



October 27, 2022

State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)  
C/O Land Use and Planning Unit  
2020 W. El Camino Ave., Suite 500  
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Draft Town of Los Altos 2023-2031 Housing Element

Dear HCD:

We are pleased to submit the Town of Los Altos Hills' draft Housing Element for the 2023-2031 planning period. In conjunction with our submittal, the Town would also request a meeting with HCD to receive any preliminary verbal comments in advance of HCD issuing a formal comment letter, to the extent possible. We look forward to HCD's response.

**Overview:**

The draft Housing Element updates the goals, policies, and implementing programs contained in the Town's current Housing Element (2015-2023 planning period) and other policies and practices to address housing needs in the community.

The Town has historically been exclusively zoned single-family. For this Housing Element draft, it is now introducing multi-family zones to accommodate density at 30 dwellings to an acre on three (3) different sites. The Town also affirmatively furthers fair housing by creating low-income housing opportunities in high-resource areas and establishing a new inclusive zoning and land use pattern."

The Town initiated its public outreach efforts for the Housing Element update in January 2022. Town staff held five (5) public workshops; administered a citywide survey (received an exceptional response, 535 responses); facilitated numerous focus groups, individual interviews, and pop-up events; and presented key components of the draft Housing Element at noticed public meetings with the Planning Commission, and City Council.

**Circulation of Public Review Draft Housing Element (compliance with AB 215)**

Pursuant to Government Code 65585(b)(1), the Town implemented a 30-day public review period on the draft Housing Element from August 10, 2022, to September 8, 2022. During this time, the

draft Housing Element was published on the Town's website for public review and input. Subsequent to this, two (2) Joint Planning Commission and City Council were held respectively on October 3, 2022, and October 26, 2022, to provide an additional opportunity for the community to provide verbal comments prior to submitting to HCD.

The Town set aside an extensive review period, well beyond the required 10 business days, to consider public comments received during the 30-day comment period. Twenty-five comment letters and emails were received during the review period (August 10 – September 8, 2022). Comments ranged from affordable housing advocates to residents. All twenty-five letters contained suggestions and concerns regarding listing of opportunity sites in the draft Housing Element site inventory and housing element programs and constraints. Comments fell into several categories, including:

- Code amendments to remove regulatory constraints:  
The Town received a number of letters with examples and suggestions of possible approaches to code amendments to remove regulatory constraints for developing housing.
  - Complex and cumbersome development standards
  - Grading permit limited to 6 months out of the year
- ADU promotion and incentives:  
Commenters called for more programs and strongly suggested incentives for ADU production through methods like further expedited review of ADU permits through pre-approved designs and relaxed development standards.
- Strategies to improve the existing permit process:  
A number of the letters expressed concerns regarding the development process in the Town and the constraints that result from the process. Commenters recommended several strategies to improve the transparency and turn-around time for getting permits approved.
- Tools, techniques, and funding sources to increase affordable housing:  
Several commenters expressed a desire for the Town to provide multifamily housing as well as provide examples of funding sources and other tools to support the development of multifamily housing.

### **Response to Public Comments**

In response to the public comments received, Town staff made several revisions noted below. Several suggested general considerations consistent with state housing law and HCD guidelines which are already included in the draft Housing Element.

1. Code amendments to remove regulatory constraints such as the following:
  - Complex and cumbersome development standards (see Program B-4)
  - Grading permit limited to 6 months out of the year (see Program B-11)
2. ADU promotion and incentives (see Programs A-7, A-8, G-2)

3. Strategies to further streamline existing permit process (see Program B-1, B-12)
4. Tools, techniques, and funding sources to increase affordable housing (see Programs F-2, F-3)

On behalf of the Town of Los Altos Hills, thank you for the review of this draft Housing Element. We look forward to receiving your feedback. Should you have questions during the review, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact Sofia Mangalam, Planning Director, at [smangalam@losaltoshills.ca.gov](mailto:smangalam@losaltoshills.ca.gov) or 650-947-2507.

Sincerely,

*Sofia Mangalam*

Sofia Mangalam  
Planning Director

Attachments:

1. Los Altos Hills Housing Element HCD Review Draft 10-27-22 (PDF)
2. Los Altos Hills Housing Element HCD Review Draft 10-27-22 (Hard copy in mail)