2013-2021 HOUSING ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION
City of Calexico

2013-2021 Housing Element of the General Plan
Section 1-Introduction
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A. REGIONAL SETTING

Calexico is located:

- 198 miles southeast of Los Angeles
- 122 miles east of San Diego
- 62 miles west of Yuma

The City is situated directly along the U.S./Mexico International border, adjacent to the City of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico.

Calexico's port of entry is a major entrance point for thousands of persons as well as large amounts of goods traveling between the two countries. Its economy reflects its proximity to the Mexican border and its location in an agriculturally-oriented California county.

Calexico, in recent years, has also been providing alternative housing options for some commuters from Mexicali that choose to live in the U.S. and work across the border. As housing prices become unaffordable in other parts of Southern California, commuters from San Diego County may also be looking to Imperial County for affordable housing options. Calexico’s location on Highway 98 and near Interstate 8 makes it a logical provider of housing and services for this new segment of future residents.

Calexico has grown from a population of approximately 14,412 persons in 1980 to 38,572 in 2010, while the population in Imperial County has increased 82,418 from a population of approximately 92,110 to 174,528 during that same period. This indicates that Calexico absorbed 29% of Imperial County's growth within that period. Chart 1-1 shows the City's population growth from 1980 to 2013.

The community of Calexico faces challenges ahead as it attempts to accommodate future growth, while protecting its agricultural heritage, international border community ties and quality of life.

B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Calexico, which began as a tent city of the Imperial Land Company, was founded in 1899 and incorporated in 1908. The Imperial Land Company converted desert land into a fertile setting for year-round agriculture. The name Calexico was coined from a combination of the words California and Mexico.

To understand the history of Calexico, it is important to understand the history of the Imperial Valley.

Geological evidence indicates that hundreds of years ago a salt-water lake of approximately 4,500 square miles occupied the area that is now the Imperial Valley. This body of water, named Cahuilla after the area's Indian inhabitants, was fed by the Colorado River. The lake gradually evaporated over 600 years ago, leaving a vast depression covered with salt deposits.
Following the discovery of the Colorado River by Europeans in 1540, various expeditions led by Spanish explorers crossed the Imperial Valley. Soon after the initial expeditions, Lt. Juan Bautista de Anza established an overland route from Mexico to the California Pacific Coast for colonists and supplies. This overland route resulted in the first secular European settlements in California. Some of these settlements were founded in the Imperial Valley and served as the way stations for all overland travel from Mexico to California.

In 1892, the Colorado River Irrigation Company, under the direction of C.R. Rockwood, Chief Engineer, began planning to build a canal to bring fresh water into the Imperial Valley. The canal was to connect with the overflow channel of the Colorado River and extend several miles south into Mexico. The first water diversion project was completed in 1901. Construction on the main canal, however, was hampered by financial and legal difficulties as well as by natural disasters. In the period from 1902-1907, the flooding Colorado River changed its course, flowing northward into the Imperial Valley and remaining in the northern portion to create what is now the Salton Sea. In 1940, the All American Canal was completed, creating a means of irrigating land which has become one of the most productive agricultural areas in the nation.

On April 4, 2010 the El Mayor earthquake caused moderate to heavy damage throughout Calexico and across the border in Mexicali. Measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale, the quake was centered about 40 miles south of the U.S.-Mexico border near Mexicali. A state of emergency was declared and officials cordoned off First and Second streets between Paulin and Heber Avenues. Glass and debris littered the streets of downtown Calexico and two buildings partially collapsed. The Calexico water treatment plant sustained severe damage.
C. STATE REQUIREMENTS AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Housing Element is one of the seven mandatory elements of the General Plan, and it specifies ways in which the housing needs of existing and future residents can be met. The element became a mandated element of a general plan in 1969, or 44 years ago. The law acknowledges that, in order for the private market to adequately address housing needs and demand, local governments must adopt land use plans and regulatory systems which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development.

Government Code Section 65583 states:

The housing element shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, mobile homes, and emergency shelters, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.

In enacting the housing element requirement in 1969, the State legislature found and declared that -

The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every Californian, including farm workers, is a priority of the highest order.

And that –

The provision of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households requires the cooperation of all levels of government.

Also –

Local and state governments have a responsibility to use the powers vested in them to facilitate the improvement and development of housing to make adequate provision for housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

The Housing Element must include six major components:

- An assessment of the City’s housing needs.
- An inventory of sites that can accommodate the need for new housing.
- An analysis of housing market and governmental constraints that impede public and private sector efforts to meet the needs.
- A progress report describing actions taken to implement the 2008-2014 Housing Element.
- A statement of goals, quantified objectives and policies relative to the construction, rehabilitation, conservation and preservation of housing.
- An implementation program which sets forth a schedule of actions which the City is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the stated goals and objectives.
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The City's prior Housing Element was adopted on April 6, 2010. Since that date, SB 812 is the only major change to the law. Chapter 507, Statutes of 2010 (SB 812), which took effect January 2011, amended State housing element law to require the analysis of the special housing needs of persons with developmental disabilities. This analysis should include an estimate of the number of persons with developmental disabilities, an assessment of the housing need, and a discussion of potential resources.

SB 375 requires that the housing element due date is 18 months after adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). October 15, 2013 (18 months after the RTP was adopted) is the due date for adoption of the Housing Element. According to Government Code Section 65588(f)(1):

"Planning Period" shall be the time period between the due date for one housing element and the due date for the next housing element.

Therefore, the planning period for the City's Housing Element is the period from October 15, 2013 through October 15, 2021.

According to Government Code Section 65588(f)(2):

"Projection Period" shall be the time period for which the regional housing need is calculated.

The SCAG Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) covers the period from January 1, 2014 to October 1, 2021.

According to SCAG, the anomaly of the housing element due date (October 15, 2013) preceding the RHNA start date (January 1, 2014) is due to (a) legislative changes and statutory definitions and (b) the date that SCAG adopted its Regional Transportation Plan. Also, HCD uses January 1 or July 1 for RHNA determination start date purposes as these are the effective dates used by Department of Finance (DOF) in updating DOF housing estimates and population projections.

D. ROLE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT

As previously noted, the Housing Element is one of seven mandatory elements of a General Plan. Its focus is on assessing the community's housing needs and describing programs to address those needs. The element must describe actions to –

- Identify adequate sites to accommodate a variety of housing needs
- Assist in the development of affordable housing
- Remove governmental constraints to housing improvement and construction
- Improve the condition of housing
- Preserve the affordable housing supply
- Promote fair housing
- Promote energy conservation

In addition to this Introduction, two additional Sections and two Appendices comprise Calexico's Housing Element:
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Section 2: Overview: This Section provides an overview of the public participation efforts of the City during the development of the Housing Element, challenges the City faces in addressing housing needs, and a brief summary of the document.

Section 3 - Housing Program: This Section provides a summary of the housing needs and describes the goals, policies and objectives of the Housing Element. Section 3 also describes the individual programs that the City – through the Housing, Planning and Building Divisions - will implement during the eight-year planning period in order to address the community's housing needs.

Appendix A: This Appendix contains detailed information on the following:

- Housing Needs Assessment
- Sites Inventory and Analysis
- Housing Market Constraints Analysis
- Governmental Constraints Analysis
- Progress Report

Appendix B: This Appendix includes a list of organizations consulted, data sources, and definitions.

E. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Eight elements comprise the Calexico General Plan:

- Land Use Element
- Circulation Element
- Public Facilities and Services Element
- Conservation and Open Space Element
- Safety Element
- Noise Element
- Economic Development Element
- Housing Element

The Housing Element complements other General Plan elements and is consistent with the policies and proposals set forth by the General Plan. For example, the housing sites identified in the Housing Element are consistent with those designated as residential in the Land Use Element. Also, residential densities established by the Land Use Element are incorporated within the Housing Element and form the basis for calculating the residential capacity within the City.

The California Government Code requires internal consistency among the various elements of a General Plan. Section 65300.5 of the Government Code states that the General Plan's various Elements shall provide an integrated and internally consistent and compatible statement of policy. The City has reviewed the other elements of the General Plan and has determined that this Housing Element provides consistency with the other Elements of the General Plan. The City will maintain this consistency as future General Plan amendments are processed by evaluating proposed amendments for consistency with all elements of the General Plan.
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F. OTHER STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Water and Sewer Priority

Chapter 727 amended Government Code Section 65589.7(a) as follows:

The housing element adopted by the legislative body and any amendments made to that element shall be immediately delivered to all public agencies or private entities that provide water or sewer services for municipal and industrial uses, including residential, within the territory of the legislative body. Each public agency or private entity providing water or sewer services shall grant a priority for the provision of these services to proposed developments that include housing units affordable to lower income households. [Emphasis added]

Calexico receives all of its potable water from the Calexico Water Department. The Calexico Water Department purchases its raw water from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) which acquires its water from the Colorado River via an open canal system. Currently, 2% of IID water is divided among Calexico and other Imperial Valley cities.

The Planning Division will transmit a copy of the adopted Housing Element to the City of Calexico Utility Services Department within two weeks of its adoption. (Office location: 608 Heber Avenue, Calexico, CA 92231) Sewer services also are provided by the Utility Services Department.

2. Flood Hazards and Flood Management Information

Government Code Section 65302 requires all cities and counties to amend the safety and conservation elements of their general plan to include an analysis and policies regarding flood hazard and flood management information upon the next revision of the housing element on, or after, January 1, 2009. The City’s General Plan was adopted on May 1, 2007.

The Safety Element includes an analysis of flood hazards. Flooding is a natural hazard that is unlikely to affect the City of Calexico under normal rain and run-off conditions. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard area map of the Calexico area shows that the 500 year floodplain of the New River within the City is contained within the area north of the Calexico International Airport that is currently zoned as Open Space land. However, conditions upstream in Mexico do affect the river. As the Mexicali area becomes more urbanized with nothing heretofore having been done to control urban runoff there, the potential for flooding could increase in downstream areas such as Calexico.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provides federal flood insurance and federally financed loans for property owners in flood prone areas. To qualify for federal flood insurance and assistance, the City has identified flood hazard areas and implements a system of protective controls. The Safety Element, Land Use Element, and Title 15, Chapter 15.54 of the Municipal Code fulfill these requirements.