

Housing Element¹

Guiding Principle: Provide a diverse, abundant, adaptable, and equitably distributed mix of rental and ownership housing that is safe, healthy, and affordable for people of all income levels, races and ages and meets the needs of current and future Riverside residents

Policy HE-1.0 - Affordable Housing: Preserve and increase affordable housing options, including subsidized and non-subsidized affordable units for lower-income² and environmental justice communities³, special needs, and underserved populations

- Action HE-1.1: Prepare an **Inclusionary Housing Program⁴** to facilitate the development of affordable housing units throughout the City's housing supply
- Action HE-1.2: Update the City's Density Bonus Ordinance to encourage and incentivize development of affordable and senior housing, both for sale and for rent, consistent with state Density Bonus legislation
- Action HE-1.3: Facilitate the relationship between developers and the County of Riverside Housing Authority project-based Section 8 voucher programs to further develop affordable housing in the City
- Action HE-1.4: Develop a streamlined process to assist homeowners and rental property owners to rehabilitate residential properties
- Action HE-1.5: Seek additional funding for the City's Housing Rehabilitation Program for lower-income owners to encourage further homeowner investment and ensure housing stability
- Action HE-1.6: Facilitate the relationship between affordable housing providers, market-rate housing providers and community-based organizations to build a network and

¹ **Housing Element.** All cities in California are required to have a Housing Element as part of their adopted General Plan. The Housing Element is the city's guide for meeting the housing needs of all segments of Riverside's population and provides a plan and a strategy for promoting safe, decent, and affordable housing. Per state law, the specific purposes of the Housing Element are to: assess both current and future housing needs and constraints; and establish housing goals, policies and programs that provide a strategy for meeting the city's housing needs.

² **Lower income.** A *lower-income* household is a household that earns less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income per year, and is inclusive of the terms *low income* (less than 80 percent of AMI), *very low income* (less than 50% of AMI) and *extremely low income* (less than 30% of AMI). The 2020 AMI for Riverside County is approximately \$75,000 per year for a family of four. [Source Link](#)

³ **Environmental justice community.** Per Senate Bill 1000, an *environmental justice community* is defined as "An area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code [i.e., a census tract that scores within the top 25% of all tracts for pollution burden, socioeconomic characteristics and underlying health status as measured by the CalEnviroScreen tool] or an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation." Environmental justice community is interchangeable with *disadvantaged community (DAC)*; the first term is used throughout this document for consistency. [Source Link](#)

⁴ **Inclusionary Housing Program.** An *inclusionary housing program* is a local policy that seek to capture a portion of increasing real estate values related to new development to create additional opportunities and funding sources for affordable housing. IHPs can incorporate several mechanisms including requiring certain portions of new development be designated affordable, establishment of an affordable housing fee, creation of incentives for projects that include affordable housing, and more. [Source Link](#)

City of Riverside Housing Policies

partnerships that will help increase affordable housing in the City and the sites identified in the City's Housing First Plan

Policy HE-2.0 - Homelessness: Expand housing and services that address the needs of the City's homeless population

- Action HE-2.1: Develop a permanent supportive service program for non-profit providers that provide shelter and support services to the homeless
- Action HE-2.2: Continue to partner with the Riverside County Continuum of Care in preparing and implementing recommendations and best practices to end cycles of homelessness; providing **emergency shelter**⁵, **permanent supportive housing**⁶ and providing homes with supervised care; and offering humane and adaptable services
- Action HE-2.3: Prepare a Zoning Code update to further facilitate development of emergency shelters, **low-barrier navigation centers**⁷, **transitional housing**⁸, permanent supportive housing, residential care facilities, and community care facilities in appropriately zoned areas
- Action HE-2.4: Collaborate with surrounding cities, counties, and other agencies to develop an ongoing multi-agency dialogue and agreement on providing emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing and affordable housing and services
- Action HE-2.5: Develop an outreach program, together with shelter and service providers, that includes homeless and lived experience/formerly homeless participants to provide information on available programs to all that need services

Policy HE-3.0 - Fair Housing: Promote safe, healthy, and attainable housing opportunities for all people regardless of their **special characteristics**⁹ as protected under State and Federal fair housing laws

- Action HE-3.1: Adopt a City-wide policy that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing regarding characteristics protected under State and Federal fair housing laws

⁵ **Emergency shelter.** *Emergency shelters* are defined in the California Government Code as short-term housing accommodations with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person. No individual or household may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay. [Source Link](#)

⁶ **Permanent supportive housing.** *Permanent supportive housing* is defined in the California Government Code as housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the target population, and that is linked to 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, work in the community. [Source Link](#)

⁷ **Low-barrier navigation center.** A *low barrier navigation center* is defined in the California Government Code 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, entry into which is not limited by things like presence of partners (if not a population-specific facility, such as a women's shelter), pets, storage of personal possessions or the need for privacy. [Source Link](#)

⁸ **Transitional housing.** *Transitional housing* is defined in the California Government Code as 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. [Source Link](#)

⁹ **Special characteristics.** In this document, *special characteristics* refers to the groups are protected from housing discrimination by State law, Federal law or both and includes, but is not limited to, race, color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, immigration status, language, age, religion, mental or physical disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, familial status, source of income, or military or veteran status. [Source Link](#)

**City of Riverside
Housing Policies**

- Action HE-3.2: Adopt a City-wide policy that supports continued collaboration and participation with fair housing service provider(s) that increases fair housing opportunities across the City
- Action HE-3.3: Adopt a City-wide policy that encourages the development or adaptation of residential units accessible to people with physical disabilities
- Action HE-3.4: Study the need for a City-wide **Universal Design and Visitability**¹⁰ Policy
- Action HE-3.5: Develop an outreach program for homeowners and renters regarding their rights, financing options, available assistance, and protection in purchasing, renting, or modifying a housing unit

Policy HE-4.0 - Thriving Neighborhoods: Facilitate and encourage a variety of new housing types, including both single- and multi-family and **missing middle housing¹¹, and the necessary public amenities to support a sense of community that results in equitable and **sustainable**¹² neighborhoods**

- Action HE-4.1: Prepare urban design regulations that link private development and public space to create safe, healthy, complete neighborhoods that incorporate quality housing development, services and commercial uses, schools, transit, parks, and other needs
- Action HE-4.2: Prepare a Zoning Code update that encourages and incentivizes building the maximum number of homes allowed by the Zoning to create a critical mass of residents to support local businesses, community services and public transit
- Action HE-4.3: Prepare an **infill development**¹³ ordinance and development regulations, including the potential to use pre-approved construction plans, to facilitate housing on smaller lots that are close to needed services and amenities

Policy HE-5.0 - Regulations: Reduce and remove government barriers, where feasible and legally permissible, to reduce the cost of housing development and facilitate both ownership and rental opportunities for all residents

¹⁰ **Universal design and visitability.** *Universal design and visitability* are closely related strategies aimed at improving the safety and utility of housing for all people, including older adults and people with disabilities. *Universal design* is an approach to designing products and environments to be appropriate for all people, including those with physical, cognitive, or sensory impairments. *Visitability* is based on the principle that all new homes should include a few basic features that make them accessible to people regardless of their physical abilities. [Source Link](#)

¹¹ **Missing middle housing.** *Missing middle housing* refers to a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood. Missing middle housing types fall somewhere between single-family houses and large apartment buildings or complexes and are referred to as “missing” because, although once very common, are often not legal to build under today’s development regulations. [Source Link](#)

¹² **Sustainable.** In the City of Riverside, *sustainability* refers to three key areas: economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility and embodies the City’s commitment to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future while ensuring the City’s capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times.

¹³ **Infill development.** *Infill development* refers to the addition of housing, businesses, or other new uses on existing sites within developed, urbanized areas, as opposed to outlying or undeveloped areas, where the efficient use of existing, in-place infrastructure and services can be realized.

**City of Riverside
Housing Policies**

- Action HE-5.1: Develop an **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)**¹⁴ program that includes pre-approved construction plans, streamlined permitting and educational materials to facilitate ADU development
- Action HE-5.2: Prepare a Zoning Code update to streamline the approval process and simplify development regulations for new housing development
- Action HE-5.3: Prepare an **Adaptive Reuse**¹⁵ Ordinance to encourage redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial properties and allow **by-right**¹⁶ residential development when building a minimum of 20% of affordable units in non-residential zones
- Action HE-5.4: Prepare a Zoning Code update to further encourage mixed-use development with transit access that reduces automobile trips, **vehicle miles traveled**¹⁷, and associated energy consumption
- Action HE-5.5: Develop regulations that will help reduce housing costs by promoting sustainable and **resilient**¹⁸ design and construction practices; promoting technological improvements such as increased energy efficiency, **net-zero construction**¹⁹, solar, electric transportation; and encouraging reduced water/energy consumption and reduced waste generation

Policy HE-6.0 - Monitoring/Engagement: Ensure regular monitoring and reporting, including outreach to the public, on the status of housing in the City

- Action HE-6.1: Develop an online dashboard that includes a monitoring mechanism, including a public outreach component, that shows potential housing development sites, housing production – both affordable and market rate – and preserved housing supply
- Action HE-6.2: Develop and maintain an up-to-date residential sites inventory and provide to interested developers with information on available housing development opportunities and incentives
- Action HE-6.3: Complete an evaluation and report of housing development every 5 years to ensure that adequate services and facilities, including water, wastewater, and neighborhood infrastructure are available

¹⁴ **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).** An ADU, sometimes called a Second Dwelling, Granny Flat, or Mother-in-Law’s Quarters, is a completely self-contained housing unit located on the same lot as another home, called the primary dwelling. ADUs are considered accessory because they are typically smaller than the primary dwelling and are not the main use on the lot.

¹⁵ **Adaptive Reuse.** *Adaptive reuse* refers to the conversion of an existing building or space that was built for one purpose to another purpose or use, such as the conversion of a commercial building to residences. Adaptive reuse projects may require special consideration or construction methods and regulations for structures converted to purposes other than that for which they were originally built.

¹⁶ **By-right development.** *By-right development* is development that is approved based on the project meeting established, objective criteria.

¹⁷ **Vehicle miles traveled.** *Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)* is a method of measuring the effects of development on the transportation system by estimating the amount driving, measured in miles driven per vehicle, that will be generated by cars and trucks associated with the development. [Source Link](#)

¹⁸ **Resilience.** Resilience refers to the ability of structures, systems, organizations, and other entities to anticipate, absorb, respond to, and recover from disturbance. Resilience often refers to climate resilience, which is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to changing climate conditions. [Source Link](#)

¹⁹ **Net-zero construction.** *Net-zero construction*, also known as zero-energy or net-zero energy building, refers to energy-efficient buildings that generate as much or more energy as they consume on an annual basis. [Source Link](#)

Action HE- 6.4: As part of the Citywide Community Engagement Policy, prepare requirements for outreach and engagement that private developers will undertake for all new housing projects

Policy HE-EJ-7.0: Facilitate a development process that promotes design and rehabilitation of housing that is responsive to the needs and desires of the residents of environmental justice communities

Action HE-EJ-7.1: Conduct an inventory of existing housing within environmental justice communities to determine the adequacy of existing housing

Action HE-EJ-7.2: On properties where poor-quality housing conditions are identified in environmental justice communities, facilitate the permitting process for property owners and residents to remedy and retrofit unhealthy and unsafe conditions in a timely fashion

Action HE-EJ-7.3: Through the approval process, identify potential California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) streamlining opportunities including, but not limited to, CEQA exemptions, tiering from prior CEQA documents, and by-right approvals to expedite approvals of proposed affordable and supportive housing projects

Policy HE-EJ-8.0: Provide opportunities to access fresh, healthy, and affordable food from food sources that are accessible to neighborhoods and within a quarter mile of public transit

Action HE-EJ-8.1: Streamline development approvals for opening full-service grocery stores and for the establishment of farmers’ markets and community gardens in areas with poor access to healthy food options

Action HE-EJ-8.2: Work with retail businesses in environmental justice communities such as local convenience stores and farmers’ markets to increase the availability of fresh produce

Action HE-EJ-8.3: Use the Riverside Food Systems Alliance and similar organizations to expand civic engagement, particularly with community-based organizations and local grocers, to better understand the barriers to healthy food access in environmental justice communities

Action HE-EJ-8.4: Develop a Food Access Assessment program to assess food security within environmental justice communities, identify strategies to ensure the equitable distribution and accessibility of healthy foods such as identifying and pursuing opportunities to locate fresh produce providers near or within existing neighborhoods

Environmental Justice Policies

The General Plan includes a series of policies and actions intended to promote environmental justice within the City. As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies. The need to promote environmental justice within and beyond California’s communities has arisen out of a history of disproportionate environmental harm borne by low-income and minority populations due to compounded exposure to environmental hazards, often leading to adverse health outcomes and compromised quality of life. To address such disproportionate effects, and to comply with California Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), policies and actions are incorporated herein with the ultimate goal of affording affected communities with an equitable level of protection from environmental and health hazards and enhanced opportunities to engage in decision-making that affects environmental quality and health outcomes.

SB 1000 amended California Government Code Section 65302 to require that both cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans, either in a separate environmental justice element or by integrating related goals, policies, and objectives throughout the other elements upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently. The purpose of the legislation is to address the “unique or compounded health risks” in disadvantaged communities by decreasing pollution exposure, increasing community assets, and improving overall health. Disadvantaged communities are those communities that are either:

Identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency as 1) areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation; or 2) areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment²⁰; or, Low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.”²¹

Disadvantaged communities within the City of Riverside were identified using the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (“CalEnviroScreen”), a data tool developed by CalEPA’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 39711 and other statutory requirements. CalEnviroScreen provides statewide data that can be used to identify communities disproportionately impacted by, or vulnerable to, environmental pollution and contaminants. The mapping tool contains 12 indicators related to pollution burden and 8 indicators that track population characteristics and other vulnerabilities.

In compliance with SB 1000, the General Plan includes environmental justice policies and actions within each of the required elements of the General Plan. The following overarching environmental justice policies have been developed as a framework for integrating environmental justice into the blueprint for future growth and development within the City.

²⁰ California Code, Health and Safety Code – HSC Section 39711

²¹ Gov. Code, § 65302, subdivision. (h)(4)(A).

Land Use and Urban Design Element

Policy LU—EJ-1.0: Ensure new housing developments adhere to local, state, and federal requirements to avoid disproportionate impacts on environmental justice communities

Policy LU—EJ-2.0: Ensure the Citywide Community Engagement Policy provides residents with opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their environment and health

Circulation and Community Mobility Element

Policy CCM-EJ-1.0: Promote physical activity and active transportation to address negative health outcomes, particularly among environmental justice communities

Policy CCM-EJ-2.0: Encourage increased public transportation and multi-modal transportation choices as means of reducing roadway congestion and associated air pollution and promoting overall health

Education Element

Policy ED-EJ-1.0: Coordinate with public school districts, charter and private K-12 schools, and local universities and colleges to promote equity in educational facilities and opportunities for all student populations

Policy ED-EJ-2.0: Support the Safe Routes to School programs of public-school districts, as well as charter and private K-12 schools

Noise Element

Policy N-EJ-1.0: With a particular focus on environmental justice communities, reduce noise pollution by enforcing noise reduction and control measures within and adjacent to residential neighborhoods

Air Quality Element

Policy AQ-EJ-1.0: Ensure that land use decisions, including enforcement actions, are made in an equitable fashion to protect residents and workers in environmental justice communities from the short- and long-term effects of air pollution

Parks and Recreation Element

Policy PR-EJ-1.0: Distribute recreational facilities equitably throughout Riverside's neighborhoods

Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element

Policy FI-EJ-1.0: Coordinate with healthcare providers to expand healthcare access for residents of environmental justice communities

Arts and Culture Element

Policy AC-EJ-1.0: Promote equitable distribution of arts and cultural facilities across the City

Historic Preservation Element

Policy HP-EJ-1.0: Encourage identification and preservation of historic and cultural resources associated with communities whose histories and historical contributions are not well documented