parking facilities to be converted into additional living space if the covered parking space is replaced with a paved space (that may be uncovered). A few of these conversions are approved each year. No replacement parking is required for conversion of existing covered parking to accessory dwelling units or junior accessory dwelling units.

Qualified affordable housing projects have utilized reduced parking requirements through incentives or concessions as allowed under the City's Density Bonus Law. Recent amendments to California's Density Bonus Law (AB 2345, 2020) further provide that, upon a developer's request, a locality must utilize State-mandated parking for qualifying projects. For example, under state law, only 1.5 on-site parking spaces are required for a two- to three-bedroom unit.

The City recently approved Ordinance No. 2830 on December 19, 2022 amending the Implementing Zoning Ordinance to create flexibility to reduce parking requirements. The ordinance provides a mechanism for applicants to request a reduction in onsite parking requirements based on reduced demand and specific project components that support reduced demand. Such as proximity to transit, bike share location, car share options, etc.

The first application under the new ordinance was reviewed and approved to allow a reduction in onsite parking for a hotel expansion based on proximity to the SMART station, vacancy rates, bike and ped provisions, etc.

The City is also looking at other zoning text amendments to reduce or eliminate parking requirements and adopt parking maximums to further reduce constraints from parking requirements, as outline in proposed Program 5 (Flexible Development Standards), Program 7 (Zoning Code Amendments), Program 9 (Shopping Center Conversion), and Program 24 (Senior Housing Options).

Parking reductions provided through state density bonus law are often used for applicable projects to reduce parking. Most projects qualify for a density bonus when complying with local inclusionary ordinance and therefore have the benefit of reduced parking ratio through state density bonus or further parking reduction as one of the allowed concessions.

Recently adopted state law (AB 2097) provides that a local jurisdiction cannot require onsite parking for residential projects in proximity to transit. That law is being implemented for applicable projects to reduce development constraints from parking regulations.

Finally, the City is actively working with a consultant in an effort to reduce VMT through adoption of objective design standards, a TDM ordinance, and a VMT mitigation program. This effort is anticipated to reduce VMT constraints on residential development.

B.1.3.3.1. SmartCode Parking Requirements

Recognizing the opportunity for transit-oriented development and walkability, projects within the Central Petaluma Specific Plan (CPSP) (T4 – T6 zones) area have considerably lower parking requirements. These include one space per residential unit and one space per 500 square feet of non-residential uses. For affordable housing units, the requirement drops to 0.5 space per unit. In addition to the lower standard the CPSP SmartCode© provides flexibility in reducing parking requirements through alternative parking arrangements, shared on-site parking, parking waivers under certain circumstances and off-site parking.

B.1.3.4. Flexibility in Development Standards

In addition to the flexibility in development standards provided by the CPSP, the Station Area Master Plan and SmartCode described earlier in this chapter, and those provided by the IZO at Chapter 12, Development Standards Modifications, the following are other tools that can be used by the City to help facilitate housing development.

B.1.3.4.1. Variance Process

A Variance is permission to depart from the literal requirements of the Implementing Zoning Ordinance. Variances provide the discretion and flexibility necessary to resolve practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships resulting from a zoning requirement, and are regulated by required findings set by the California Government Code. Examples include exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or unusual shape of a parcel of property; or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions; or by reason of the use or development of property immediately adjoining the parcel in question.

Petaluma's Implementing Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 24.050) outlines the requirements and findings necessary to grant a variance. The Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission is the deciding body for a variance. In addition, Chapter 24.030 of the Implementing Zoning Ordinance outlines exceptions to setbacks and accessory buildings that may be made at the administrative level by the Community Development Director.

B.1.3.4.2. Density Bonus

Chapter 27 of the Petaluma Implementing Zoning Ordinance sets forth the criteria and standards for residential density bonuses. This chapter was established to: (1) comply with state density bonus law in accordance with California Government Code Section 65915, and (2) facilitate the development of affordable housing consistent with the goals, policies and programs of the Housing Element.

The City shall grant either a Density Bonus or a Density Bonus with a Concession or Incentive as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance Chapter 27 to an applicant or developer who agrees to provide one of the following:

1. At least ten percent of the total units of the Housing Development as Restricted Affordable Units affordable to Lower Income Households; or
2. At least five percent of the total units of the Housing Development as Restricted Affordable Units affordable to Very Low Income Households; or
3. A Senior Citizen Housing Development, as defined in the Zoning Ordinance; or
4. Ten percent of the total dwelling units in a common interest development as defined in Civil Code section 4100 for persons and families of Moderate Income Households as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, provided that all units in the development are offered to the public for purchase.

The Zoning Ordinance outlines the density bonus percentage calculations for very low, low, and moderate income units as well as for land donation. Restricted affordable units must be constructed concurrently with non-restricted units unless an alternative schedule is agreed upon between the City and the applicant. Restricted affordable units shall remain restricted and affordable for a period of 30 years. The City may require a longer period of time if required by the construction or mortgage financing assistance program, mortgage insurance program, or rental subsidy program.

Concessions or Incentives

Upon the written request of the applicant, the City shall provide a Concession or Incentive as follows:

1. For a Housing Development that provides either 5 percent of the units affordable to Very Low income households, or 10 percent of the units affordable to Lower income households, the developer is entitled to one Concession or Incentive.
2. When the number of affordable units is increased to 10 percent Very Low income units, or 20 percent Lower income units, the developer is entitled to two Concessions or Incentives.
3. When the number of affordable units is increased to 15 percent Very Low income, or 30 percent Lower income, the number of Concessions or Incentives is increased to three.

The Zoning Ordinance outlines the available concessions and incentives. These include: reduced lot setbacks; increased maximum building height; reduced on-site parking standards and approval of a mixed-use development if the land uses are compatible and if commercial, office, industrial or other land uses will reduce the cost of the housing development. Since 2016, 2 projects requested a density bonus.

Recent Change to State Density Bonus Law

In recent years, the State has made various amendments to the State Density Bonus Law to improve its effectiveness in facilitating affordable and special needs housing. These include, but are not limited to, AB 1763, which made several changes to density bonus requirements for 100 percent affordable projects, and

AB 2345, that further incentivizes the production of affordable housing. The City's Density Bonus provisions must be updated to reflect these new changes. Program 7 (Zoning Code Amendments includes an action to amend the City's Density Bonus ordinance.

B.1.3.5. Residential Growth Management System (RGMS)

The City adopted a growth management system in 1972 to meet such objectives as maintaining a reasonable ratio of Eastside to Westside growth, encouraging infill and a mix of housing types, and matching essential public facilities and services to residential development. In general, the system allows for allocations averaging 500 residential lots or units per year, over three years. The actual requirement is 1,500 units over any three consecutive years and no more than 1,000 units in any one year. Because the system exempts multi-family housing for senior and lower income housing as well as residential development projects having 30 or fewer units, the system has not had any material impacts on the City's ability to provide for housing or meeting its RHNA.

The growth management allocation system has not been used since 1998 because development of subject projects has averaged fewer than 500 lots or units per year. Specifically for the 6th cycle Housing Element, the City's RHNA is 1,904 units. The RGMS would allow for 4,000 units over eight years, not including units that are exempt under the system. Therefore, the growth management system will not represent a constraint on residential development during the planning period. Nevertheless, the RGMS may not be considered enforceable due to SB 330 (which expires in 2030). This Housing Element includes a program action to evaluate the RGMS for consistency with State law and identify mitigation actions if necessary.

B.1.4. Provision for A Variety of Housing Types

Housing element law specifies that jurisdictions must identify adequate sites to be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards to encourage the development of a variety of housing types for all economic segments of the population. This includes single-family homes, multi-family housing, accessory dwelling units, mobile homes, emergency shelters, and transitional housing, among others. Table B3 and Table B4 summarize the different housing types permitted in the various land use zones in Petaluma.

B.1.4.1. Single-Family Homes

Single-family homes are permitted in all of the residential zones and the MU1C mixed-use zone. In the T4, T5, and D4 SmartCode zones, single-family units are allowed only on upper floor(s) or behind an allowed ground floor use per the permit requirement indicated. Single-family homes comprise the predominant housing type and span virtually all parts of Petaluma. While only 27.6 percent of land is zoned residential, Planned Unit Developments – most of which represent master-planned single-family housing communities, such as those on the northeast end of town – comprise an additional 24.7 percent of land. Thus, the total amount of land that allows single-family housing is approximately 52 percent.²

According to the Zoning Code, a dwelling group is a group of two or more detached dwellings located on one parcel of land in one ownership and meeting the requirements of Section 7.040. No more than three dwelling units shall be erected in a dwelling group. An accessory dwelling is not included as a dwelling for

² City of Petaluma General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report: Land Use and Community Character, October 22, 2021.

the purposes of a dwelling group. These dwellings are allowed in the RR through R3 zones, subject to a site plan and architectural review.

To encourage the efficient use of limited land resources, this Housing Element includes Program 4 (Efficient Use of Multi-Family Land) to modify allowable residential types in higher density zones.

B.1.4.2. Multi-Family Housing

Multi-family housing is permitted in the R3, R4, R5 and MU1C zones. In the T4, T5, and D4 SmartCode zones and MU1A, MU1B, and MU2 zones, multi-family units are allowed only on upper floor(s) or behind an allowed ground floor use or with issuance of Conditional Use Permit. In C1 and C2 zones, multi-family housing is permitted on floors above a ground-floor commercial use. Multi-family units are conditionally permitted in the MU1A and B zones.

B.1.4.3. Mixed-Use Residential, Live/Work and Work/Live

Petaluma has a variety of zones that permit residential developments in mixed-use locations. These include all of the mixed-use zones (MU1A, MU1B, MU1C and MU2), the C1 and C2 commercial zones, and the following SmartCode Zones: T4, T5, T6, T6-O and D4.

As defined by the SmartCode: a work/live unit refers to a space in which the commercial activities are the predominant use and the residential component is a secondary use. Meanwhile live/work units refer to a space in which the predominant use is residential, and commercial activity is a secondary use. Work/live units are a permitted use on an upper floor or behind a ground floor street fronting use in the mixed-use zones and the C1 and C2 zones. In the CPSP area, work/live and live/work units are either permitted, conditionally permitted, or permitted as part of a mixed-use project in most of the SmartCode zones (refer to Table B4). The flexibility and locations where mixed-use projects are permitted helps to provide a diversity of housing choices for Petaluma residents.

Table B3: Housing Types Permitted – Zoning Code

Land Use Type	Permit Required by Zone																
	AG	RR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	MH	MU1 A	MU1 B	MU1 C	MU 2	C1	C2	B P	I	C F
Dwelling, Accessory and Junior Accessory	A, S	A, S	A, S	A, S	A, S	A, S	A, S	---	A, S	A, S	A, S	A, S	---	---	--	--	---
Dwelling, Group	-	S ⁽¹⁾	S ⁽¹⁾	S ⁽¹⁾	S ⁽¹⁾	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	---
Dwelling, Multiple	---	---	---	---	P	P	P	---	CUP	CUP	P	---	---	---	--	--	---
Dwelling, Single Household	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	---	---	---	P	---	---	---	--	--	---
Emergency Shelters	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	P	CUP
Mobile Homes/Manufactured Housing ⁽⁵⁾	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	P									
Residential Care, 6 or fewer	---	P	P	P	P	P	P	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	---	P ⁽³⁾	---	---	--	--	---
Residential Care, 7 or more	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽³⁾	P ⁽³⁾	P	CUP ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	--	--	---
Residential Facilities, Adult (ARF)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	---	CUP ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	--	--	---
Residential Care Facilities for the Chronically Ill (RCFCI)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	---	CUP ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	--	--	---
Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	---	CUP ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	CU ⁽³⁾ P ⁽³⁾	--	--	---
Residential in mixed use building	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽³⁾)	P ⁽³⁾)	--	--	
Supportive Housing	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	---	CUP	CUP	P	<u>P⁽⁴⁾</u>	<u>P⁽⁴⁾</u>)	<u>P⁽⁴⁾</u>)			
Transitional Housing	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	---	CUP	CUP	P						
Work/Live	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾	P	P ⁽²⁾	P ⁽²⁾)	P ⁽²⁾)	--	--	---

Land Use Type	Permit Required by Zone																
	AG	RR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	MH	MU1 A	MU1 B	MU1 C	MU 2	C1	C2	B P	I	C F
<i>Source: Petaluma Zoning Code</i>																	
<p>Notes:</p> <p>BP = Business Park, I = Industrial, CF = Civic Facility</p> <p>P = Permitted Use, C = Conditional Use Permit, S = Permit Requirement in Specific Use Regulation, A = Accessory Use, --- = Use Not Allowed</p> <p>(1) Site Plan and Architectural Review Required & Compliance with Section 7.040 Required</p> <p>(2) Permitted use on an upper floor or behind ground floor street fronting use; use in other locations allowed subject to a CUP</p> <p>(3) Allowed only on floors above the ground floor</p> <p><u>(4) See discussions on Supportive Housing Streamlined Approval Process pursuant to AB 2162</u></p> <p><u>(5) Manufactured or mobile homes placed on a permanent foundation are considered single-family homes</u></p>																	

Table B4: Housing Types Permitted – SmartCode

Land Use Type	Permit Required by Zone					
	T4	T5	T6	T6-O	D2	D4
Dwelling, Multiple	P*	P*	---	---	---	---
Dwelling, Single Household	P*	P*	---	---	---	---
Emergency Shelters	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP
Residential in mixed use building	P	P	P	P	---	P
Work/Live	MUP	MUP	CUP	MUP	---	P
Live/Work	P	P	CUP*	MUP	---	P

Source: Petaluma SmartCode

Notes:
 P = Permitted Use, CUP = Conditional Use Permit, MUP = Minor Use Permit
 --- = Use Not Allowed
 * On a frontage where shopfronts are required, use is allowed only on upper floor(s) or behind an allowed ground floor use per the permit requirement indicated.

B.1.4.4. Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU), also referred to as a second unit, is an attached or detached residential dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary residence. ADUs are usually considered to be affordable housing because there are no land costs associated with their development and they frequently rent for less than comparably-sized apartments. They may also occupy unused space in large homes, and by supplementing the income of the homeowner, allow the elderly to remain in their homes or make it possible for lower income families to afford homes.

Over the last few years, the State legislature has passed a series of bills aimed at encouraging the development of ADUs. These bills, including AB 68, AB 587, AB 881, and SB 13, all pertain to ADUs and became effective on January 1, 2020.

The Petaluma City Council adopted Ordinance 2738 in June 2020 to comply with the new state law changes related to ADUs, including standards for junior ADUs, which are structures no more than 500 square feet in size created within the existing walls of an existing or proposed dwelling. ADUs and junior ADUs are permitted in all of the city’s residential and mixed-use zones and are only subject to ministerial review. Sections 7.030 and 7.035 of the Zoning Code outline the requirements for ADUs and junior ADUs respectively. The following are highlights from the Zoning Code changes:

- ADUs
 - One detached accessory dwelling unit is permitted on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family dwelling
 - One accessory dwelling unit is permitted on a lot with a proposed or existing multifamily dwelling. A maximum of two detached accessory dwellings are permitted on a multifamily lot if each unit is limited to 16 feet in height and provides four-foot side and rear yard setbacks.

- The maximum allowable living area of an accessory dwelling unit is 1,000 square feet; provided, however, that if a proposed accessory dwelling unit is to be attached to an existing or proposed primary residence, then the accessory dwelling unit total living area may not exceed 50 percent of the total living area of the primary residence, unless the accessory dwelling unit has a total living area no greater than 800 square feet, a height no greater than 16 feet, and minimum four-foot side and rear yard setbacks.
- An accessory dwelling unit must provide setbacks of no less than four feet from the side and rear lot lines.
- No additional parking is required for new accessory dwelling units.
- An accessory dwelling is encouraged to be designed to be compatible with the architectural richness of existing development in the immediate vicinity and principal dwelling on the site.
- No accessory dwelling units permitted after September 7, 2017, shall be permitted as a short-term vacation rentals.

The Zoning Code recognizes that there is not discretion in approving ADU, but expresses an aspiration of the community's desire for ADU development to enhance the surrounding neighborhood. This section of the Zoning Code encourages design be a consideration when developing ADUs in existing neighborhoods. However, there is no requirement for architectural review, consistent with state law.

- Junior ADUs
 - A junior accessory dwelling unit must be created within the existing walls of an existing or proposed primary dwelling.
 - A separate exterior entry shall be provided to serve a junior accessory dwelling unit.
 - Kitchen Requirements - Junior accessory dwelling units shall include an efficiency kitchen, which complies with any applicable requirements of the Building Code,
 - No additional parking requirements apply for creation of a junior accessory dwelling unit.
 - Maximum Unit Size - The maximum unit size for a junior accessory dwelling unit is 500 square feet.
 - Setbacks - Setbacks are as required for the primary dwelling unit.
 - All rentals of accessory dwelling units shall be for a term of more than 30 days.

The City's ADU ordinance has been submitted to HCD for review, as required by State law. The City is awaiting comments from HCD. This Housing Element includes an action in Program 3 (Accessory Dwelling Units) to address HCD comments.

ADUs can be an important tool to help meet affordable housing needs in a community. The City has seen significant ADU construction, reaching nearly 30 permits per year. The majority of the ADU development has been in the western part of the city. However, the eastern part of the city is characterized by many Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), where ADUs were mostly prohibited until the passage of recent state legislation.³ A detailed explanation of the ADU standards and approval process is available on the City's website. The City is currently working in partnership with the Sonoma Napa ADU Accelerator program to facilitate ADU production and availability of pre-approved plans, and permit resources for property owners. Additionally, the City is currently working to update local resources on line to improve transparency and efficiency with ADU permitting.

³ City of Petaluma General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report: Land Use and Community Character, October 22, 2021.

B.1.4.5. Mobile Home Parks and Manufactured Homes

The MH (Mobile Home) zone is applied to existing mobile home parks throughout the City. Approximately 120 acres of land have this land use designation and are primarily located along Highway 101.⁴ Since 2015, the city’s number of mobile home spaces has increased to 368. The Zoning Code does not contain specific provisions for the approval of new mobile home parks. However, given the market conditions, such as cost of land, and generally low density of mobile home parks, development of new mobile home parks is not likely.

The City Council adopted a Mobile Home Park Space Stabilization Program (Ordinance 1949 N.C.S) in 1993 to help stabilize rents for Petaluma mobile home owners, who tend to be low income seniors. Under the ordinance, mobile home park rent increases are only allowed to take place on an annual basis. Furthermore, the increases cannot exceed the rate of inflation.

Mobile and manufactured homes meeting State building code standards and installed on permanent foundation are considered single-family homes and permitted where single-family homes are permitted.

B.1.4.6. Emergency Shelters and Low-Barrier Navigation Centers

As mentioned in the Needs Assessment chapter, the City of Petaluma has undertaken a number of successful projects and programs that address the needs of the local population experiencing homelessness. The Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) is an organization that runs the Mary Isaak Center Emergency Shelter in Petaluma. The shelter is an 80-bed dorm-style facility for individuals aged 18 and older. COTS also operates one small 15 bed shelter for families, the Kids First Family Shelter (KFFS). COTS offer two outreach workers who regularly make contact with residents experiencing homelessness, working to understand their situations and provide connections to services. Since 2015, the City has provided \$380,000 to the Mary Isaak Center for operational support.

On September 13, 2021, the Petaluma City Council declared a Shelter Crisis in Petaluma in recognition of the urgent need for shelter faced by a significant and growing number of people in the community. Declaring a “crisis” empowers the City to take necessary steps to address these important issues.

This declaration also allows the City to implement interim housing solutions on City owned or leased land that support the health, safety, and well-being of people currently experiencing homelessness. The design and site development will be at the discretion of the City Manager. To this end, Council approved funding for the Interim Housing Solutions Project, People’s Village. This project will provide 25 units of non-congregate shelter and intensive case management services for those experiencing homelessness. Program services are focused on supporting community members transition to long term housing solutions. The project was completed in June 2022 and is fully occupied.

The Zoning Code defines emergency shelters as housing with minimal supportive services for persons experiencing homelessness that is limited to occupancy of six months or less. Emergency shelters are permitted by-right in the Industrial zone. No special development standards are established for emergency

⁴ City of Petaluma General Plan Update Existing Conditions Report: Land Use and Community Character, October 22, 2021.

shelters. Development of emergency shelters will be subject to the same standards as established for other uses in the same zone.

Shelters are also conditionally permitted in the CF zone and the following SmartCode zones: T4, T5, T6, T6-O, D2 and D4. The City currently has an unsheltered population of 214 persons, according to the 2022 Point in Time Count. The City's Zoning Code does not establish limitations such as number of beds and separation requirement for shelters. Portions of the Industrial zone are also centrally located with access to services, amenities, and transportation. Typical uses are light industrial activities that do not result in contamination. The City has at least 26.41 acres of vacant and underutilized properties in the Industrial zone, adequate to accommodate the City's unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness.

With the most recent changes to State law regarding emergency shelters, the City will re-evaluate the Industrial Zone as the zone where shelters can be permitted by right. AB 2339 makes two changes to Housing Element law. AB 2339 provides that the sites identified for emergency shelters must be in residential areas or are otherwise suitable, thus prohibiting local governments from situating shelters in industrial zones or other areas disconnected from services. The law also seeks to ease constraints on the development of emergency shelters by requiring that any development standards applied to emergency shelters be "objective."

AB 139, adopted by the State legislature in 2019, limits the standards that local jurisdictions may apply to emergency shelters. Per AB 139, cities and counties may set forth standards regulating: the maximum number of beds; the size and location of onsite waiting and intake areas; the provision of onsite management; proximity to other emergency shelters, provided that shelters are not required to be more than 300 feet apart; length of stay; lighting; and, security during hours of operation. Additionally, a city or county may only require off-street parking to accommodate shelter staff, provided that these standards do not require more parking than what is required for other residential or commercial uses in the same zone. The City's Zoning Code does not include specific development standards (including parking or separation requirements) for emergency shelters. Therefore, no revisions to the Zoning Code are needed to comply with AB 139.

Also adopted in 2019, AB 101 requires cities to permit Low Barrier Navigation Centers by right in areas zoned for mixed-use and nonresidential zones that permit multi-family uses, if the center meets certain requirements. AB 101 defines a Low Barrier Navigation Center as "a Housing First, low-barrier, service-enriched shelter focused on moving people into permanent housing that provides temporary living facilities while case managers connect individuals experiencing homelessness to income, public benefits, health services, shelter, and housing." AB 101 is effective through the end of 2026, at which point its provisions are repealed.

This Housing Element includes a program for the City to update the Zoning Code to reflect State law and the permitting of Low Barrier Navigation Centers in areas zoned for mixed-use and nonresidential zones that permit multi-family housing.

B.1.4.7. Transitional and Supportive Housing

In 2018 Petaluma updated its Zoning Ordinance to allow transitional and supportive housing as a residential use in all zones. The Petaluma Zoning Code defines supportive and transitional housing as follows:

Supportive Housing: Housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the Target Population, and that is linked to an onsite or offsite service that assists the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible,

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work in the community. Supportive housing is a residential use subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone.

Transitional Housing: Buildings configured as rental housing developments, but operated under program requirements that require the termination of assistance and recirculating of the assisted unit to another eligible program recipient at a predetermined future point in time that shall be no less than six months from the beginning of the assistance. Transitional housing is a residential use subject to only those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone.

Target Population: Persons with low incomes who have one or more disabilities, including mental illness, HIV or AIDS, substance abuse, or other chronic health condition, or individuals eligible for services provided pursuant to the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Division 4.5 (commencing with Section 4500) of the Welfare and Institutions Code) and may include, among other populations, adults, emancipated minors, families with children, elderly persons, young adults aging out of the foster care system, individuals exiting from institutional settings, veterans, and homeless people.

B.1.4.7.1. Supportive Housing Streamlined Approval Process

In 2018, the State legislature adopted new requirements (AB 2162), which mandate cities to permit supportive housing developments of 50 units or less, meeting certain requirements, by right in zones where mixed-use and multi-family development is permitted. Additionally, parking requirements are prohibited for supportive housing developments within one-half mile of a transit stop.

In 2020 staff implemented application processes for AB 2162 applications. Project applicability and application requirements are provided on the City's website. Below are some of the key points of the of the process:

Eligible Projects (list of all requirements are on the application form):

- **Affordability:** The project must comply with required affordability standards as specified in California Government Code 65651. At the time of writing, one hundred percent of the units, excluding managers' units, within the development are restricted to lower income households and are or will be receiving public funding to ensure affordability of the housing to lower income Californians.
- **Supportive Housing:** At least 25 percent of the units in the development or 12 units, whichever is greater, are restricted to residents in supportive housing who meet criteria of the target population. If the development consists of fewer than 12 units, then 100 percent of the units, excluding managers' units, in the development shall be restricted to residents in supportive housing.
- **Supportive Services:** A developer of supportive housing shall provide the planning agency with a plan for providing supportive services.

Application Process:

- Prior to submitting an application for the AB 2162 review process applicants are encouraged to schedule a preliminary project discussion with Planning Division Staff to assess eligibility.
- The applications can be submitted at the Planning Division under the same procedure as other Planning review submittals. CEQA review is not required for AB 2162 eligible projects because they are subject to a ministerial approval process and the building permit will not be subject to any applicable neighborhood notice requirements.

- In compliance with Section 65653, Petaluma will notify the applicant whether the application is complete within 30 days of receipt of an application to develop supportive housing in accordance with this article. The City shall also complete its review of the application within 60 days after the application is deemed complete for a project with 50 or fewer units, or within 120 days after the application is complete for a project with more than 50 units.
- Any project that has been approved using the AB 2162 review process may then apply for building permits.

The Meridian at Corona Station is a 131-unit affordable housing project, including 30 supportive housing units and onsite support services on the parcel adjacent to the future SMART station at Corona Road. The project was submitted under AB 2162 streamlining and the City Council approved an AB 2162 policy to allow the project on the site. This project was approved by the City in September 2021 and the developer is currently seeking funding sources. Another project approved under AB 2162 streamlining was the Studios at Montero motel conversion located at 5135 Montero Way. This project will provide 60 new permanent supportive housing units and onsite support services. Currently in building permit review, funding for the project was through Homekey.

While the City has already developed a procedure to process supportive housing pursuant to AB 2162, this 2023-2031 Housing Element includes a program [action](#) to amend the City's Zoning Code [to clarify that eligible projects are permitted in all multi-family zones and nonresidential zones that permit multi-family housing in compliance with State law.](#)

B.1.4.8. Residential Care Facilities

The City's Zoning Code has the following residential care facility uses:

Residential Care, 6 or Fewer Clients, in a Home: Permitted in all residential zones. Also permitted on an upper floor or behind ground floor street fronting use in the MU1 A and B zones and allowed only on floors above the ground floor MU2 zone.

Residential Care, 7 or More: Permitted in the MU1 C zone; permitted on an upper floor or behind ground floor street fronting use in the MU1 A and B zones; conditionally permitted above the ground floor in the MU2, C1 and C2 zones.

In addition, the residential facilities listed below are permitted on an upper floor or behind ground floor street fronting use in the MU1 A and B zones and conditionally permitted above the ground floor in the MU2, C1 and C2 zones.

Residential Facilities, Adult (ARF): Facilities of any capacity that provide 24-hour non-medical care for adults ages 18 through 59, who are unable to provide for their own daily needs. Adults may be physically disabled, developmentally disabled, and/or mentally disabled.

Residential Care Facilities for the Chronically III (RCFCI): Facilities with a maximum licensed capacity of 25. Care and supervision is provided to adults who have Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE): Facilities that provide care, supervision and assistance with activities of daily living, such as bathing and grooming. They may also provide incidental medical services under special care plans. The facilities provide services to persons 60 years of age and over and persons under 60 with compatible needs. RCFEs may also be known as assisted living facilities,

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retirement homes and board and care homes. The facilities can range in size from six beds or less to over 100 beds. The residents in these facilities require varying levels of personal care and protective supervision. Because of the wide range of services offered by RCFEs, consumers should look closely at the programs of each facility to see if the services will meet their needs.

The California Department of Social Services shows 13 small residential care for the elderly facilities licensed in the city with a total of 75 beds. In addition there are four larger facilities including: Muirwoods Memory Care (capacity of 80), Our House (capacity of 11), Springfield Place (capacity of 112) and Sunrise of Petaluma (capacity of 95).

Residential care facilities for seven or more persons are not permitted in any residential zones, but are permitted or conditionally permitted on an upper floor or behind a ground floor fronting use in mixed use and commercial zones. The locational requirements (upper floor or behind street front) may restrict the development of such uses as mixed use projects only and therefore constrain the potential development of residential care facilities. Furthermore, residential care for the chronically ill and adult residential facilities are subject to additional restrictions (such as a maximum capacity of 25).

Approval of a Conditional Use Permit requires the making of findings based on the following review criteria:

1. Regarding the siting of the building(s) and use:
 - a. The site is adequate to accommodate the proposed use and building(s) and all related activities.
 - b. All outdoor activities will be adequately screened.
 - c. The proposed building(s) and use will protect the outlook, light, air, and peace and quiet of any adjoining buildings and uses.
 - d. The location and character of any display of goods and services and the size, nature, and lighting of any signs will satisfy all applicable requirements of this Zoning Ordinance and will be compatible with adjoining buildings and uses.
 - e. The intensity of proposed activity will be compatible with adjoining buildings and uses.
2. Regarding traffic circulation and parking:
 - a. The type of street serving the proposed building(s) and use is adequate for the amount of traffic expected to be generated.
 - b. The adequacy, convenience, and safety of vehicular access and parking, including the location of driveway entrances and exits is adequate for the amount of traffic expected to be generated, and will be compatible with adjoining buildings and uses.
 - c. The amount, timing, and nature of any truck traffic associated with the proposed building(s) and use will be compatible with adjoining buildings and uses.
3. Regarding the compatibility of the proposed building(s) and use with its environment:
 - a. The number of customers or users and resulting activity level is suitable for the surrounding uses and especially any neighboring uses of unusual public importance such as schools, libraries, playgrounds, churches, and hospitals.
 - b. The hours of operation are compatible with adjoining uses.
 - c. Provisions for the control of any off-site effects such as noise, dust, odors and other emissions, light, or glare, etc., are adequate to protect adjoining uses.
 - d. Provisions for protection of the public against any special hazards arising from the intended use are adequate.

4. The expected duration of the proposed building and use, whether temporary or permanent, is compatible with adjoining uses, and time limits on the proposed use, if appropriate, are adequate in view of adjoining uses.
5. The proposed use in the proposed location is or is not considered a matter of public convenience and necessity.
6. The proposed structure and use, subject to any conditions which may apply, conforms with the applicable requirements of this Zoning Ordinance and applicable policies and programs of the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan, and the proposed use will not, under the circumstances of the conditional use application, constitute a nuisance or be detrimental to the public welfare of the community.

The City will review and revise these conditions for approval to ensure that objective performance standards are established to evaluate these criteria.

B.1.4.9. Housing for Persons with Disabilities

B.1.4.9.1. Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

Examples of the ways in which the City facilitates housing for persons with disabilities through its regulatory and permitting processes are:

- The City allows some variation from the application of its parking standards; for example, the reduction of parking spaces for a unique use such as a senior housing project or other special needs.
- The City permits group homes with six or fewer persons by right in all residential districts. No permits are required unless accommodations are needed that require a building permit. The City has no authority to approve or deny group homes of six or fewer people, except for compliance with building code requirements, which are also governed by the State.
- The City permits group homes of 7 or more persons in mixed use zones above ground floor by right, and in commercial zones subject to a Condition of Approval.
- The City permits housing for special needs groups, including for individuals with disabilities, without regard to distances between such uses or the number of uses in any part of the city. The Land Use Element of the General Plan does not restrict the siting of special need housing.

Definition of Family

The City does not restrict occupancy of unrelated individuals in group homes and does not define family or enforce a definition in its zoning ordinance.

Building Code

Petaluma implements and enforces the 2019 California Building Standards Code and does not have any modifications to that code that would affect accessibility. The City does not impose special permit procedures or requirements that could impede the retrofitting of homes for accessibility. The City's requirements for building permits and inspections are the same as for the other residential projects and are straightforward and not burdensome. City officials are not aware of any instances in which an applicant experienced delays or rejection of a retrofitting proposal for accessibility to persons with disabilities.

The City recently adopted a local visitability/universal design code applicable to all new residential development to ensure efficient internal conversions and to facilitate the ability for Petaluma's aging population to age in place as desired.

Reasonable Accommodation

Both the federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act impose an affirmative duty on local governments to make reasonable accommodations (i.e., modifications or exceptions) in their zoning and other land use regulations when such accommodations may be necessary to afford disabled persons an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, setback area encroachments for ramps, handrails, or other such accessibility improvements; hardscape additions, such as widened driveways, parking area or walkways that would not otherwise comply with required landscaping or open space area provisions; and building addition(s) necessary to afford the applicant an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. The City has not yet established a formal procedure for processing reasonable accommodation requests. [Program 7 \(Zoning Code Amendments\) includes an action to establish an objective and ministerial procedure to review and approve reasonable accommodation requests.](#)

B.1.4.10. Employee Housing

State Employee Housing Act: Any employee housing providing accommodations for six or fewer employees shall be deemed a single-family structure with a residential land use designation. For the purpose of all local ordinances, employee housing shall not be included within the definition of a boarding house, rooming house, hotel, dormitory, or other similar term that implies that the employee housing is a business run for profit or differs in any other way from a family dwelling. The Petaluma Zoning Code currently does not address employee housing. The Zoning Code will be amended to address this requirement.

Furthermore, the State Employee Housing Act provides for farm labor housing. Specifically, any employee housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in a group quarters or 12 units or spaces designed for use by a single family or household shall be deemed an agricultural land use. For the purpose of all local ordinances, employee housing shall not be deemed a use that implies that the employee housing is an activity that differs in any other way from an agricultural use. No conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other zoning clearance shall be required of this employee housing that is not required of any other agricultural activity in the same zone. The permitted occupancy in employee housing in a zone allowing agricultural uses shall include agricultural employees who do not work on the property where the employee housing is located.

The Petaluma Zoning Code currently allows agricultural uses such as crop production, horticulture, orchard, vineyard, and farm animal keeping in OSP (Open Space), AG (Agriculture), RR (Rural Residential), and R1 (Residential 1) zones. Farm labor housing is not currently addressed in the Zoning Code. The City will amend the Zoning Code to address this requirement.

B.1.4.11. Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing

Petaluma's Implementing Zoning Ordinance does not currently allow traditional SROs (buildings with private bedrooms and shared bathroom and kitchen facilities) as a land use. While SROs could be considered synonymous with permanent supportive housing projects like the Studios at Montero, which is the adaptive re-use of the former America's Best Value Inn in northeast Petaluma, each of Montero's small units has its own bathroom and kitchenette but shares other services/resources in common areas. Historically, SROs have typically consisted of small furnished rooms with shared kitchen and bath facilities

that are rented monthly. Contemporary SROs are more commonly made up of small efficiency units that include kitchen and bath facilities in each unit. Deed-restricted projects like the Studios at Montero are obviously affordable to lower-income groups but even non-deed-restricted SROs could be considered affordable by design.

To align Petaluma's zoning regulations with state law as well as facilitate the City's overarching effort to create a wide range of housing opportunities, the City will be updating zoning regulations to define SRO as a land use type and permit SROs in zoning districts such as the MU and R4 and R5 districts where high density multi-family housing is already allowed.

B.1.5. Affordable Housing Requirements

B.1.5.1. Inclusionary Housing Program

Section 3.040 of the Zoning Code regulates inclusionary housing in Petaluma. The inclusionary housing requirement is a critical component of the City's housing program and an active means of providing affordable units to households typically shut out of the housing market. Developers of residential projects of five or more units are required to rent or sell 15 percent of the units at prices or rents affordable to lower and moderate income households.

B.1.5.1.1. Inclusionary Housing Implementation Framework

The developer's affordability requirements shall apply based on the ownership structure of the residential project:

- Inclusionary housing units in a rental project shall be made affordable to very low and low income households as follows: 7.5 percent of the total number of residential units or lots in the residential project shall be affordable to very low income households and 7.5 percent of the total number of residential units or lots in the residential project shall be affordable to low income households.
- Inclusionary housing units in an ownership project shall be made affordable to low and moderate income households as follows: 7.5 percent of the total number of residential units or lots in the residential project shall be affordable to low income households and 7.5 percent of the total number of residential units or lots in the residential project shall be affordable to moderate income households.
- Affordable units required pursuant to this section shall be made subject to affordability covenants that are binding on owners of the units and their successors for a duration of at least 55 years in the case of rental projects and for a duration of at least 45 years in the case of ownership projects.
- When providing inclusionary rental units the developer must restrict half of the required 15% inclusionary units to the Very Low Income category and the other half to the Low Income category. When providing inclusionary for sale units, the developer must restrict half of the required 15% onsite inclusionary units to Low Income households and the other half to Moderate Income households.
- Affordable units required pursuant to this section shall be made subject to affordability covenants that are binding on owners of the units and their successors for a duration of at least 55 years in the case of rental projects and for a duration of at least 45 years in the case of ownership projects.

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The following compliance options are available to developers:

- The developer may provide affordable units pursuant to the requirements.
- The developer may request approval of Alternative Compliance, at the sole discretion of the City Council. Alternative Compliance options include:
 - Donation of a portion of the project site or an off-site property to the City or a non-profit organization deemed acceptable by the City for development of affordable housing; or
 - Payment of a housing in-lieu fee established by the City's adopted fee schedule; or
 - Alternative mixture of units by income levels; or
 - Use of an alternative method, such as provision of a smaller percentage of onsite inclusionary units coupled with payment of in-lieu fee for the inclusionary units not provided.
- A developer may only satisfy inclusionary housing requirement through payment of in-lieu funds if approved by the City Council as Alternative Compliance.
- A developer's request for Alternative Compliance is not limited to payment of in-lieu fees but all such requests are at the sole discretion of the City Council.

The following incentives are provided by the City on a case-by-case basis:

- Housing funds for site acquisition, pre-development, etc. as funds are available
- Deferred fees
- Reduced fees for residential projects that are located in proximity to transit and services and does not exceed minimum parking requirement
- Fast-track processing

B.1.5.1.2. In-Lieu Fees

On December 1, 2003, the City Council adopted a resolution that increased the In-Lieu fees based on the square footage of the market-rate units. The current in lieu fees were established by Ordinance No. 2664 N.C.S and Resolution No. 2018-142 N.C.S. and is \$10.12/square foot. An explanation of the fee is provided in the City's Development Impact and Capacity Fees Booklet on the City's website. According to the City's Draft 2021-2022 CDBG Action Plan, the City allocated \$1,100,000 of City In-Lieu Housing funds to assist with a senior housing development under construction which will provide 54 affordable units. The City also utilizes the Housing In-Lieu fund towards a rental assistance program, which is administered by the Petaluma People Services Center and the Committee on the Shelterless. This program serves households at or below 80 percent AMI annually. It is anticipated that 140 households will receive assistance in 2021/2022. The City's inclusionary housing ordinance does not allow payment of in-lieu fees to satisfy inclusionary housing requirements. The ability to pay in lieu fees rather than construct inclusionary affordable housing is only through approval of alternative compliance at the sole discretion of the City Council. [There have been limited applications for alternative compliance since the City adopted its inclusionary housing ordinance in 2018. One approved request was for a mixed use project in Central Petaluma to provide a reduced percentage of onsite inclusionary units based on the project performance and the length of time the project had been in design phase.](#) As of 2022, the housing in-lieu fee is \$10.21 per square foot for residential development, however, based on the 2019 change in the City's inclusionary housing ordinance the City has seen a significant increase in local generation of in-lieu funds.

B.1.5.2. Commercial Development Housing Linkage Fee

Section 19.36 of the Zoning Code establishes the City's Commercial Linkage Fee for housing. The purpose of the fee is to mitigate the housing impacts caused by new, changed and expanded nonresidential development in the city and to provide housing affordable to persons who earn between 80 and 100 percent of the Area Median Income. For the purposes of this fee, nonresidential land uses are divided into three classifications: commercial, retail, and industrial. As of 2022, the fee is between \$3.36 and \$5.81 per square foot of nonresidential development.

B.1.6. Project Review and Approval

The length of time it takes the City to review and approve housing development applications can add to housing costs. If the developer is buying the land outright, there are monthly interest costs, and if they are working under an option to purchase, there are option costs to hold the land. Processing delays for residential projects can result from incomplete submittals by project applicants, inadequate responses to staff requests for additional information and exhibits, and failure to design projects to city standards.

Generally, projects that require environmental impact reports and/or are subject to public controversy have longer review periods. Project re-designs or additional studies may be required by environmental review. Each change in the project design can have associated architect and engineering fees, which grow with each revision. Projects that receive a negative declaration of environmental impact are typically approved within four to six months; projects with environmental impact reports typically require nine to 12 months. Table B5 below shows the typical application process times for a variety of planning applications. [Table B6 provides a summary of processes for typical residential and mixed use development projects. Site Plan and Architectural Review \(SPAR\) is discussed in detail under Section B.1.6.2. Program 5 \(Flexible Development Standards\) includes an action adopt objective design standards and parking standards for multi-family residential and mixed use development that will guide the SPAR.](#)

[The City is also pursuing a comprehensive update to the General Plan and Zoning Code update. Once completed, the need to request General Plan amendment and Zone Change in the future to accommodate residential and mixed use development is likely reduced.](#)

Below-market-rate projects are fast-tracked through the City of Petaluma's approval process as required by the State of California. Please see the SB 35 timelines in Table B5. Also as required by the State, Petaluma complies with streamlined project review under AB 2162. Projects that meet AB 2162 eligibility provisions (including lower income and supportive housing requirements) are reviewed within the timelines outlined in Table B5. All processing time limits required by state law are adhered to and the overall length of review is consistent with similar communities.

Table B5: Planning Application and Processing Timelines

Application Type	Completeness Review*	Analysis and Action Phase**
Conditional Use Permit	30 days	6 weeks to 6 months
General Plan Amendment	30 days	2 to 6 months
Site Plan and Architectural Review	30 days	6 weeks to 6 months
Specific Plan/Zoning Amendment	30 days	2 to 6 months
Tentative Parcel Map	30 days	6 weeks to 4 months
Tentative Subdivision Map	30 days	2 to 6 months
Variance	30 days	2 to 6 months
SB 35 Application and Processing Timeline		
<p>Any design review or public oversight must be completed in:</p> <p>90-days for 150-or fewer units and 180 days for projects with more than 150 units, measured from the date of the SB-35 application submittal. This time includes the eligibility review phase.</p> <p>Any project that has been approved using the SB-35 review process may then apply for building permits.</p>		
AB 2162 Application and Processing Timeline		
<p>Any AB 2162 application review must be completed in:</p> <p>60-days after an application is deemed complete for a project with 50 or fewer units or 120 days after the application is deemed complete for a project with more than 50 units.</p> <p>Any project that has been approved using the AB 2162 review process may then apply for building permits.</p>		
<p><i>Source: City of Petaluma Planning Documents and Forms, https://cityofpetaluma.org/planning-applications/</i></p>		
<p>Notes:</p> <p>*The Analysis and Action Phase may be extended if an application is deemed incomplete and additional information is required from the applicant.</p> <p>**This timeline does not include the appeals period or the building permit phase.</p>		

Table B6: Typical Projects – Process and Timeline

Typical Project	Reviews Required	Approval Body	Number of Hearings	Overall Timeline
Single-Family Unit	Building Permit	Ministerial Review	None	15 working day plan review
Multi-Family – Apartments (<5 units)	Administrative SPAR	Administrative (Staff)	No Hearing	8 weeks
Multi-Family – Apartments (≥5 units)	Major SPAR	Planning Commission	1 hearing	6-9 months
Multi-Family – Mixed Use	SPAR	Planning Commission	1 hearing	6-9 months
SPAR = Site Plan and Architectural Review				

B.1.6.1. Development Review Committee

The City’s Development Review Committee meets weekly with prospective developers to allow for early input on project proposals. This committee brings building, planning, water, fire, police, transit, public works and engineering, and economic development staff to the table early in the process to identify issues and opportunities. The effect of these meetings is that applications are more complete and the review process is more efficient.

B.1.6.2. Site Plan and Architectural Review

A Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) is required for residential projects involving more than one dwelling unit per lot (except for accessory buildings or ministerial projects as directed by the State of California such as SB 9 projects⁵), and subdivisions with five or more single-family dwellings. According to Section 24.010 of the Implementing Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the review is to achieve a satisfactory quality of design in the individual building and its site, appropriateness of the building to its intended use, and the harmony of the development with its surroundings. Reviewers of residential projects are to be guided by the following standards to achieve these purposes:

- The appropriate use of quality materials and harmony and proportion of the overall design
- The architectural style which should be appropriate for the project in question, and compatible with the overall character of the neighborhood
- The siting of the structure on the property, as compared to the siting of other structures in the immediate neighborhood

⁵ Senate Bill (SB) 9 (Chapter 162, Statutes of 2021) requires ministerial approval of a housing development with no more than two primary units in a single-family zone, the subdivision of a parcel in a single-family zone into two parcels, or both. SB 9 facilitates the creation of up to four housing units in the lot area typically used for one single-family home. SB 9 contains eligibility criteria addressing environmental site constraints (e.g., wetlands, wildfire risk, etc.) Source: www.hcd.ca.gov

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- The bulk, height, and color of the proposed structure as compared to the bulk, height, and color of other structures in the immediate neighborhood

The City's existing Site Plan and Architectural Review findings are largely subjective as found in the Zoning Code. Depending on the scope of the project, Administrative SPAR is approved by the Director and Major SPAR is approved by the Planning Commission. Projects are evaluated in consistency with the adopted criteria in Zoning Code as well as consistency with development standards, General Plan policy, and SPAR guidelines:

1. The project uses quality materials and the overall design is harmonious and in proportion in itself and in relation to adjacent development, based on the following:
 - a. The architectural style is appropriate for the project, and compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
 - b. The siting of the structures on the property is appropriate for the site and as compared to the siting of other structures in the neighborhood.
 - c. The size, location, design, color, number, lighting, and materials of all signs and outdoor advertising structures is in accordance with all applicable requirements of this Zoning Ordinance and appropriate for the site and compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
 - d. The bulk, height, and color of any proposed structure is appropriate for the site and as compared to the bulk, height, and color of other structures in the neighborhood.
2. Landscaping in accordance with applicable City standards and that is appropriate for the site and compatible with the character of the neighborhood will be provided on the site. Existing trees shall be preserved wherever possible, and shall not be removed unless approved by the Planning Commission.
3. Ingress, egress, internal circulation for bicycles and automobiles, off-street automobile and bicycle parking facilities and pedestrian ways are designed so as to promote safety and convenience and conform to applicable City standards. Any plans pertaining to pedestrian, bicycle, or automobile circulation have been routed to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee for review and approval or recommendation.
4. The design is of good character and has been prepared by a professional designer, such as an architect, landscape architect or other practicing urban designer or person with equivalent skill and qualifications.
5. The application and the project for which it seeks approval are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), or the environmental impacts of the project including impacts to or of biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle miles travelled, land use, population and housing, agriculture and forestry resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral resources, public services, utilities and service systems, air quality, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, and recreation are avoided, or are mitigated by conditions imposed by the reviewing authority so as to be less than significant, or are approved based on overriding considerations in accordance with all applicable CEQA requirements.

6. The proposed structure and use, subject to any conditions which may apply, conforms with the applicable requirements of this Zoning Ordinance and applicable policies and programs of the City's General Plan and any applicable specific plan, and the proposed use will not, under the circumstances of the conditional use application, constitute a nuisance or be detrimental to the public welfare of the community.

The City reviews SB 35 or similar projects given the objective standards that the City does have in the Implementing Zoning Ordinance, such as building heights and setbacks. The City is developing Objective Design Standards for adoption in 2023 (see Program 5: Flexible Development Standards).

B.1.6.3. Historic Preservation

The City is committed to protecting the many historic resources in Petaluma. Petaluma has a Nationally Registered Commercial District and three city-designated local Historic Districts. Over 300 properties have been surveyed for potential historic significance. Well-known historic landmarks in the city include the Sweed House, United States Post Office (4th and D Streets), the Opera House, the former Carnegie Library (now the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum), and the Old Silk Mill. Historic landmark properties are provided a designation of "Historic" overlay on the City's Zoning Map. Applications to alter designated historic resources (excluding demolition) are reviewed in accordance with Implementing Zoning Ordinance Section 15.050 and 15.070. Review under those sections include an evaluation of conformance with district guidelines (when applicable) and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

B.1.6.4. Building Codes

The City has adopted all of the California Building Standards Code, (Title 24) which include Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Green, Energy, Fire, Historic and Existing Building subsections.

The City has amended these codes in a few instances when necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. Smoke detectors are required in single-family homes and automatic fire alarm systems must be provided in multi-family complexes, apartment complexes, and condominium complexes.

The City continues to comply with the Building Code requirements on energy conservation. In 2020 the City adopted a mandatory all-electric code for new construction and substantial remodels and additions that exceed base requirements of the California Building Code. Additionally, the City has adopted the Green Building Code at Tier One to maximize energy efficiency.

In 2022 the City adopted a visitability and universal design code that is required for all new residential construction.

Automatic fire suppression systems must be installed in new residential structures. While these measures result in higher initial housing costs, they are offset over the long run by savings on homeowners' insurance and property damage.

The presence of an active code enforcement effort serves to maintain the conditions of the City's housing stock and does not constrain the production or improvement of housing in the city. The Municipal Code also establishes standards for the maintenance of properties with three or more rental units regarding the accumulation of trash and debris, overgrown vegetation, and abandoned vehicles and equipment.

B.1.6.5. Required Fees and Improvements

The City collects various fees from developments to cover the costs of processing permits, including fees for planning approvals, subdivision map act approvals, environmental review, engineering and plan check services and building permits, among others.

B.1.6.5.1. Planning Fees

Table B7 below shows the Planning Fees, effective July 1, 2022

Table B7: Planning and Building Fees

Category	Fee with 9% Overhead
Planning and Application Fees (Deposit + Time and Materials)	
Conditional Use Permit - Major	\$6,458.25 +TM
Conditional Use Permit - Minor	\$2,459.04 +TM
General Plan Map Amendment	\$7,575.50 +TM
Zoning Map Amendment	\$8,180.45 +TM
Site Plan & Architectural Review	\$7,921.03 +TM
Specific Plan	\$10,989.38 +TM
Variance	\$5,596.06 +TM
Building Inspection/Permit	Building Valuation \$500,001 to \$1,000,000: \$4,710 for first \$500,000 plus \$6 for each additional \$1,000. Building Valuation \$1,000,001 and up \$8,170 for first \$1,000,000 plus \$4 for each additional \$1,000.
Subdivision	
Lot Line Adjustment	\$3,787.75 + \$1,744 Deposit for Engineering Tech Review for Lot Line Adjustment, +TM
Tentative Parcel Map	\$4,478.81 +TM
Tentative Subdivision Map	\$11,106.01 + TM
Final Parcel Map	\$3,357.20 + \$5,450 Deposit for Engineering Tech Review
Environmental	
Initial Study	\$7,590.76 +TM
Environmental Impact Report	Consultant Fee +25% admin & TM
<i>Source: City of Petaluma FY22-23 Planning Fees Handout</i>	

B.1.6.5.2. Impact Fees

The City charges residential development a variety of development impact fees in order to pay for the increased system capacities and services required by that development. The City’s Development Impact and Capacity Fees booklet from July 2022 is a collection of general descriptions of development and capacity fees imposed on new construction in the City of Petaluma. It is intended to serve as a general guideline describing when a fee applies, how it is calculated, and when it is collected. This booklet can be found on the City’s website.

The fees, as shown in [Table B8](#) are reflective of the costs associated with major transportation improvements and water-capacity infrastructure needs. While these fees may affect housing prices, the only alternatives would be their payment by the existing Petaluma taxpayers or no further residential development, either of which are infeasible. The Traffic Impact fee is prorated for projects located within one-half mile of a parcel identified as a possible future location for a SMART Rail Station. The existing fee schedule applies to the City’s affordable housing developments (usually multi-family). As opposed to waiving impact fees for affordable housing project, the City has provided local funding and the developers pay the applicable city fees. Several impact fees are reduced or waived for low and moderate senior housing projects, including the City Facilities Development Impact Fee, Park Land Acquisition Fee and Traffic Impact Fee. The fees are included within the development budget and are not a constraint to the production of low and moderate income housing.

Table B8: Development Impact Fees

Fee Type	Single-Family Fee/Unit	Multi-Family Fee/Unit
City Facilities	\$7,419	\$4,995
Open Space	\$522	\$350
Park Land Acquisition	\$2,219	\$1,501
Park Land Development	\$7,341	\$4,943
Traffic Impact	\$18,656	\$11,453 *
Wastewater	\$9,846	\$6,519
Water	\$4,794	\$4,794
TOTAL	\$50,797	\$34,555
<i>Source: City of Petaluma FY22/23 Development Impact Fees</i>		
* Senior Housing \$4,986/unit		

Storm Drain Impact Fee

The increase in runoff created by a given project is calculated for a 100-year storm, utilizing runoff coefficients based upon the portion of vegetated area to impervious surfaces, and expressed in acre-feet. Runoff coefficients are based upon the type of use, slope of the land, and percent of vegetation coverage. Projects pay a fee of \$15,000 per acre-foot of additional runoff. Incremental runoff is dependent upon the density of a project and the amount of landscaping and open space provided. A high-density project with

20 percent or less area in landscaping could expect to pay \$4,500 per acre. A typical detached single-family subdivision would pay approximately \$1,500 per acre.⁶

B.1.6.5.3. Fees for a Typical Residential Development

Table B9 below identifies the hypothetical fees that would be collected for a new 2,000-square-foot two-story house and a 45-unit multi-family project. This assumes that inclusionary housing is constructed on site, so does not include payment of a housing in-lieu fee. These fees would be approximately \$54,954 and \$37,805 per unit respectively. This represents about 7.9 percent of the total development cost for a single-family unit and 5.4 percent for a multi-family unit. The City's fee structure is not partial to single-family development.

Table B9: Proportion of Fee in Overall Development Cost for a Typical Residential Development

Development Cost for a Typical Unit	New Single-Family	New Multi-Family
Total estimated fees per unit*	\$ \$54,954	\$ \$37,805
Typical estimated cost of development per unit**	\$700,000	\$700,000
Estimated proportion of fee cost to overall development cost per unit	7.9%	5.4%

*Includes building permit fees of \$3,969 for a single-family home and \$3,000 per multi-family unit.

**Based on current article published July 2022 in Press Democrat Newspaper.

In order to develop a fee comparison, the City reviewed the 6th cycle Housing Element updates submitted to HCD by jurisdictions in Sonoma County. However, not every jurisdiction provides estimates on the total fees (planning and development) for typical single-family and multi-family housing development. The following information is available:

- Rohnert Park: Impact fees only – \$27,000 per single-family unit and \$17,000 per multi-family units; these fees do not include school fees or planning fees
- Santa Rosa: \$51,862 per single-family unit and \$29,486 per multi-family unit; these fees do not include school fees
- Sonoma: \$28,748.91 per single-family unit and \$18,264.25 per multi-family unit
- Windsor: Impact fees only - \$57,423 per single-family unit and \$37,158 per multi-family unit

Based on estimates provided by these jurisdictions in their Housing Elements, planning and development fees in Petaluma are comparable to Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park, lower than Windsor, and likely to be higher than Sonoma.

In December 2022, the City Council approved an ordinance to exempt qualifying affordable housing from development impact fees.

⁶ City of Petaluma FY22/23 Development Impact Fees.

B.1.6.6. Required Improvements

The City of Petaluma requires developers to provide on- and off-site improvements in association with residential development, e.g., streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street trees, drainage, water, sewer, power and communications utilities. These requirements are comparable to provisions in neighboring cities.

Recent development in the City has primarily been for multi-family housing, which generally requires less on- and off-site improvements compared to new single-family subdivisions. Furthermore, payment of development fees as shown previously is considered adequate to address most key off-site improvements. As shown above, the City's development impact fees are moderate compared to other jurisdictions in the region. Other improvements required include undergrounding of utilities, and sidewalk and street improvements to half the street. All standards for public improvements (i.e., street widths, sidewalks, storm drains) are delineated in the Municipal Code. These standards may be modified if warranted by individual circumstances, and therefore are not a constraint on development. Specifically, the City has a large number of housing units on the pipeline. No developers have expressed the City's on- and off-site improvements as constraining to development.

The City's In-Lieu Housing Fund, Commercial Linkage Fee Fund, the California HOME Investment Partnership Act funds, and CDBG funds are often used to assist below-market-rate projects with the aforementioned improvements.

B.2. Non-Governmental Constraints

Nongovernmental constraints are those that are not created by local governments, but may be lessened through their actions.

B.2.1. Construction Costs

Housing prices are influenced partly by the types of construction materials used. Homes in Petaluma are generally of wood frame construction and finished with stucco or wood siding. This type of construction is the least expensive conventional method (brick, stone and concrete block are more costly). Composition shingle and built-up roofs, which are found on a large share of the community's homes, are also the least expensive, followed by concrete tile, metal and clay tile. A barrier to building taller residential structures (above 4 stories) is the requirement for podium construction, which raises the construction cost making the project financially infeasible.

In general, construction costs per unit can be lowered by increasing the number of units built. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), wood frame construction at 20 to 30 units per acre is generally the most cost-efficient method of residential development. However, local circumstances affecting land costs and market demand will impact the economic feasibility of construction types.

A report in 2020 by the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley found that materials and labor (also referred to as hard construction costs) accounted for approximately 63% of total development costs for multi-family projects in California between 2010 and 2019.⁷ The report also found that controlling for project characteristics, compared to the rest of the state, average materials and labor costs were \$81 more

⁷ The Hard Costs of Construction: Recent Trends in Labor and Materials Costs for Apartment Buildings in California, Turner Center for Housing Innovation. March 2020.

expensive per square foot in the Bay Area. The Bay Area has comparatively higher construction wages than elsewhere in California.⁸

Additionally, labor costs are influenced by the availability of workers and prevailing wages. State law requires payment of prevailing wages for many private projects constructed under an agreement with a public agency that provides assistance. As a result, the prevailing wage requirement substantially increases the cost of affordable housing construction. In addition, a statewide shortage of construction workers can impact the availability and cost of labor to complete housing projects. This shortage may be further exacerbated by limitations and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic

A recent study looking at affordable housing production in Marin County included residential development costs for projects in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa Counties. The following is a summary of the seven projects that were included:

- Average number of units in the project: Average dwelling units per acre: 63.27
- Average land costs: \$3,174,814; \$37/square foot
- Average construction costs: \$28,383,713; \$345/square foot
- Average project costs: \$47,179,443; \$564/square foot

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board's 2021 Construction Industry Insider Report stated that Builders are experiencing higher commodity and labor expenses. Though construction labor wages plateaued in mid-2020, they are expected to accelerate as residential building ramps up and competition for an adequate workforce rises. Other input costs are on the rise as well. Most notably, lumber prices are likely to continue going up until there is an end to the COVID-19 induced supply shocks; the same holds true with copper, steel and fuel prices.⁹

Additionally, labor costs are influenced by the availability of workers and prevailing wages. State law requires payment of prevailing wages for most private projects constructed under an agreement with a public agency providing assistance to the project. As a result, the prevailing wage requirement substantially increases the cost of affordable housing construction. Although construction costs are a significant factor in the overall cost of development, the City of Petaluma has no direct influence over materials and labor costs.

B.2.2. Land Costs

Land costs are affected by such factors as zoning density, the availability of infrastructure, the existence or absence of environmental constraints, land speculation, and the relative amount of similar land available for development. As is typical in California, land costs are high in Petaluma. Listings for residential land for sale on Zillow.com as of June 2022 averaged to \$108,750 per acre to \$6.7 million per acre, depending on location and density. On a per-acre basis, the most expensive property listed for sale was a 0.1 acre parcel that is centrally located in the city.

⁸ Same as Footnote 7

⁹ Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Construction Industry Insider Report, July 2021. www.sonomaedb.org

B.2.3. Financing Costs

B.2.3.1. Mortgage Financing

The availability of financing affects a person’s ability to purchase or improve a home. Under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA), lending institutions are required to disclose information on the disposition of loan applications. Through analysis of HMDA data, an assessment can be made of the availability of residential financing within Petaluma.

[Table B10](#) shows the 2018-2019 HMDA data for the City of Petaluma, including loan approval rates by race/ethnicity. Citywide, the mortgage application approval rate was 71 percent. This is the same approval rate for White residents. However, other racial/ethnic groups have lower approval rates, with Black or African American residents having the lowest at 50 percent. Black or African Americans also have the highest denial rate (29%) while Asians/Asian Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of loans withdrawn by the applicant or closed for incompleteness (Other = 23%).

Table B10: Mortgage Applications and Approval Rates (2018-2019)

Racial/Ethnic Group	Total # of Applications	% Approved*	% Denied	% Other*
White	1,902	71%	14%	16%
Unknown	709	65%	13%	22%
Hispanic or Latinx	246	61%	19%	20%
Asian/API	130	59%	18%	23%
Black or African American	28	50%	29%	21%
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	71%	14%	14%
Citywide	3,022	68%	14%	18%

Source: ABAG Housing Needs Data Packet, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's (FFIEC) Home Mortgage Disclosure Act loan/application register (LAR) files

Notes: **“Approved” loans include loans originated and applications approved but not accepted. “Other” includes loans withdrawn by the applicant or closed for incompleteness.

B.2.3.2. Construction Financing

Construction financing usually represents a small contribution to total housing costs. Financing costs for construction are affected partly by how early in the development process loans must be taken out and how long the loans must be carried. Project delays can increase total interest payments, as well as create greater financial risk for a project. Construction financing for higher-density in-fill projects is generally harder to obtain than for conventional single-family construction.

B.2.4. Identified Densities and Approval Time

Requests to develop housing at densities below those anticipated in the Housing Element may be a constraint to housing development. Over the last housing cycle no projects were approved below the permitted densities. [It is the City’s policy that projects are not allowed to go below the permitted densities. Furthermore, development projects within the Form-Based Code areas are not subject to density limits.](#)

Non-governmental constraints can also include timing between project approval and requests for building permits. In many cases, this has to do with securing construction financing. In Petaluma, the typical time lapse between project entitlement and issuance of building permits is approximately 10 to 12 months for medium to larger projects.

Securing funding for affordable housing projects has been seen as a constraint due to the number of different sources that are often required to construct an approved project and the deadlines and processing for each different award. For instance, the MidPen project at 414 Petaluma North recently initiated construction after being awarded funding from 14 different sources.

B.2.5. Local Efforts

The City of Petaluma has remained committed to working with our affordable housing partners to facilitate development of affordable housing. The City has used a variety of means to address non-governmental constraints, including local funding, vacant land, grant partnerships/collaboration, recent exemption from development fees for affordable housing projects, and expedited permitting. Local funding sources include inclusionary housing in-lieu funds, commercial linkage funds, and housing trust fund.

B.3. Infrastructure and Environmental Constraints

Infrastructure and environmental constraints affect, in varying degrees, existing and future residential developments in Petaluma and are discussed below.

B.3.1. Infrastructure

The City of Petaluma, and its urban growth boundary, host a uniquely functioning system of transportation corridors, wet and dry utility distribution, stormwater drainage, potable water treatment and conveyance.¹⁰ Special consideration must be given to critical infrastructure and facilities, including emergency services, lifeline utility systems, high potential loss facilities, and transportation systems. The City has assessed the potential vulnerabilities to these systems as part of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) efforts.¹¹

The City provides water and sewer services, and operates the storm drain system for city residents and businesses, as well as for some surrounding areas. Electricity, gas, telecom and waste services are provided by private utility companies..

B.3.1.1. Potable Water

The City of Petaluma receives potable water via two methods: 95 percent or more of the water supply is purchased from Sonoma Water and the remaining five percent is pumped groundwater from city-owned municipal wells. The City does not have a self-supplied surface water source. The City's potable water system consist of 225 miles of water mains, 9 pump stations, and 10 water tank sites. The average age of water mains is 51 years.

¹⁰ City of Petaluma General Plan Update Existing Conditions Reports for Land Use and Utilities; published October 22, 2021 and November 22, 2021, respectively).

¹¹ See note 10

Since 2015 the City has recorded a general decrease in its groundwater usage and has only used groundwater during short-term scenarios such as local fires, aqueduct repair and water supply shortage.¹² In the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the City projects zero groundwater use through 2045 until a more robust understanding of long-term yield, water quality, and treatment requirements becomes available. Beginning July 1, 2021, the City began pumping local groundwater to augment a reduced Sonoma Water supply due to drought conditions. The City is evaluating the potential for expansion of the groundwater well system and currently working on the development of a new well at Oak Hill Park.¹³

B.3.1.1.1.2021 Drought Impacts

In response to the reduced Sonoma Water deliveries, the City of Petaluma implemented its Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) beginning May 3, 2021 to address water shortage conditions. The City is continuing to implement the WSCP to prepare water supply for likely drought conditions in 2022. Climate change potential impacts on Petaluma's water supply is a concern and was part of the 2020 UWMP analysis.

The City of Petaluma is a member agency of the Petaluma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). As required by the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the Petaluma Valley GSA developed a 20-year Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that was finalized in January 2022. The GSP establishes a standard for sustainability of groundwater use and management and outlines how the Petaluma Valley Basin will achieve sustainability by 2042.

B.3.1.1.2. Water Service Reliability Through 2045

As an urban water supplier, the city prepares an updated Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) every five years which assesses the reliability of water sources over a 20-year planning horizon. Part of the UWMP is the Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP) which is enacted during water shortage events. As part of the city development impact fees, the city charges water and sewer capacity fees for new connections. By December 2022, the city will conduct a water and sewer capacity fee study and revise its capacity fees to reflect the current cost of growth for future customers.

The 2020 UWMP outlines a Water Service Reliability and Drought Risk Assessment. Below is a summary:

- Normal Water Years: City projects meeting demands in normal years thru 2045.
- Singly Dry Water Years: City projects experiencing a shortfall in imported water from Sonoma Water by 2030 in a single dry year that is hydrologically equivalent to the driest water year on record (1977). The City does not project a shortfall in recycled water or groundwater supply in a single dry year, and may decide to reduce its potable water demand and supplement supply with local groundwater.
- 5 Consecutive Dry Year Periods: City projects having adequate water supplies for a period that matches the 5 driest years on record (1987-1991) to meet demands until 2045. From the UWMP "An update to the water supply reliability analysis will be included in Sonoma Water's 2020 UWMP. In the City's past UWMPs, the reliability analysis showed that no impact to the City's water supplies would occur during drought years. Sonoma Water's model results indicate up to 19 percent reduction in wholesale water supply during Single-Dry years by 2045."

¹² 2020 Petaluma Urban Water Management Plan page 6-7.

¹³ 2020 Petaluma Urban Water Management Plan pages 6-13 and 6-14.

- The City's Drought Risk Assessment (DRA) shows the City anticipates having adequate supplies to meet estimated demand if 2021-2025 are equivalent to the driest 5-year period on record. City staff have discussed the possible need to update the DRA and UWMP in response to the current drought.

B.3.1.2. Wastewater

The City's wastewater system plan was found to be mostly satisfactory with only few minor concerns identified in a 2020 audit. Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) within Petaluma are overall less severe in comparison to other areas in the region and state, though may become more frequent in the Flood Prone City of Petaluma. The Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility (ECWRF), operating since 2009, provides water recycling that offsets potable demand for some landscape and agricultural irrigation and produced recycled natural gas. Few to no buildings, including recently built structures, are known to be dual plumbed for future use of recycled water as a non-potable supply. The analysis of hydraulic capacity should be completed to inform which areas are currently near or above capacity. The municipal waste treatment plant is currently operating under daily capacity.

B.3.1.3. Stormwater

Funding availability for maintenance of the City's stormwater drainage system is currently being investigated. Deferred maintenance costs continue to grow each year. There remain significant portions of the city which are underserved by existing stormwater infrastructure and are prone to flooding. Storm events will continue to become more intense with climate change, threatening to overwhelm the capacity of natural waterways and city storm drain network. The City is currently developing flood mapping which integrates rainfall flooding with Sea Level Rise predictions, and with the expected increased flood intensity due to higher precipitation and further land development in the future. The limited remaining greenspace in the city, particularly flood plains or channel-adjacent undeveloped parcels, provide significant stormwater management function and represent critical sites for future stormwater management and flood mitigation infrastructure projects. Additional measures related to water quality will be taken in order to address the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) goals defined by the City to protect the Petaluma River from pathogens, nutrients, sediment, trash, and other contaminants, as identified by the Clean Water Act.

B.3.1.4. Transportation and Transit Network

The following information is from the General Plan Update Existing Conditions Reports for Transportation (published September 23, 2021) and available on the City's website.

While most trips in Petaluma are made by private vehicle, reflecting the suburban nature of the city, several opportunities exist to encourage greater use of sustainable modes like walking, biking, and public transit in Petaluma to help achieve the City's climate goals. Petaluma is currently served by the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) commuter rail service at the Downtown Petaluma station, and will be served in the future at the planned Petaluma North/Corona Station. Petaluma is also served by Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit, which provide inter-city and regional connectivity, with a hub at the Copeland Street Transit Mall adjacent to the Downtown Petaluma station. Public transit use in Petaluma for commuting (3%) is slightly higher than the Sonoma County average (2%). However, residents of Petaluma tend to walk and bike slightly less compared to countywide averages (3% and 4%, respectively). While the transit and bicycle mode share in Petaluma is low compared to automobile mode share, low-income and underserved populations are a disproportionately large share of those modes. Approximately 54% of

Petaluma Transit riders are K-12 students; 75 percent of riders earn a household income of less than \$35,000; and over half (54%) of riders are Hispanic.

While Petaluma does not currently have a formal Complete Streets policy, the 2025 General Plan and 2008 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) encouraged a complete streets approach to planning. Recommendations from the General Plan Update will be coordinated with the ongoing Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update, which will also incorporate findings from Petaluma's ongoing Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP). There are several planned and in progress bicycle facilities in downtown Petaluma, including a road diet and Class II bike lanes along Petaluma Boulevard, Class II bike lanes on Western Avenue, and Class I facilities along the Petaluma River. While being constructed as part of the upcoming Petaluma Boulevard South road diet and approved to be constructed as a component of a development project along a block of East D Street, Petaluma does not yet have any Class IV protected bicycle facilities.

The General Plan Update will incorporate ongoing efforts to identify and prioritize network gaps and barriers to walking and biking in Petaluma, including Sonoma County's Vision Zero project, the City's ongoing LRSP and BPMP update. Emerging trends and services, such as carsharing and autonomous vehicles will be considered through the General Plan Update process to help the City achieve its mobility goals.

B.3.1.4.1. Petaluma Municipal Airport

In accordance with federal law, specific height and construction regulations apply to parts of Petaluma. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is authorized to review and discretionarily approve any project exceeding 200 feet above-ground – whether through building height or construction – in areas surrounding an airport. This regulation may therefore reduce the potential for intensification in the vicinity of the Petaluma Municipal Airport.

B.3.2. Environmental Hazards

Natural hazards that impact Petaluma are addressed below. The information is from the General Plan Update Existing Conditions Reports for Natural Hazards (published October, 2021) and available on the City's website. The City's 2020 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) includes mitigation measures to reduce the impacts from natural and man-made hazards. The Safety Element, being revised as part of the overall General Plan update, also includes policies and programs to address hazards in the City of Petaluma.

B.3.2.1. Seismic Activity, Liquefaction and Landslides

The City of Petaluma is situated in a highly active seismic area and, given recent quake activity and the proclivity of the region for seismic activity, earthquake hazards will continue to be a factor for the city. The Tolay Fault resides in the northwestern portion of the city and an additional unnamed fault runs somewhat parallel to the Tolay Fault. To the southeast of the city the Lakeville fault runs to the southeast parallel to the Tolay fault that continues in this area. To the south of the city, but not in the city limits, the Burdell Mountain fault runs from west to east along the hills along part of Highway 101. The Rodgers Creek fault and Bennet Valley fault zone resides northwest of the city. Other major fault lines are present in the region, such as the San Andreas Fault and the Rodgers Creek Fault, which could cause serious ground shaking, which is discussed in the next section.

Liquefaction can be defined as the loss of soil strength or stiffness due to a buildup of pore-water pressure during a seismic event, and is associated primarily with relatively loose, saturated fine to medium-grained

unconsolidated soils. In the event of an earthquake the seismic ground shaking of loose, granular soils that are saturated or submerged can cause the soils to liquify and behave as a dense fluid temporarily. Most of the city is in the moderate liquefaction risk zone, while parts of it in the center and close to Highway 101, near Washington Street and Western Avenue are higher risk zones. Approximately 1,851 acres are at high risk of liquefaction within Petaluma, and 559 acres are at very and high-risk of liquefaction, in the event of a significant earthquake. Most of the high-risk areas follow along the railroad corridor, which is similar to the Petaluma River's general location as it flows from the northwest of the city, though the center and downtown area, then out through the center-east.

The majority of Petaluma is in the lower risk categories of landslides, meaning that the local soils and geology are not very likely to lead to landslide activity. However, some higher landslide susceptibility areas fall inside the city boundary. Historically, landslides have occurred in the hills to the northeast and southeast of the city. During heavy rainfall events, added precipitation in soil can result in increased landslide potential and susceptibility in these higher-risk areas. Erosion along the Petaluma River will also become more of a threat as a result of sea level rise as a result of climate change, combined with storm surges.

B.3.2.2. Flooding

The City of Petaluma is situated in the Petaluma Valley, a fairly flat alluvial plain with elevation ranging from sea level along the Petaluma River, to over 400 feet in the nearby hills. The main waterways in the city include the Petaluma River, Adobe Creek, Lynch Creek, Lichau Creek, and smaller branches or tributaries such as Willow Brook.

A 146-square mile basin contributes to the 19 miles of the Petaluma River, emptying into San Pablo Bay. The city sits near the center of the river stretch. The Petaluma River floodplain overlays portions of the northwestern and southeastern parts of the city, as well as parts of central Petaluma and the western suburban neighborhoods. Over the years, multiple factors both natural and man-made have caused siltation of the streambed, which in turn has affected the water-carrying capacity and navigability of the waterway and has caused problems on surrounding communities.

Flooding caused by heavy rainfall, primarily associated with seasonal storms, can occur in the region during winter and spring months. In the more urbanized areas of Petaluma, localized flooding intensifies because of impervious surfaces such as roads and paved structures that prevent the natural absorption of rainfall and runoff. According to the latest FEMA National Flood Hazard data, the 100- and 500- year flood plains are located on the south-southeast and north-northwest of the city and along the Petaluma River. The most frequent flooding occurs along the Petaluma River, and the City has created the Petaluma River Flood Mitigation Plan to address the issues of reoccurring flooding during heavy rains.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the City Zoning Map includes a Flood Protection Overlay Zone; which is intended to protect life, health, property, and public facilities and utilities from damage resulting from floodwaters. Additionally, areas within the Floodway are identified in the General Plan and development is prohibited in such areas.

The City is currently undertaking revised flood plain modeling to update maps as well as to discuss policy about use and development within flood prone areas as part of the General Plan Update process.

B.3.2.3. Wildfires

Petaluma has experienced several notable wildfire events dating back to 1900 and earlier. The rugged terrain, dry vegetation and the rocky slopes of the surrounding lands all contribute to wildfire potential. In

the Fall of 2017, the Santa Rosa fires spread and affected the Fountaingrove and Coffey Park areas extensively, with high winds and dry conditions fueling the flames. The fire seasons of 2017, 2019 and 2020 were especially devastating to the region. The Kincade Fire in October 2019 burned 77,758 acres and over 90,000 structures. In 2020 the LNU Complex Fires became the biggest in Sonoma County history and burned for two months. While much of the city is in the Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the pattern in the overall region suggests that fires will increase everywhere, or that indirect impacts of fires such as community exposure to poor air quality and smoke will be more severe.

When urban development encroaches on wildlands and other natural areas, this is known as the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The most at risk areas exist along the perimeter of the city boundary where development is adjacent to or interspersed in areas with wildland vegetation present. Several areas with residential uses are adjacent to wildfire prone vegetation, including a portion of central Petaluma between Highway 101 and Petaluma Boulevard North, land to the south of Lakeville Highway near the Rocky Memorial Dog Park, land adjacent to the intersection of Casa Grande Road and Hidden Valley Drive, and a large stretch of the city boundary in southern and western Petaluma.

The Petaluma Building Code (Title 17) was updated to include regulations from the 2019 California Fire Code (Title 24, Part 9 of the California Building Standards). The City's updated code includes building safety guidelines to reduce fire risk and outlines the role of the Fire Department and Fire Chief in implementing regulations. The Petaluma Fire Department provides fire protection services to a total area of 184 square miles and a population of 70,000 people. There are three Fire Department Stations located within the city limits and two volunteer fire stations are located southwest of the city. The Department has 58 personnel, with 48 divided among three platoons that work in 24-hour rotating shifts. In response to wildfires, the Fire Department offers several resources to residents such as weed abatement and access to wildfire disaster loans. As of 2019, the Petaluma Fire Department has an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 3 and adopted the most recent Emergency Operations Plan in 2007.