

## WHAT ARE THE TWO ISSUES THAT VISTA RESIDENTS WORRY ABOUT MOST?

(Okay, we *gripe*.)

- (1) Numbers of housing units being built in Vista
- (2) Traffic through Vista

*Some things you may not know . . .*

**HOUSING** -- *with many thanks to Community Development Director John Conley*



- Cities in California are required to develop housing elements in 8-year cycles as part of their general plans for their communities. Vista is in the middle of its 2013-2021 housing element and will begin next year to develop its 2020-2028 housing element.
- According to *A 2018 Guide to New Housing Law in California* [League of California Cities], “Housing affordability is an urgent issue in California, where a majority of renters (over 3 million households) pay more than 30 percent of their income toward rent and nearly 1/3 (over 1.5 million households) spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent. In addition, California’s homeownership rates are at the lowest point since the 1940s. This has led many experts in the field to declare the current state of housing supply and affordability a crisis.”
- **Number of new residential units completed since Jan 1, 2013: 1,475**

Year	New Units
2013	114
2014	757
2015	415
2016	35
2017	154
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,475</b>

Number of residential units permitted and currently under construction in Vista: 924

Number of residential units approved and obtaining construction permits in Vista: 658

Number of residential units under planning review in Vista: 402

- To address some of the barriers to housing construction, CA lawmakers introduced more than 130 bills during the 2017 legislative session. Fifteen bills made it into the “housing package” and were signed by Gov. Brown.
- The state determines Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) – the number of new affordable housing units to be provided – for the counties; the counties (through SANDAG, in our case) allocates a number to each city. In the upcoming cycle, San Diego County is required to provide **171,065 new affordable housing units**; SANDAG divvies up this number among the cities.
- **In the past**, cities had to show only that they had enough zoning to accommodate the assigned number of required affordable housing units. **With the new laws**, Vista’s new housing element will



have to show specific sites in Vista for specific types of affordable housing: extremely low income, very low, low, and moderate (% of median income).

- **Vista's RHNA numbers:** Vista's current RHNA number is 1,374 (affordable single and multiple-dwelling units). The city is waiting for its new RHNA number to prepare its next housing element, which will start next year. Preparation of the housing element is about a 2-year process.

- If a market-rate housing project is built on one of the affordable housing sites, the city must find a replacement site for the affordable housing.
- Under our current housing element, Vista has exceeded the number of market-rate projects (determined by the RHNA numbers); we have not met our affordable housing numbers.
- **What happens if Vista doesn't meet its RHNA numbers?** Under current law, the state cannot supersede local zoning. For zoning or general plan changes, the city has absolute discretion. If Vista doesn't meet its RHNA numbers, there are no fines or fees to be imposed – but the state or a number of housing advocates could sue the city (\$\$\$).
- On the other hand, the city receives monetary incentives for having a certified housing element in grants for public projects. For example, the city received about \$5M in grant funding for the Paseo Santa Fe project from SANDAG, for which the city would not have been eligible if it did not have an adopted housing element.
- None of the new laws requires local approval beyond local zoning. However, the city cannot deny projects that meet local zoning. If new projects meet zoning standards, the city can rule on such elements as access, site design, environmental issues, architecture, etc.
- Specifically, the new laws passed are SB 35, SB 2, SB 3, SB 35, SB 73, SB 540, SB 167, AB 678, AB 1515, SB 1505, AB 879, AB 1397, AB 72, AB 73, and SF 828.
- **Not good news:** SB 828 was passed by both the Senate and the Assembly; awaiting Gov. Brown's signature. Vista's City Council wrote a letter opposing SB 828, which would  
 "require the City of plan and accommodate 125% of the local housing allocation for every income category in the RHNA . . . The City is acutely aware of the statewide housing crisis and has experienced a large influx of residential developments including multi-family apartments, affordable housing, and condominium projects in response to ongoing demands for additional housing stock throughout our region . . . Contrary to SB 828, the City of Vista must balance the needs and desires of the community when making land use and planning policy."  
 - *City of Vista letter to Assembly Member Cecilia M. Anguier-Curry, 6-20-2018*

**Bottom line:** It appears that Vista is going to have more new housing units. The delicate balance will be determining the location, the density, and assuring sufficient parking not to negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods.

**For more information on our current housing element,** John Conley, Vista's Community Development Director, recommends reading the first part of the housing element. Go to City of Vista website → Records → Reports/Studies → General Plan → Housing Element



<https://records.cityofvista.com/WebLink/Browse.aspx?startid=4&dbid=0>

*Which brings us to . . .*

## **TRAFFIC**

*-- with many thanks to Vista Traffic Engineer Sam Hasenin*

We don't have as much information about traffic, though several new studies and signal upgrades are being made.

- **The Traffic Signal Interconnect Upgrade – South** project will be closely followed by the implementation of a traffic performance measurement system, which will allow us to develop better estimates of the use of the City's arterials by regional traffic. The system is anticipated to be in operational early next year.
- The Traffic Signal Interconnect Upgrade – South is a grant-funded project that will upgrade the City's existing traffic signal communications infrastructure. The existing infrastructure is ageing and the City regularly loses contact with traffic signals. The project will install a reliable, modern communications system and install several traffic CCTV cameras, which will allow staff to monitor conditions and make timing adjustments in real time as necessary.