Southern California Housing Element Resources

**What is the Housing Element?** As part of the General Plan, the Housing Element is the “constitution” for future development, and local land use decisions need to be consistent with it. The Housing Element is unique because it requires cities to assess their residents’ housing needs by income level, and to plan adequately for the needs of all of its residents. This means cities must consider programs to both produce and preserve affordable housing. Cities are required to obtain public participation from all economic segments of society in the development of their housing element.

Southern California jurisdictions are required to update their housing elements approximately every 5 years. The latest round of updates is due June 30, 2008! Many cities have not met the deadline, and housing elements are expected to be adopted throughout the summer/fall of 2008. Cities must send their Draft Housing Elements to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review and comment. HCD has 60 days to respond, and HCD’s mark of approval of the City’s Housing Element makes it eligible to apply for certain types of funding. Click here for a more detailed description of Public Counsel’s Housing Element Advocacy Project.

### Tools to Review Housing Elements

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Public Counsel: How Can You Get Involved in the Update Process?</strong></th>
<th>This document advises why the Housing Element is important and how you can get involved.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HCD Review Letters</strong></td>
<td>HCD reviews housing elements for compliance with state law. If HCD has reviewed your jurisdiction, its review letter can be accessed here.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HCD Housing Element Q&amp;As</strong></td>
<td>This is a comprehensive guide to the state housing element law and the factors that HCD will use to assess housing element compliance.</td>
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<td><strong>HCD Building Blocks for Housing Elements</strong></td>
<td>HCD also publishes guidance for cities with sample language to include in housing elements.</td>
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<td><strong>HCD SB 2 Memo - Local Planning &amp; Approval for Emergency Shelters and Transitional &amp; Supportive Housing</strong></td>
<td>SB 2 clarifies and strengthens housing element law to ensure zoning that encourages and facilitates emergency shelters, including a requirement to identify locations where emergency shelters are permitted without discretionary approval. SB 2 also limits the ability of localities to deny permits for emergency shelters and transitional and supportive housing, extending the protections contained in the Housing Accountability Act (formerly, the “Anti-Nimby Law”) to these uses. For additional information, see HCD’s building blocks.</td>
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Public Interest Law Project: California Housing Element Manual

This manual is a summary of California's landmark land use planning requirement for housing. The guide covers review, advocacy and litigation for this plan.

The Kennedy Commission

The Kennedy Commission maintains a variety of housing element resources on its website for Orange County jurisdictions.

Livable Places Affordability Matters Report

A comprehensive report on the state of housing construction in the City of LA since the 1998 Housing Element, including maps depicting where new housing was built and where housing was demolished.

Cities We Are Working In

Public Counsel has provided legal analysis of the housing elements in Los Angeles City, Los Angeles County, Burbank and Glendale. The letters we submitted to HCD, together with the links to the cities' housing elements and other information, appear below. [Click here](#) for a list of all the cities we are researching, along with dates of submittal to HCD and HCD comment letters, if any.

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<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction Name</th>
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<th>City Documents, Including Draft Element</th>
<th>Relevant Dates and News</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beverly Hills</td>
<td>• <strong>September 19, 2008 Comment Letter</strong></td>
<td>• Draft Housing Element</td>
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| Burbank           | • **February 14, 2008 Comment Letter**
                     • **April 1, 2008 Comment Letter**
                     • **August 20, 2008 Comment Letter** | • Adopted Housing Element | • **May 9, 2008 HCD Comment Letter**
                     • **January 9, 2009 HCD Compliance Letter** |
| Covina            | • **September 5, 2008 Comment Letter**
                     • **November 25, 2008 Comment Letter** | • Draft Housing Element | • **January 23, 2009 HCD Comment Letter**
                     Currently under second HCD review (as of 4/29/09) |
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| El Monte                  | • July 21, 2008 Comment Letter  
                            • January 29, 2009 Comment Letter                                                       |                                                                                        | • March 28, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • August 29, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • February 13, 2009 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • March 30, 2009 HCD Compliance Letter                                                   |
| Gardena                   | • August 19, 2008 Comment Letter                                                              |                                                                                        | • August 8, 2008 HCD Comment Letter                                                   |
| Glendale                  | • March 3, 2008 Comment Letter                                                                | • Adopted Housing Element                                                                       | • May 13, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • November 3, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • February 24, 2009 HCD Compliance Letter                                                |
| Huntington Park           | • July 30, 2008 Comment Letter  
                            • November 25, 2008 Comment Letter                                                           | • Adopted Housing Element                                                                       | • June 20, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • December 30, 2008 HCD Comment Letter                                                   |
| Lancaster                 | • July 23, 2008 Comment Letter                                                                | • Draft Housing Element                                                                         | • July 1, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • November 19, 2008 HCD Comment Letter                                                   |
| Los Angeles County        | • March 28, 2008 Comment Letter                                                                | • Adopted Housing Element                                                                       | • April 29, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                            • November 6, 2008 HCD Compliance Letter                                                  |
<p>| (unincorporated)          |                                                                                             |                                                                                                  |                                                                                        |
| Pasadena                  | • August 11, 2008 Comment Letter                                                               | • Draft Housing Element                                                                         | • February 19, 2009 HCD Comment Letter                                                |</p>
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| Thousand Oaks     | - September 19, 2008 Comment Letter  
                  | - January 12, 2009 Comment Letter  
                  | - February 10, 2009 Comment Letter     | - Draft Housing Element  
                                                                          | October 24, 2008 HCD Comment Letter  
                                                                          | Currently under second HCD review (as of 4/29/09) |
| Whittier          | - August 26, 2008 Comment Letter |                                        | Currently under second HCD review (as of 4/29/09) |
| City of Los Angeles | - May 14, 2008 Comment Letter Submitted by SCANPH and Public Counsel  
                      | - June 17, 2008 Comment Letter Submitted by SCANPH and Public Counsel  
                      | - June 12, 2008 Presentation to the LA City Planning Commission and Affordable Housing Commission  
                      | - July 15, 2008 Environmental Analysis  
                                                                          | - Adopted Housing Element  
                                                                          | - Housing Element Executive Summary  
                                                                          | - Housing LA News-Planning Commission Strengthens Draft Housing Element  
                                                                          | - November 17, 2008 HCD Compliance Letter |
Housing Element in the News!

- United Nations Committee Praises California’s Housing Element Law in Report on Racial Discrimination – Department of Housing and Community Development

- Report Sets City's Target For Housing – The Daily News of Los Angeles

- City of Los Angeles Bases Current EIR Update On Its Former General Plan Framework EIR – The Argonaut

Additional Information & Contact

There is no greater justice than equal justice.

For more information regarding Public Counsel’s Housing Element Advocacy Project, contact Remy de la Peza at 213.385.2977 ext. 237 or Shashi Hanuman at 213.385.2977 ext. 136.