



To: Honorable Mayor Paul and Members of the City Council
From: Ande Flower, Principal Planner, EMC Planning Group
Date: November 16, 2021
Re: Preparation for Sites Inventory Analysis & Mapping Exercise

SUMMARY

This memorandum introduces the Community Engagement Plan and prepares the Cupertino community and decision-makers for the sites inventory analysis process of the 6th Cycle Housing Element update; and specifically, use of the Balancing Act to enable democratic participation in determining locations of future housing unit capacity. The background section of this memo answers basic questions, the discussion section suggests desired feedback at this introductory period of the process, and the next steps section describes what participants and observers can expect next. Much of the information shared below has been excerpted from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) text, and Cupertino General Plan text, both of which are available as links at the end of this memo.

SITES INVENTORY - BACKGROUND

What is a Sites Inventory for a Housing Element?

The Housing Element of the General Plan must include an inventory of land suitable and available for residential development to meet the jurisdiction's housing need by income level.

What is the connection to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)?

The purpose of the Housing Element's site inventory is to identify and analyze specific land (sites) that is available and suitable for residential development in order to determine the jurisdiction's capacity to accommodate residential development and reconcile that capacity with the jurisdiction's RHNA. The total draft RHNA for Cupertino's existing and future housing need is 4,588 housing units, at varying levels of affordability. Cupertino's Housing Element update is expected to accommodate 1,193 very low-income units, 687 low-income units, 755 moderate-income units, and 1,953 above moderate-income units (Attachment A.1).

Sites are suitable for residential development if the City's regulations (zoning) allow enough residential development to accommodate the RHNA during the planning period (2023-2031). If there are not enough existing sites to accommodate the RHNA for each income category, the City must identify additional sites until there are enough sites. Changes to the City's regulations (rezoning) and/or adopting programs and policies may be necessary to accommodate the full amount of housing needs allocated with RHNA.

SITES INVENTORY - DISCUSSION

Where will growth happen for future housing units?

The final sites inventory will be informed by input from the community and decision-makers of Cupertino. The public engagement process will be robust and iterative, with a variety of opportunities throughout the process to learn about the Housing Element update and provide feedback. As a first step for a transparent community engagement process, an interactive mapping tool, called “Balancing Act,” has been created which will allow the public to suggest sites throughout the City where housing would be appropriate and should be considered.

Our first Balancing Act map includes all designated special areas and neighborhoods of the City, with an ability for everyone to determine how future housing units can be distributed. Data captured from the community engagement will lead to additional iterative maps and all of this information will be integrated with a draft Sites Inventory report for Council consideration in February 2022.

The following two types of areas are shown on two separate maps (Attachment A.2). The following types were chosen because together, they represent the entire City. Excerpts from the Cupertino General Plan describes these two categories of land in specific ways:

SPECIAL AREAS (LU-40)- Special Areas are located along major mixed-use corridors and nodes that have access to a variety of different forms of transportation. Future growth in Cupertino will be focused in these areas to manage growth while minimizing traffic, greenhouse gas and health impacts on the community.

NEIGHBORHOODS (LU-67)- The City has many neighborhoods, each with its own distinctive character and setting. These neighborhoods play a vital role in supporting Cupertino’s great quality of life. Neighborhood goals and policies help preserve and enhance the quality of life by protecting neighborhood character and improving walking and biking connections to parks, schools and services. Neighborhoods typically offer a variety of housing choices to meet a spectrum of community needs.

The Council will be invited to preview a demonstration of the Balancing Act to help provide general input on which areas the Council wishes to see development occur in, and as a corollary, where development should not occur.

Why can’t we just build more single-family homes?

If the City’s RHNA were planned to be met with typical 5,000 square-foot single-family parcels, then upwards of 526 acres would be needed to fulfill that goal. While new state law (SB-9) allows adding a duplex home on all lots that allow single-family homes, limitations on the amount of developable land in Cupertino suggests that housing development during this next eight-year cycle will largely need to be in attached townhomes/rowhomes or other types of multi-family units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful public education and engagement is essential to success for the 6th Cycle Housing Element update. Inclusive participation is the only way to address affirmatively furthering fair housing (AB 686).

We look forward to engaging the community in the following ways:

- **Website & Online Engagement:** The Housing Element website will soon be launched for the community to learn about the Housing Element Update process, find out about upcoming events, and participate in online engagement opportunities, such as surveys, polls, and the Balancing Act mapping tool. The website will be available in five languages, including Mandarin, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, and English. Emails will be sent to all who sign up for Housing updates on the City website, and several social media blasts will direct individuals to visit www.engagecupertino.org/housingelement once the website is ready to launch.
- **Community Workshops:** We anticipate facilitating a total of two community workshops. We are excited to host our first virtual community workshop on December 9th. At this workshop, we will introduce the Balancing Act mapping tool to the larger public. To gain additional feedback, the mapping exercise and instructional video will remain active and online for approximately one month. Additional mapping exercises will follow the initial Balancing Act Special Areas & Neighborhoods map. Iterative maps will become more and more focused on specific potential sites with feedback from the community. Results from the December 9th Community Meeting will be incorporated into a future Council report, along with the subsequent maps, to assist decision-makers in understanding the public's preferences for future housing in Cupertino. Councilmembers may request changes to the initial mapping exercise, and/or suggest considerations for future iterative mapping exercises.
- **City Council, Planning Commission, & Housing Commission Public Meetings:** We anticipate hosting a total of 11 public meetings for City Council, Planning Commission, and Housing Commission through adoption of the final, certified Housing Element. It is anticipated that decision-making bodies will provide input at four stages: Sites Inventory; Housing Policy; Draft Housing Element adoption and Final Housing Element adoption.
- **Stakeholder Meetings:** We anticipate a total of three stakeholder focus group meetings. Stakeholder groups are made up of individuals with interest in a process or project. We are looking for direction from City Council regarding the makeup of the stakeholder group and selection process, and we request that Council share guidance on criteria for no more than 10 members. A well-rounded stakeholder group could include property owners, renters, block group leaders, developers, business owners, local employees, and service providers. A form will be available on the Housing Element Update website for applicants and members will be appointed to this ad-hoc group by Council, with recommendations provided by staff in January.
- **Postcard:** Announcement of upcoming events may be announced to the public via postcard.
- **Scene E-Magazine & City Social Media Outreach:** Information about progress and upcoming events will be amplified through all City social media channels.

NEXT STEPS

- The Housing Element Update team will present an update to Housing Commission on December 9, 2021.

- The community is invited to participate in the December 9th virtual workshop. Meeting information will be added to the Housing Element webpage (www.engagecupertino.org/housingelement). The outcomes from this first workshop's Balancing Act mapping exercise will influence the next exercise, which will include a deeper analysis of sites and will be designed to further develop the educational and participatory experiences.
- Staff is compiling a list of property owners who are interested in becoming a 6th Cycle Housing Element site. To increase the number of possible sites, Staff is contacting all property owners who may be eligible as a Housing Element site. All interested and potentially eligible property owners will be notified via mail of the Housing Element Update process and upcoming engagement opportunities. Property owners will also be able to sign up to have their property added to this list on the website.
- Staff will be returning to Council in January to present a grant opportunity from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for an update to the Heart of the City Specific Plan. It is anticipated that this update will occur concurrently with the Housing Element Update with EMC as the project lead.

ATTACHMENTS:

A.1 – ABAG Draft RHNA Methodology Report 2023-2031 (Appendix 4, Santa Clara County)

A.2 – General Plan Excerpts of Special Areas and Neighborhood Maps

LINKS:

Cupertino General Plan:

<https://records.cupertino.org/WebLink/docview.aspx?dbid=0&id=873201&repo=CityofCupertino&cr=1>

HCD memo for Sites Inventory:

https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos/docs/sites_inventory_memo_final06102020.pdf

Preview link for Balancing Act mapping exercise (sample placeholder):

<https://lovelafayette.abalancingact.com/rhna-distribution?preview=f1166e6b0ea86c97d0bc3892a8b7a120>