



**Town of Atherton
Office of the City Manager
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January 31, 2023

State Department of Housing and Community Development
C/O Land Use and Planning Unit
2020 W. El Camino Ave, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95833
HousingElements@hcd.ca.gov

Re: Town of Atherton Adopted Housing Element

Please find herein the Town of Atherton's Housing Element for the 2023-31 period (Sixth Cycle). The City Council found that the Housing Element substantially complies with Housing Element laws, and on that basis, certified and adopted the Housing Element on January 31, 2023 and directed staff to submit the document to the State. The Town believes that it has made a good faith effort to address the Regional Housing Needs Allocation with a creative yet comprehensive plan that considers the uniqueness of this community.

Atherton is a 100% built-out community with limited needs and resources. Plus, property owners have unequivocally expressed that they will neither sell their property nor develop them into multifamily lots. However, they committed to the construction of Senate Bill 9 lots (and the Town has received much interest) and Accessory Dwelling Units (with the Town seeing actual ADUs being built and requests for more). Based on this untenable position, but mindful of its obligations to plan for its RHNA, the Town found that upzoning existing, built-out, properties would not result in those properties actually being developed into multifamily units. Unlike other communities, the Town also has extremely limited public property, all of which is either built out (civic center, police station, small corporation yard) or gifted to it and under deed restrictions for use (Holbrook-Palmer park). In other words, planning for Atherton's RHNA is incomparable to other communities and required creative solutions.

As such, the 6th Cycle Housing Element addresses the identified needs of the community using upzoning in portions of the Town where property owners have expressed interest, along with a combination of accessory dwelling units, lot splits pursuant to Senate Bill 9, vacant lot development. This solution provides a distributed approach in a way that best prevents segregation, racial or ethnic concentration of housing, or results in a disparate impact to access or opportunities for housing.

Specifically, the adopting Housing Element implements goals, policies and programs to incentivize and promote adequate housing opportunities for people at all income levels. For example, it includes:

- Upzoning at Menlo College to allow affordable housing for students and teachers. The college has committed to a "centennial campaign" that is already underway and states that local donors have committed to contributing the necessary funds to *actually* design a four story 40-60 unit multifamily complex. (See Appendix 6). This demonstrates not just planning for additional housing, but seeking commitments to effectuate its construction;

- Upzoning at 23 Oakwood to allow 10 dwelling units/acre with a 20% affordability requirement to result in the construction of up to 16 new units. (See, Housing Element at p. 68-69). Furthermore, similar to Menlo College, the Town obtained a willingness and commitment from the property owner to *actually* develop. (See Appendix 7);
- Local policies to incentivize ADU development and rental programs to facilitate affordable housing, including, but not limited to, partnering with HIP housing, allowing multiple ADUs on parcels that are at least 2 acres, and offering fee reductions;
- Streamline the construction of affordable housing by offered an expedited review process
- Adopting an affordable housing fee, which fees will be used to provide rental assistance for very-low income housing.

To comply with public participation requirements pursuant to AB 215 (Chapter 342, Statutes of 2021), a draft of this document was made available for public comment on January 23, 2023 with copies provided to individuals and organization who previously requested copies. The draft was posted on the Town's website and physical copies made available at Town Hall and the Library. The Town exceeded the minimum public participation requirements by establishing additional workshops, community meetings, and multiple public hearings to solicit public comment. The Housing Element was promoted via the Town's email newsletter, public notices posted at the Town Center, public notification in the newspaper, email outreach to interested parties, and physical mailings to affected properties. The Atherton City Council reviewed public comments received during the public review period at its January 31, 2023 meeting, directed specific modifications in response to public comments, and authorized transmittal of the then adopted and certified Housing Element to HCD. The final version of the Housing Element has also been posted on the website with copies provided to interested parties.

Thank you for your time and attention in reviewing this document.

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