

# LASSEN COUNTY

## HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

### *SEVENTH HOUSING ELEMENT CYCLE*

## 2024–2029



*PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT – JAN 24, 2024*



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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This section within the Lassen County General Plan, the Housing Element, is dedicated to presenting the goals, policies, actions, and needs pertaining to the provision of housing for the current and future residents of Lassen County. The Housing Element serves a dual function: firstly, it outlines specific policies and actionable measures designed to meet the County's unique and clearly identified housing needs; and secondly, it aims to align with regional standards and attain State certification, as required by State law.

### **1.2 Definition and Purpose**

A Housing Element is a crucial component of a local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, also known as a General Plan. A Housing Element must identify and assess existing and projected housing needs, existing policies and programs, and constraints to housing development. It must also establish goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs to meet housing needs.

State law requires that Housing Elements be revised periodically. This document updates the 2019-2024 Lassen County Housing Element and covers the period of June 30, 2024, through June 30, 2029. The purpose of a Housing Element is to adequately address local housing needs in a way that does not constrain development, by facilitating the development of diverse housing options and promoting fair housing practices.

### **1.3 Consistency with State Laws and General Plan**

Under California law, local jurisdictions are required to update their housing elements on a set schedule to align with changing demographics, economic conditions, and regional housing goals. The components of a housing element are set by the California "Housing Element law" (Government Code § 65580 - 65589.11). State law requires the various sections, or elements, of a General Plan to be consistent with one another. Upon adoption, this Housing Element becomes a part of the Lassen County General Plan and is found to be consistent with the rest of the General Plan. As the General Plan is amended in the future, the County will ensure the Housing Element remains consistent.

New State law requires that the Safety Element be updated to address climate adaptation upon revision of the Housing Element. The County will ensure compliance with this requirement.

Pursuant to Government Code § 65589.7, the County will provide a copy of the adopted Housing Element to local utility providers, and those entities must apply priority service to proposed affordable housing developments for lower income households.





### 1.4 Public Participation

Effective housing policy must reflect the values and priorities of the community. The public participation requirement of Housing Element law presents an opportunity to engage residents in defining housing issues, and in creating solutions that both meet the needs of the community and the requirements of State law. It is the cornerstone of the process.

For the development of the 2024 Lassen County Housing Element, methods of obtaining public participation and input included but were not limited to the following:

- Housing Element updates posted on the Lassen County Planning and Building Services Department website
- Housing Needs and Opportunities Community Opinion Survey (English and Spanish)
- Housing Element Update Developer Survey
- Community Housing Needs and Perceptions Survey, by Lassen County Health and Social Services
- Updates provided to the email interest list and to community groups in Big Valley, Westwood, and Herlong/Doyle
- Planning Commission Housing Element Kickoff Workshop of November 7, 2023
- Board of Supervisors Draft Housing Strategy Workshop of January 9, 2024
- Workshop flyers published in the Modoc County Record and Intermountain News, and posted at County public meeting boards
- Workshop flyer posted on Lassen County Health and Social Services' Housing Grants Facebook page

### 1.5 Organization of the Housing Element

The Lassen County Housing Element is comprised of the following five major components:

- **Section 1** introduces the overall Housing Element update effort, a summary of housing needs and constraints, a Fair Housing summary, and a review of the effectiveness of the 2019 Housing Element and the County's progress in its implementation.
- **Section 2** sets forth the County's Housing Strategy, which is comprised of the Goals, Policies, and Programs that it intends to implement over the next 5-year planning cycle. The County's Quantified Objectives are also included in Section 2.
- **Section 3** presents a detailed Housing Sites Inventory, including a discussion of the availability of services, and compares this Inventory to the County's projected housing needs.
- **Section 4**, the Technical Background Report, provides statutorily required data including an assessment of housing needs and programs, an analysis of non-



governmental and governmental constraints to affordable housing provision, and a discussion of special needs populations.

- **Section 5**, the Fair Housing Assessment, is a new requirement for Housing Elements to identify factors that contribute to local fair housing issues and barriers and include meaningful actions within the County's Housing Element goals, policies, and programs to address those factors.
- **Appendices** provide background context on community engagement and program implementation.

### 1.6 Data Sources

In preparing the Housing Element, various sources of information were utilized. The 2020 Census provided the basis for population characteristics. The U.S. Census Bureau also provides updated survey data through the American Community Survey (ACS) process, which is used to supplement Census data whenever possible. The following sources of data were used to help identify historic patterns of segregation, assess constraints to housing and the market conditions in Lassen County, and to better identify specific housing needs:

- California Department of Conservation, Seismic Hazards Zones GIS map
- California Department of Developmental Services, Consumer Count by California ZIP Code and Residence Type, 2017
- California Department of Education, California School Dashboard
- California Department of Finance, Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State – January 1, 2022 and 2023
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing 2.0 Data Viewer
- California HCD, Final Regional Housing Need Determination and Allocation Plan, 2023
- California Department of Transportation, Lassen County Economic Forecast, 2021
- CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Zones Database
- California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC/HCD) Opportunity Area Map, 2024
- C&S Waste Solutions of Lassen County. Solid Waste and Recycling Service Area Map
- Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey, 9/2023
- Lassen County Housing Element Annual Progress Reports
- Lassen County, City of Susanville, & Susanville Indian Rancheria Hazard Mitigation Plan, January 2019
- NorCal Continuum of Care Point-In-Time Report, 2019, 2021, 2022



- UC Berkeley Othering & Belonging Institute, Mapping Race in America
- UC Berkeley Urban Displacement Project
- U.S. Census 2010 and 2020-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census, OnTheMap, 2020
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, 2017
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, CHAS 5-Year Estimates

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

Throughout the Housing Element, a variety of technical terms related to income levels are used in describing and quantifying conditions and objectives. The definitions of these terms follow:

- **Above Moderate-Income Households:** Households earning over 120% of the County's Area Median Income (AMI), adjusted for household size.
- **Affordable Housing:** Housing that costs no more than 30% of a moderate-, low-, very low-, or extremely low-income household's gross monthly income. For affordable rental units, monthly rent is capped at 30 percent of the relevant Area Median Income (AMI), divided by 12, with any tenant-paid utilities deducted. For homeownership units, the maximum sales price is calculated assuming no more than 30 percent of the relevant AMI household's monthly income will be spent on the monthly housing payment, which includes mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and homeowners' dues.
- **Area Median Income (AMI):** The income figure representing the middle point of the County household income. Fifty percent of households earn more than or equal to this figure and 50% earn less than or equal to this figure. The AMI varies according to the size of the household. For the year 2023, the AMI for a four-person household in Lassen County was \$83,800.
- **Cost Burden:** The condition of a household spending more than 30% of their income on rent, mortgage, utilities, and other housing needs.
- **Extremely Low-Income Households (ELI):** Households earning not more than 30% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Federal Poverty Threshold:** Issued by the Census Bureau and varies by family size, number of children, elderly. There is no geographic variation. For 2022, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$29,950, and for a family of two, it was \$18,900. (Note: this differs from the Federal Poverty Guidelines issued by Health & Human Services)
- **Low-Barrier Navigation Center:** A "Housing First," low barrier, temporary, service-enriched shelter that helps homeless individuals and families to quickly obtain permanent housing.





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- **Low-Income Households:** Households earning between 51-80% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Missing Middle Housing:** A range of house-scale buildings with multiple units compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes.
- **Moderate-Income Households:** Households earning 81 to 120 percent of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Special Needs:** Special needs refer to specific demographic or occupational groups that call for specific program responses to increase access to and availability of suitable housing options.
- **Very Low-Income Households (VLI):** Households earning between 31-50% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.

### 1.8 Community Profile

Lassen County is located in northeastern California. It is bordered on the north by Modoc County, on the south by Plumas and Sierra Counties, on the west by Shasta County, and on the east by Washoe County in the State of Nevada. Lassen County has a total area of 3,001,780 acres (4,690.3 square miles). Over 63 percent of the land area in Lassen County is administered by federal, state, or local agencies.

The region where present-day Lassen County is located is within the original lands of the several indigenous societies, including the Washoe, Northern Paiute, Achomawi, Atsugewi, and Pit River peoples. Soon after the Gold Rush of 1849, many emigrants following established trail routes through the area made up the population of Honey Lake Valley and Lassen County. By 1880, many settlements had sprung up in the area and the railroad industry had begun to develop interest in the expansion. The Nevada-California-Oregon Railway (NCO), which operated from 1880 to 1927, was the nation's longest narrow-gauge line of the 20th century, traversing the eastern side of the County, and assisting in the development of the high desert region of eastern Lassen County. The Fernley & Lassen Railroad, built in 1913, tapped into western Lassen County's timber resources. Also shaping the area at that time was the lumber industry, particularly the Red River Lumber Company of Westwood, the world's largest electrical sawmill of that time, and two other large mills that developed in the Susanville area. Other towns in the area, such as Janesville, Doyle, Standish, Bieber, Hayden Hill, and Wendel, all had their place in developing Lassen County during this time. Communities with more recent histories include Clear Creek, Leavitt Lake, Herlong, which developed outside the gates of the Sierra Army Depot, and Spalding, which developed on the shore of Eagle Lake.

The City of Susanville is the County seat and the only incorporated City in Lassen County. Lassen County's unincorporated communities include Westwood, Clear Creek, Bieber, Johnstonville, Janesville, Standish, Litchfield, Doyle, Herlong, Milford, Leavitt Lake, and Little Valley.



Figure 1 Lassen County Context Map



## 1.9 Changing Housing Needs and Demographics

The following section summarizes the information contained in Section 4, Technical Background Report. For additional information on each of the topics described below, please refer to Section 4.

As Lassen County ages and demographics change, different housing needs have arisen, and new programs are needed to meet changing demands. This section explores the characteristics and housing needs of residents and helps to provide direction in updating the County's Housing Element goals, policies, and programs.

### *Population Characteristics and Trends*

Although Lassen County's population more than doubled in the decade between 2000 and 2010, the population decreased 7.4% between 2010 and 2021, from 35,081 to 32,494. In comparison, the population in neighboring Shasta County rose by nearly 3% during the same



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period, from 177,223 in 2010 to 182,155 in 2020. The State Department of Finance estimates that Lassen County's population has continued to decrease since that time.

### Age Composition

Lassen County's population is slightly younger than the region's population. The median age in Lassen County is 37.2 years old compared to 37.9 years of age statewide. Approximately 42.5% of the population is age 20 to 44, while nearly 15% of residents are ages 65 and above.

### Race and Ethnicity

Census statistics include the race and ethnicity of a County's population. The most prevalent racial and ethnic categories are as shown in Table 1 below. The 2021 population estimates show that Lassen County's largest population of White (Non-Hispanic) residents decreased 10.5% from 23,606 in 2010 to 21,139 in 2021. Decreases also occurred in the populations of Black or African American, Native American, Asian, and residents who are Other Race. Additionally, Lassen County saw population increases in three racial or ethnic groups. Between 2010 and 2021, Hispanic or Latino residents grew from 5,974 to 6,494 (9%). The population of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander rose from 201 to 250. Notably, residents who are Two or More Races nearly doubled with a significant increase of 80.35%, from 509 to 918.

Table 1 Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010-2021

Racial or Ethnic Group	2010	2021
Hispanic or Latino	5,974	6,494
White (Non-Hispanic) alone	23,606	21,139
Black or African American alone	2,849	2,748
Native American alone	1,129	750
Asian alone	642	513
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone	201	250
Some other race alone	171	137
Two or More Races	509	918
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community 5-Year Estimates Table B03002, 2010 and 2021		

### Employment and Income

According to the American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimate, Lassen County has 9,847 residents 16 years and older employed in the workforce. The top three industries with the highest percentage of employees are in public administration (31.13%), education, health, and social services (20.7%), and retail trade (9.82%). The majority of workers, 45.3%, are employed in local, state, and federal public sector jobs, followed by 40% employed in private sector companies, while the remaining workers are in nonprofit (4.4%) or self-employed (10.3%) jobs. The high proportion of public sector jobs can be partially attributed to the presence of major prisons in Lassen County, including one (California Correctional Facility) that is designated for closure by the state.



### **Household Incomes and Housing Affordability**

Lassen County's median household income was \$59,292 in 2021. This is lower than neighboring Plumas County's median household income of \$67,885 and substantially lower than the statewide median household income. Comparatively, the household income of families, particularly married couples in Lassen County, is \$85,956, substantially higher than the County median. Approximately 11.5% of Lassen County households qualify as Extremely Low-Income. The distribution of income by household type is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Income Distribution by Household Type

<b>Household</b>	<b>Income</b>
Household Median Income	\$59,292
Families	\$69,158
Married-couple Families	\$85,956
Non-family Households	\$38,319
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community 5-Year Estimates, 2021</i>	

### **1.10 Special Needs Populations**

Segments of the population may have more difficulty in finding decent, affordable housing due to their special needs. Special circumstances may be related to one's employment and income, family characteristics, disability, and household characteristics, among other factors. Consequently, certain residents in Lassen County may experience incidences of discrimination, housing access obstacles, or other housing problems.

#### **Homelessness**

Lassen County's most recent NorCal Continuum of Care (NorCal CoC) Point-in-Time (PIT) Count of homeless was conducted in 2023. That PIT Count reported 134 persons experiencing homelessness, with 96 residing in shelters and 38 living without shelter. This represents a 31.37% increase in the total number of Lassen County residents experiencing homelessness since 2022. The PIT Count in 2022 found 102 unhoused residents, with 71 persons residing in shelters and 31 unsheltered.

#### **Persons with Disabilities**

The term "disabled" refers to a disability (physical, mental, developmental, or sensory), which prevents or precludes a person from doing their work either in or outside of the home. Individuals with disabilities are the most likely population to experience homelessness, be rent burdened or unable to afford housing, and face the highest rates of housing discrimination. The number of disabled persons in a community has important implication for providing certain social services, in the removal of barriers to facilities, and in developing housing which has specialized access for disabled residents.

Census data from the 2021 American Community Survey indicate that 16.9% of all residents in Lassen County have a disability. Of the 3,939 persons with a disability, 775, or 26.7%, are age 65 years or older. The two most prevalent disabilities in Lassen County are residents with



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ambulatory difficulties (10.6%) and with independent living difficulties (10.2%). Additional information on Persons with Disabilities is available in Section 5.

### **Seniors**

Seniors often have fixed incomes and can have additional special needs related to access and care that may require physical improvements to their homes such as ramps, handrails, lower cupboards and counters, creation of a downstairs bedroom, or other modification to enable them to remain in their homes. They may also need assistance in the form of a part-time or live-in caretaker.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, nearly 15% of Lassen County's population is aged 65 and above. While a majority of seniors in the County own their homes, 22% of residents aged 65 and older are renters.

### **Large Households**

Household size is an important consideration when it comes to planning for housing. Household size can be influenced by a lack of affordable housing options, an increase or decrease in family formations, or families leaving an area. Ethnicity can also affect sizes of households if a particular ethnic group has a tradition of living with family members upon retirement age.

Lassen County has 8,910 households. Among these, there are 756 large households with 5 or more persons and 200 (26.45%) of large households are renters. The average household size is 2.67 persons, compared to a higher household size of 3.10 persons in adjacent Shasta County.

### **Female-Headed Households**

Female-headed households generally have lower incomes and higher living expenses and childcare costs making the search for affordable, decent and safe housing more difficult. The higher cost burdens for female-headed households increase housing insecurity.

In 2021, Lassen County had 1,097 female-headed family households, or 12.3% of the total household population. Approximately 3% of female-headed family households are under the poverty level. Data from the same year show single female-headed households with no spouse earning a median annual household income of \$47,713, nearly 19.53% less than Lassen County's median income.

### **Farmworkers**

Farmworkers play a key role in the operation and delivery of the state's food system. Lassen County is located in northeastern California on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and has a rich agricultural legacy. Farms in Lassen County produce alfalfa, strawberries, wheat, hay, milk, and cattle. In 2021, 5.37% of Lassen County residents were employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industry. Lassen County is home to 77 farms, with 152 farmworkers classified as permanent farmworkers working 150 days or more per year.





Given their precarious employment and low-income status, farmworkers encounter hardships finding affordable housing. As a result, many farmworkers live in overcrowded and substandard housing arrangements. This situation presents a need to provide safe and affordable housing for the farmworker community. A detailed analysis of farmworker households in the County is provided in Section 4.

### 1.11 Characteristics of Housing Stock

#### *Type*

The housing stock in Lassen County is predominantly single-family residences (76.4%), though the County maintains multifamily housing including duplexes, 3-4 unit dwellings, 5+ unit dwellings, as well as mobile homes, boats, recreational vehicles, and vans used for residency. The housing stock steadily increased for 7 decades until 2009. Housing production then decreased significantly from 1,734 units in 2000-2009 to only 243 units in 2010-2019, an 86% drop.

#### *Tenure*

Between 2010 and 2021, the number of homeowner households decreased from 6,545 to 6,236. However, given the County's overall population decrease, 70% of households in Lassen County are homeowners as of 2021. This represents an increase in the proportion of homeownership in Lassen County from 68% in 2000 and 64% in 2010. Since 2010, the number of renter households sharply decreased by 28% from 3,731 to 2,674 in 2021. As homeownership affords long term stability and investment equity, owning a home is a way to achieve greater housing security in Lassen County.

#### *Age and Condition*

Of Lassen County's housing stock of 12,273 units, 88.1%, or 10,812 units, were built between 1940 and 2009. Between 2010 and 2019, 243 new homes were built, whereas only 33 homes were built after 2020.

#### *Overcrowding*

Residential overcrowding is determined by the number of persons per room. The Census defines overcrowding as more than 1 person occupying 1 room, excluding bathrooms, hallways, balconies, and porches. Severely overcrowded households are more than 1.51 persons per room.

Overcrowding results from many conditions, such as a lack of affordable housing, insufficient housing stock, and an increasing population. Overcrowding is influenced by demographic and socioeconomic factors such as race, class, and housing tenure. Older-adult immigrants, recent immigrants, low-income families, and renter-occupied households are more likely to experience overcrowding. Overcrowding can exacerbate the potential for contracting communicable diseases, suffering respiratory illnesses, and increased vulnerability to homelessness. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey, there



were 150 overcrowded households (1.74%) and 28 severely overcrowded households (0.3%) in the County. The full analysis of overcrowding is included in Section 5.

### **Vacancy**

In 2021, Lassen County's 8,910 occupied housing units accounted for 56.9% of the total, while 4,548 units, or 29%, were vacant. Lassen County's 18 unoccupied units were classified as "Rented, not occupied" in U.S. Census ACS, a category comprising vacant units rented but not yet occupied, including units where rent has been paid or agreed upon but renters have not moved in. A vacancy rate of less than 5% can indicate a shortage of available rental housing.

### **Prices**

The median value of a home in Lassen County rose from \$172,900 in 2015 to \$211,300 in 2021, an increase of 22.2%. During this same period, median gross increased almost 8% from \$680 to \$969. By comparison, there was a 22.2% increase in the median value of a home and a 37% increase in median gross rent in California.

Cost burden, or the ratio of housing costs to household income, has increased in the last several years. A household is considered cost burdened if more than 30% of monthly income pays for housing. Severely cost-burdened households pay more than 50% of monthly income to housing costs.

In Lassen County, cost burdened households vary by census tract. Some census tracts exhibit as high as 77% of renter households and 58.6% of ownership households experiencing cost burden. Overall, 46% of Lassen County's renter households are cost burdened.

## **1.12 Summary of Constraints**

Constraints to affordable housing production are created by governmental, infrastructure, market, environmental, and social factors, among others. Constraints can be divided into two types: "Governmental constraints" are those created local, state, and federal governments, whereas "Nongovernmental constraints" do not arise from government policy, regulation, program, or practice.

Governmental constraints result from land use controls including policies, regulations, zoning ordinances, and development standards, permit processing times, and taxes and fees. The County has the ability to intervene directly into these constraints to housing production.

Lassen County's zoning code guides development by establishing rules, districts, design standards, and permit types, along with review authority. Applicable to all privately owned land in the County's unincorporated areas, zoning regulations set forth specific standards for allowed land uses, density, lot coverage, setback area, floor area ratio, building height, open space provisions, and parking requirements. In Lassen County, residential uses are allowed in non-residential zones, though the current zoning code requires amendments to bring it into compliance with State law and remove the lack of clarity regarding certain permitted uses.



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Zoning regulations require certain new developments to provide on-site parking. Parking standards vary by land use, and residential uses such as single-family, duplex, and multi-family residences, require two parking spaces per dwelling unit. Parking standards can act as a constraint to housing production. Additionally, Lassen County's existing ADU ordinance is out of compliance with state ADU law. The County must update its existing ADU ordinance to allow non-discretionary, by-right approval of ADUs in the unincorporated areas that do not have constraints that would otherwise allow for them. Other land use controls should be continually monitored for changes or conditions that can create constraints. Policies and programs are included in Section 2 to address governmental constraints analyzed in the Technical Background Report (Section 4) and identified by stakeholders.

Nongovernmental constraints arise from a range of factors impacting housing affordability but are not directly connected to government actions. These include construction costs, including land prices, building materials, and labor; availability of mortgage financing; market conditions such as housing price, consumer preferences, demand, and competition; interest and capacity of developers; natural hazards and environmental conditions that impact housing availability and costs; and availability of infrastructure.

Nongovernmental constraints to housing production in Lassen County relate to housing costs, interest of developers, mortgage financing, environmental conditions, and infrastructure. According to community survey data, the cost of housing for owners and renters in Lassen is prohibitive. While financing is available for qualified homebuyers, home purchases may be difficult for lower and moderate-income buyers with limited down payments. The median value of a home in Lassen County is \$230,000. With a down payment of 20% and the current interest rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage, an annual household income of \$65,000 or more would be required to purchase a home in the County. Additionally, stakeholder input gathered through a survey noted that although the affordability of land in the County can offset the cost of development, rents often do not support development projects and can pose a constraint to the development of housing.

Lassen County is subject to environmental conditions that can constrain housing production. Sited within a seismically active area, the County is susceptible to earthquakes. Northern Lassen County is predominantly within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, while southern Lassen County encompasses both Moderate and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Additionally, Lassen County comprises large areas of rural undeveloped land and the majority of homes in unincorporated areas are on private well and septic systems. Access to water, sewer, and fire protection can pose a challenge to large-scale housing production. However, the availability of infrastructure does not pose a constraint to the County's ability to meet its RHNA. New development may need to assess environmental impacts on infrastructure. Policies and programs included in Section 2 address the nongovernmental constraints analyzed in the Technical Background Report and identified by stakeholders.



1.13 Summary of Fair Housing Analysis

Under State housing law, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing means “taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics.” AFFH entails taking decisive actions to remove entrenched housing discrimination barriers and to locate housing so it is affordable and equitably accessible to populations in need.

In compliance with Housing Element law, Lassen County must prepare a Fair Housing Assessment to identify factors that contribute to local fair housing issues and barriers and include meaningful actions within Lassen County’s Housing Element Goals, Policies, and Programs to address those factors. The County must incorporate Fair Housing Assessment findings into the Housing Element’s Sites Inventory. To ensure meaningful public participation, outreach and engagements efforts for the Housing Element must also affirmatively further fair housing.

In addition to these factors, the Fair Housing Assessment addresses: Engagement, Enforcement and Outreach Capacity, Segregation and Integration Patterns and Trends, Disparities in Access to Opportunity, Disproportionate Housing Needs including Displacement, Areas of Concentrated Poverty and Affluence Across Racial and Ethnic Groups, Identification of Contributing Factors, Identification of Contributing Factors, and a Summary of Fair Housing Issues.

Lassen County commits to affirmatively further fair housing and incorporate the lens of fair housing and equity – racial, social, gender, and economic – throughout this Housing Element.

1.14 Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is a part of State Housing Element law that determines the projected and existing housing needs for each local jurisdiction in California. State housing law requires each jurisdiction’s Housing Element to demonstrate that the jurisdiction has sufficient land zoned for housing and plans to meet its RHNA, and that there are no unnecessary barriers to the housing approval process to meet the RHNA targets.

For the 7th Cycle Housing Element period 2024-2029, Lassen County has a RHNA of (2) units, divided among income groups as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Lassen County Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2024-2029

	VLI	LI	MI	AMI	Total
Unincorporated Lassen County	1	1	0	0	2
Source: Department of Housing and Community Development Regional Housing Needs Determination					



### 1.15 Lassen County 6th Cycle Housing Element Review

#### *Progress Implementing Programs*

Lassen County has made progress in implementing programs in its 2019 Housing Element. Some programs have been amended and carried forward in this 2024 Housing Element Update. Programs have been enhanced to affirmatively further fair housing, encourage energy conservation, and enable by-right development of accessory dwelling units. Other 2019 programs have been merged into new programs, such as ones for farmworker and farm labor housing. Programs that have been completed or are no longer applicable have not continued. The following programs will be continued or modified and continued. A more detailed analysis of the County's implementation of the 2019 Housing Element programs and their status is included in Appendix A.

- HE-1.B Annual Reporting
- HE-2.A Density Bonus Ordinance
- HE-2.B Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance
- HE-2.C State and Federal Funds
- HE-3.A Adequate Sites
- HE-3.B Housing Distribution
- HE-4.A Farm Labor Housing
- HE-4.B Farmworker Housing
- HE-4.C Licensed Residential Care Facilities
- HE-4.D Emergency Shelter Development
- HE-4.E Reasonable Accommodation
- HE-4.F Single-Room Occupancy Units
- HE-4.G Special Needs Housing
- HE-5.A Conservation of Affordable Housing
- HE-5.B Building Inspection/Code Enforcement
- HE-7.A Infrastructure Improvements
- HE-7.B Permit Processing
- HE-7.C Expedited Processing and Technical Assistance and Permitting Fees
- HE-7.D Multifamily Projects
- HE-8.C Transitional and Supportive Housing
- HE-8.D Supportive Housing





- HE-9.A Weatherization Programs

### 1.16 Policy Document Overview

The 2019 Housing Element contained 9 goals, 33 policies, and 27 programs. The 2024-2029 Housing Element is restructured with 5 goals, 11 policies, and 13 programs. Many goals of the existing 2019 Housing Element have been maintained, with new or revised policies and programs proposed to meet current and project needs and legal requirements. The goals, policies, and implementation programs are included in Section 2.



## SECTION 2: HOUSING STRATEGY

### Section 2.1: Introduction

This Section contains the County's Housing Strategy for the 2024-2029 Housing Element planning period. State law requires each jurisdiction to adopt a Housing Element to ensure adequate provision for the housing needs of all segments of the community. The Housing Strategy is comprised of goals, policies, and implementing programs that form a roadmap to address the existing and projected housing needs of the community. In order to do so, the Housing Element must do all of the following:

- Identify the agencies and officials responsible for the implementation of the various actions and the means by which consistency will be achieved with other general plan elements and community goals.
- Identify adequate sites which will be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards and with the public services and facilities needed to meet the needs of all income levels. This shall include rental housing, factory-built housing, mobile homes, emergency shelters, and transitional housing.
- Assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households.
- Address and, where appropriate and legally possible, remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing.
- Conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock.
- Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or color.
- Affirmatively further fair housing.

This Section of the Housing Element complies with the requirements and goals of Government Code Section 8899.50(b). Consistent with State law, each program identifies actions, timeframes, objectives, responsible agencies, and funding. Quantified objectives are identified in Table 4.

#### 2.1.1 Background

The 2019 Housing Element contained nine goals, 33 policies, and 27 programs. This Housing Element restructures the goals and policies of the 2019 Housing Element to better address the current and projected needs of Lassen County. Implementing programs that have been implemented and are no longer application for continuation have been removed. New and amended programs are described in Section 2.3.



### 2.1.2 Community Input

The Housing Element strategy was crafted through consultation with a diverse group of local stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

In anticipation of the Housing Element Update, the County issued a Community Housing Needs and Perceptions Survey yielding 281 responses. The Housing Element referred to prior outreach efforts and tailored the second community survey to build on existing and recent community input. The follow-up Community Housing Needs & Opportunities Survey was circulated widely in digital format, yielding 30 responses as of December 2023 and remaining open through the Housing Element drafting process. Respondents to both surveys noted a need for lower cost affordable housing; more housing choices such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and apartments; and resources to improve the conditions of existing housing in Lassen County. Programs to address these priorities are provided in this section. Overall, survey results express a theme of keeping Lassen County clean, safe, and affordable so it remains an attractive place for families.

### 2.1.3 Stakeholder Input

A Housing Element Developer Survey was circulated to development and real estate professionals to gather input on housing needs and constraints. Respondents identified more housing choices in lower price ranges as the most pressing need, followed by affordable rental housing and first-time buyer homes, senior housing, workforce housing, and housing for large or intergenerational families. Respondents noted that the most prohibitive constraints were fees and exactions, processing and permitting procedures, availability of financing, costs (labor, materials, and land), and community opposition. Constraints are considered in full in Section 4 and are mitigated through program actions to reduce barriers and actively facilitate housing development.

## Section 2.2: Goals & Policies

As previously discussed, the 2024 Housing Element restructures the goals and policies of the 2019 Housing Element. The goals and policies set forth in this Section are as follows:

### Goal HE-GP-1: Housing Sites and Opportunities

Maintain a current inventory of Housing Element sites to ensure the County's meets the 2024-2029 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Goal GP-1 and Goal GP-3, *modified*]

- Policy HE-GP-1.A Maintain viable sites for the development of housing in close proximity to services and adequate infrastructure. [Source: 2019 Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-1.A, Policy HE-GP-1.C, HE-GP-1.D, HE-GP-3.A, *modified*]



### Goal HE-GP-2: Housing Production and Conservation

Expand, maintain, and conserve affordable and accessible housing opportunities with adequate infrastructure and services for all economic sectors and persons with special housing needs. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Goal HE-GP-2, HE-GP-3 and HE-GP-4]

- Policy HE-GP-2.A Identify and pursue available federal, state, and private financial resources for the production and conservation of affordable and accessible housing. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-2.A, Policy HE-GP-2.C, Policy HE-GP-4.B, and Policy HE-GP-5.D, *modified*]
- Policy HE-GP-2.B Encourage the development of a variety of housing types with access to employment opportunities, adequate services, and facilities for special needs groups and lower income households. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-2.D, Policy HE-GP-4.C, and Goal GP-6, *modified*]
- Policy HE-GP-2.C Seek and support programs that address the housing needs of special needs groups such as seniors, persons with disabilities and developmental disabilities, farmworkers, those in need of temporary shelter, single-parent families, and large families. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-4.A, *modified*]
- Policy HE-GP-2.D Encourage the maintenance and conservation of housing as a means of conserving existing housing stock. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-5.A, Policy HE-GP-5.B, and HE-GP-5.C, *modified*]

### Goal HE-GP-3: Address Housing Constraints

Address and, wherever possible, remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing to meet the needs of County residents. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Goal HE-GP-7]

- Policy HE-3.A Take an active role in the elimination of barriers that hinder access to safe, affordable housing.

### Goal HE-GP-4: Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

Promote and affirmatively further fair housing opportunities for all members of the community, including those with special needs. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Goal HE-GP-2 and Goal HE-GP-8]

- Policy HE-GP-4.A Promote housing opportunities for all persons, regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, source of income, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and familial status. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-8.B, *modified*]



## SECTION 2: HOUSING STRATEGY

- Policy HE-GP-4.B Work to educate the community about fair housing, housing programs, and housing assistance available to the public. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-2.B]
- Policy HE-GP-4.C Affirmatively further fair housing for all residents consistent with State and Federal law. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-8.A]

### Goal HE-GP-5: Energy Conservation

Encourage the use of energy and resource conservation in the development of housing in the County. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Goal HE-GP-9]

- Policy HE-GP-5.A Support energy conservation programs in the production and rehabilitation of affordable housing to reduce household energy costs. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-9.A]
- Policy HE-GP-5.B Promote energy-efficient design in residential development. [Source: 2019 Lassen County Housing Element, Policy HE-GP-9.B]

## Section 2.3: Housing Programs

The following programs are designed to implement the County's goals and policies described above. Each program identifies actions, timeframes, objectives, responsible agencies, and funding, as required by State law.

### *Program HE-1: Annual Reporting*

The County will monitor the progress towards Housing Element implementation through the completion of the Housing Element Annual Progress Report (APR) and submit the APR to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Context	Continuation and modification of Program HE-1.B
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Annually, by April 1
Objective	Provide housing administration to meet the County's Housing Element program deadlines and ensure no net loss of housing capacity throughout the planning period. Maintain access to key State housing, planning, and infrastructure funds.





**Program HE-2: Adequate Sites**

The County shall maintain an adequate supply of appropriately zoned land for residential use to ensure it can accommodate the County's RHNA.

- Action (A): To ensure sufficient residential capacity is maintained to accommodate the County's RHNA, the County will establish a process to make findings related to the potential impact of a development project or other actions on the County's ability to meet its unmet RHNA.
- Action (B): Consistent with "no-net-loss" zoning requirements in Government Code Section 65863. If at any point it is determined that the County does not have adequate capacity to meet the unmet lower - or moderate-income RHNA, the County shall identify and make available a replacement site within 180 days. The County shall prioritize finding replacement sites in High and Highest resource areas to affirmatively further fair housing.
- Action (C): Maintain a list of the housing sites inventory on the County's website and track using the County's Geographic Information System database as soon as possible. The County shall monitor the distribution of the sites inventory to ensure that, if additional sites are identified, the inventory continues to affirmatively further fair housing.
- Action (D): Create and maintain a list of additional sites with appropriate zoning that could be added to the Sites Inventory if the density or development capacity is reduced upon project approval or other actions.

Context	Continuation and modification of Programs HE-3.A and HE-3.B
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Action (A): December 31, 2024 Action (B): Ongoing, replacement site within 180 days of action Action (C-D): Six months after Housing Element adoption Action (E): Ongoing
Objective	Maintain capacity to accommodate the County's RHNA throughout the planning period.



***Program HE-3: State and Federal Funds***

Actively pursue state and federal funds on an ongoing basis to support low-income housing construction and rehabilitation and seek new funding programs to create additional local sources of funding for affordable housing.

Context	Continuation and modification of HE-2.C to secure funding for cost burdened households
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services
Funding	General Fund & Grant Funding
Timeframe	Ongoing
Objective	Secure funding to support affordable housing construction and rehabilitation.

***Program HE-4: Zoning for a Variety of Housing Types***

The County will actively work to accommodate a variety of housing types and comply with State law through the following actions:

- Action (A): Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by right pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2(i) for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households at a default density of 15 dwelling units per acre on sites contained in the Housing Inventory.
- Action (B): Allow transitional housing in all zones allowing residential uses subject to the same standards as a residence of the same type (AB 2162) and allow eligible supportive housing as a use by right in zones where multifamily and mixed uses are permitted pursuant to Government Code Sections 65650 to 65656.
- Action (C): Amend the Lassen County Code to clearly define licensed residential care facilities and allow licensed residential care facilities as a by-right use in all residential zones, subject only to clear, transparent, and objective standards, as required by Health and Safety Code Section 1568.0831.
- Action (D): Amend the Lassen County Code to allow emergency shelters by-right in all zones where residential uses are permitted and adopt written, objective standards as required by Government Code Section 65583(a)(4)(B) and define and permit low



barrier navigation centers consistent with the requirements of Government Code Sections 65660 to 65668, including treating low barrier navigation centers as a use by right in areas zoned for mixed use and nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses.

- Action (E): Amend the Lassen County Code to adopt a Density Bonus Ordinance that defers to statute (Government Code Section 65915).
- Action (F): Amend the Lassen County Code to define agricultural worker housing and employee housing and bring the zoning code into compliance with the Employee Housing Act. The text amendment shall indicate that any agricultural worker housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in a group quarters or 12 units or spaces shall be deemed an agricultural land use and permitted in the same manner as agricultural uses consistent with Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6, as well as to treat employee and farm labor housing that serves six or fewer persons as a single-family structure and permitted in the same manner as other single-family structures of the same type in the same zone (Health and Safety Code Sections 17021.5).

Context	Continuation and modification of Programs HE-2.A, HE-4.A, HE-8.C, HE-8.D, HE-4.G, HE-4.F, HE-4.C to address State law.
Geography	Countywide, in applicable zoning districts.
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	June 30, 2025 or June 30, 2027*
Objective	Achieve consistency with State law and facilitate the development of the County's RHNA with a target of 50 housing units.

*\*Program timing dependent on State certification date.*

### **Program HE-5: Accessory Dwelling Units**

The County will work with the California Department of Housing and Community Development to amend its Zoning Code to achieve compliance with Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) law. The text amendment will be made to support ADU development while mitigating impacts on existing infrastructure challenges and will explore restricting the development of ADUs in areas with heightened flood and fire risk factors. The County will also develop preapproved standard ADU plans per Assembly Bill 1332 of 2023.

Context	Continuation of Program HE-2.B.
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Geography	Countywide, in applicable zoning districts.
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	December 31, 2024 - text amendment January 1, 2025 - standard plans
Objective	Achieve consistency with State law with a target of 10 ADUs built over the planning period.

***Program HE-6: Special Needs Housing***

The County will take an active role in addressing the needs of special needs groups and facilitating access to safe and affordable housing.

- Action (A): Maintain the County's motel vouchers program to support the placement of individuals and or families into safe, stable housing and explore the feasibility of preserving and rehabilitating existing motels in the County that are suitable for conversion to single-room occupancy (SRO) units.
- Action (B): Collaborate with the Plumas County Community Development Commission (PCCDC) to promote the project-based and tenant-based housing assistance programs.
- Action (C): Work with local service providers to explore the feasibility of a safe parking program which would designate parking lots for people living out of their vehicles to safely stay overnight and provide services to help navigate them toward permanent housing.
- Action (D): Assess the benefits of adopting a fair chance housing ordinance that would limit both private rental and publicly subsidized affordable housing in tenant selection policies to give previously incarcerated persons and other persons with a criminal history a fair opportunity to compete for rental housing.
- Action (E): Adopt a universal design ordinance and checklist applicable to new construction and home modifications to ensure accessibility to existing and new housing units for persons of all ages and abilities.

Context	Continuation and modification of Programs HE-4.D and HE-4.G to address the housing needs of special needs groups, as required by Government Code Sections 65583 and 8899.50.
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Geography	Countywide, in applicable zoning districts.
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department, Health and Social Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Action (A): Ongoing. Action (B): Annually. Action (C): By December 31, 2024, biannually thereafter. Action (D): December 31, 2025. Action (E): June 30, 2025.
Objective	Meet the needs of special needs groups through proactive action, with a target of 10 motel vouchers issued, and at least annual promotion of project-based and tenant-based vouchers.

#### ***Program HE-7: Conservation of Affordable Housing Stock***

In order to conserve the existing supply of housing and maintain affordability, the County will take an active role in monitoring the existing affordable housing stock and maintaining an active rehabilitation program.

- Action (A): Monitor the continued affordability of 58 affordable housing units in the County.
- Action (B): Identify substandard housing or housing with code violations and provide information on rehabilitation programs to eligible households.

Context	Continuation and modification of Programs HE-5.A and HE-5.B
Geography	Action (A): Assisted affordable housing developments. Action (B): Countywide
Responsibility	Planning
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Action (A): Contact property owners annually Action (B): Ongoing



Objective	Maintain the continued affordability of 58 affordable housing units and conserve the existing housing stock through the rehabilitation of three housing units.
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### ***Program HE-8: Fees and Permitting***

The County will take an active role in increasing transparency regarding fees and permitting procedures through the following actions:

- Action (A): Post all relevant fee information to the County's website to ensure compliance with Government Code 65940.1(a)(1).
- Action (B): Publish the required details on Post-Entitlement Permit Procedures in compliance with Government Code 65913.3. This includes a comprehensive list of requirements, review timelines, and exemplars of successful applications and permits for diverse housing development projects.
- Action (C): Provide expedited processing and technical assistance for development projects that contain units affordable to lower-income and special needs groups.
- Action (D): Develop a fact sheet and application process for Senate Bill 35, Assembly Bill 2162, and Senate Bill 330 and make available both online and in-person.
- Action (E): Initiate a zoning code amendment to review opportunities to reduce parking requirements.
- Action (F): Train staff to ensure that eligible multifamily projects with affordable housing components are provided streamlined review and are only subject to objective design standards consistent with relevant provisions of SB 35 and SB 330 as provided by applicable sections of the Government Code, including but not limited to Sections 65905.5, 65913.4, 65940, 65941.1, 65950, and 66300.

Context	Continuation of Program HE-7.C and modification to add new actions to comply with State law and increase transparency regarding fees and permitting procedures.
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Action (A-B): December 31, 2024 Action (C): Ongoing





	<p>Action (D): Within one year of Housing Element adoption</p> <p>Action (E): January 31, 2025</p> <p>Action (F): December 31, 2024</p>
Objective	Provide technical assistance for 100% of development projects that contain units affordable to lower-income and special needs groups during the planning period.

***Program HE-9: Monitoring and Removal of Constraints***

The County will actively work to support the development of housing and remove constraints through the following actions:

- Action (A): As new California codes are adopted, the County will review its code, procedures, and practices for current compliance and adopt the necessary revisions.
- Action (B): Track when housing development applications are received and meet with potential applicants on an ongoing basis. Should any constraints be discerned, the County will actively address and resolve the constraint.
- Action (C): Continue to work with service districts to improve and expand County infrastructure to support existing and future development and seek funding for infrastructure repairs, upgrades, and new facilities.

Context	Continuation and modification of Programs HE-7.A, HE-7.B, and HE-7.D to remove constraints, where possible.
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	<p>Action (A): Annually</p> <p>Action (B-C): Ongoing</p>
Objective	Compliance with State law and remove constraints to housing, where possible



***Program HE-10: Reasonable Accommodation***

Establish a formal procedure to request reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the application of zoning and land use regulations, policies, and procedures and conduct a biannual administrative review of the process to ensure the process does not pose a constraint to housing for persons with disabilities.

Context	Continuation of Program HE-4.E and achieve compliance with Government Code Section 65583.
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department, Health and Social Services Department.
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Adoption of ordinance: within one year of Housing Element adoption Administrative review: Biannual review conducted by April 1, 2025.
Objective	Address all requests for reasonable accommodation and biannually review the procedure to ensure that it does not pose a constraint to housing for persons with disabilities.

***Program HE-11: Fair Housing***

To affirmatively further fair housing and increase awareness of fair housing law, the County shall take the following measures:

- Action (A): Collaborate with the Plumas County Community Development Commission (PCCDC) on an annual basis to explore pathways to increase the number of property owners that accept Housing Choice Vouchers in High and Highest resource areas and make brochures and other materials available in County offices and on the County's website.
- Action (B): Continue providing tenant - landlord dispute resolution information and literature on housing discrimination and fair housing resources at the County offices, on the County's website, community centers, libraries, and other areas in which the community gathers information.



## SECTION 2: HOUSING STRATEGY

- Action (C): Continue to refer housing discrimination complaints to the appropriate state and federal agencies and refer all fair housing complaints to service providers including California Rural Legal Assistance.
- Action (D): Partner with Lassen County realtors and community-based organizations such as the Lassen Association of REALTORS® and local lending agencies to educate residents about first-time homebuyer assistance programs, ADU programs and opportunities, and overall housing education.

Context	New program to affirmatively further fair housing as required by Government Code Sections 65583 and 8899.50.
Geography	Action (A): High and Highest Resource Areas Action (B-D): Countywide
Responsibility	Health and Social Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Action (A): Annually Action (B-D): Ongoing
Objective	Actions (A-B): Increase education and awareness surrounding fair housing. Action (C): Resolve all complaints and refer as appropriate. Action (D): Partner with at least two organizations per year.

### ***Program HE-12: Weatherization Programs***

Actively encourage and promote the use of weatherization programs available to residents in the County. The County will maintain information pertaining to active weatherization programs on the County's website and refer residents to available programs.

Context	Continuation and modification of Program HE-9.A
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services Department
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	Website update - December 31, 2024



	Ongoing
Objective	Reduce energy consumption of qualifying households by 15 percent through the use of weatherization programs.

### **Program HE-13: Energy Conservation Programs**

Maintain a comprehensive list of residential and commercial rebate programs available to residents and businesses on the County's website and make information available in-person.

Context	New
Geography	Countywide
Responsibility	Planning and Building Services
Funding	General Fund
Timeframe	October 2024
Objective	Encourage the reduction of energy consumption by 10 percent by incentivizing the use of energy-efficient technologies.

## **Section 2.4: Quantified Objectives**

Table 4 below summarizes the County's quantified housing objectives for the 2024-2029 Housing Element planning period.

Table 4 Quantified Objectives, Lassen County, 2024-2029

	<b>ELI</b>	<b>VLI</b>	<b>LI</b>	<b>MI</b>	<b>AMI</b>
New Construction	5	5	5	20	15
Rehabilitation	1	1	1	-	-
Conversion	-	-	-	-	-
ADUs	2	2	2	2	2
Total	8	8	8	22	17



SECTION 3: HOUSING SITES

Section 3.1: Context

State law requires that Housing Elements demonstrate each local agency’s ability to meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Each jurisdiction’s RHNA is set through a process that is meant to identify and address housing needs for the projected State population and household growth, to improve the jobs/housing balance in communities, and to ensure the availability of housing affordable to all income groups. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65584, et seq., the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is required to provide the determination of Lassen County’s existing and projected housing need and a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan. For the 2024-2029 Housing Element Update period, HCD’s Final Regional Housing Need Determination and Plan identifies a RHNA of two (2) units for the unincorporated County, distributed among different income categories.

Table 5 Regional Housing Needs Allocation in Lassen County, 2024-2029

	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	Total
Unincorporated Lassen County	1	1	0	0	2

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development Regional Housing Needs Determination

Government Code Section 65583(a)(1) of California State law further divides the very low-income category into extremely low and very low categories with 50% in each category. Lassen County’s extremely low-income unit allocation is one (1) unit.

Section 3.2: Realistic Capacity of Sites Zoned for Housing

Government Code Section 65583.2(a) stipulates that a jurisdiction must identify, as part of an inventory, sites within its boundaries that could have the potential for new residential development within the housing element planning period. Lassen County is meeting its RHNA through sites identified in the Housing Sites Inventory. This Section describes the general characteristics of the Sites Inventory, an analysis of site suitability, as well as the methodology used to determine the number of units that can be reasonably developed on a site.

3.2.1 Vacant Sites

Lassen County is utilizing vacant land to fulfill the entirety of its 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Sites Inventory. The following Sites Inventory identifies one undeveloped residential property that has access to services including water and/or sewer. The methodology used to determine the realistic capacity of the site identified in Table 6, can be found in Section 3.2.3.



Table 6 Realistic Capacity of Vacant Parcels

Site No.	Site Address	APN	Zone	General Plan	Acreage	Realistic Capacity
1	700-193 Pilcher St, Susanville, CA	101-100-14-11	R-3	Residential	6.93	77
Total					6.93	77

3.2.2 Site Suitability Analysis

Site #1 has realistic development potential and is suitable to accommodate the County’s RHNA. The site has adequate availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities and is located in proximity to transit, jobs, and community services. Furthermore, the site has been utilized in the past two planning periods and accommodates the housing needs of very low- and low-income households by permitting owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by right at a default density of 15 dwelling units per acre for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2 Housing Site



<sup>1</sup> By right means local government review must not require a conditional use permit, planned unit development permit, or other discretionary review or approval.





Site #1 Description (APN: 101-100-14-11)	
<b>Size of Site</b>	6.93 acres
<b>Zoning</b>	R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential)
<b>Assumed Density</b>	No maximum; 15 dwelling units per acre assumed (default)
<b>Existing Use</b>	Vacant
<b>RHNA Affordability</b>	Total units (77 units); including Lower (16 units); Moderate (8 units); Above Moderate (53 units)

### 3.2.3 Realistic Capacity Analysis

Government Code Section 65583.2(c) requires, as part of the analysis of viable sites, that the projected residential development capacity of the sites identified in this section be calculated to demonstrate that the sites can realistically be achieved.

The Sites Inventory includes land in the Multi-Family Residential District (R-3). The R-3 zone contains no density minimums or maximums, and realistic capacity is assessed based on statutory default density of 15 dwelling units per acre as a baseline.

The current RHNA cycle requires accommodation for two units, or capacity for one (1) housing unit each among Very Low and Low-Income households. This need is addressed through one (1) identified vacant site (Site #1), totaling 6.93 acres. This site must adhere to statutory requirements to allow development by right at a minimum density of 15 dwelling units per acre for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households. An adjustment factor of 75%, in line with standards set by the neighboring Plumas, Shasta, and Butte County (70%-80%), has been applied to determine realistic capacity. The realistic capacity for the Sites Inventory is calculated by multiplying its area by the default density and then applying the 75% adjustment factor.

- Realistic Capacity of Site #1:  $(6.93 \text{ acres} \times 15 \text{ dwelling units per acre}) \times 0.75 \text{ adjustment factor} = 77.9 \text{ units}$ , rounded down to 77

Inventoried land was selected under a range of considerations including infrastructure availability, natural disaster resilience, and access to community resources to support affordable housing development.



Section 3.3: Programs to Ensure Adequate Sites

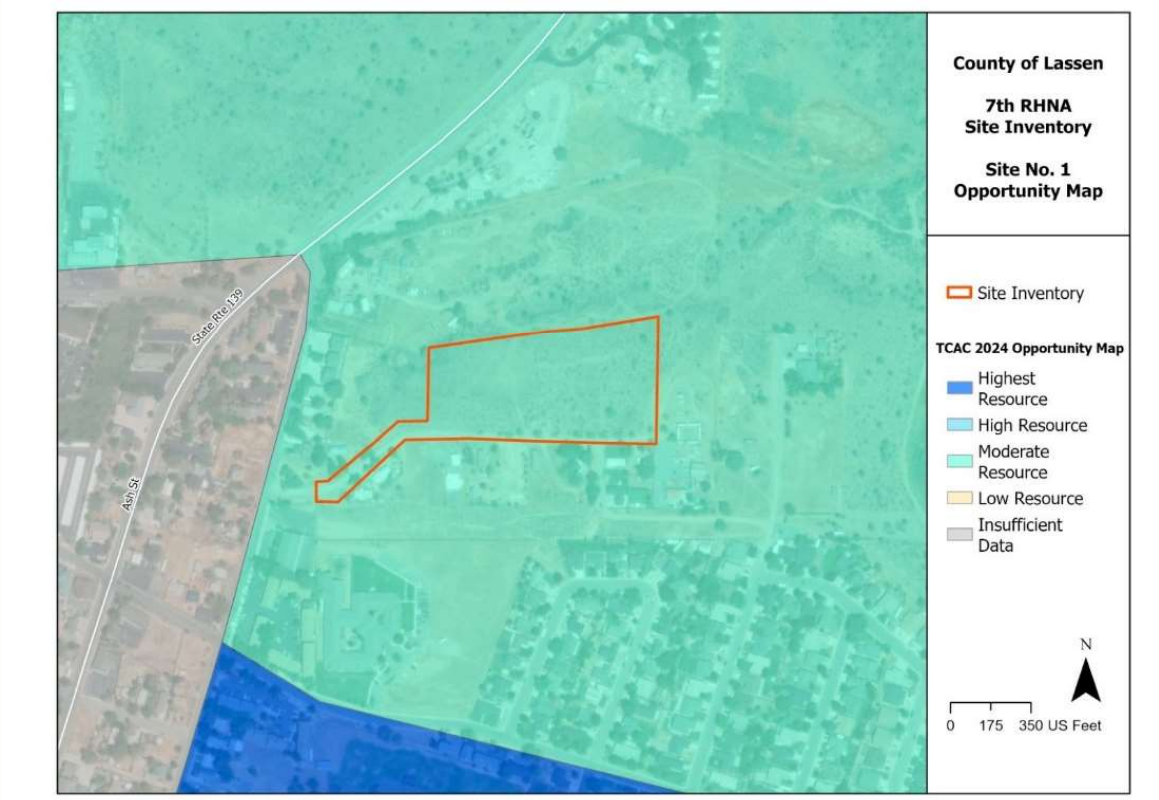
Program HE-2, "Adequate Sites," outlines steps to ensure the County's ability to accommodate its RHNA throughout the planning period. This involves establishing a process (Action A) to assess the impact of development projects on RHNA fulfillment and adhering to "no-net-loss" zoning (Action B) by identifying replacement sites within 180 days if RHNA capacity is insufficient. The program emphasizes transparency by maintaining a public list of housing sites inventory (Action C) and plans for potential site additions (Action D) if density or development capacity is reduced. Additionally, Program HE-2 permits owner-occupied and rental multifamily uses by right for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households.

Section 3.4: Fair Housing Considerations

3.4.1 Relationship of Sites to Fair Housing Analysis

Inventoried land identified to meet Lassen County's RHNA is sited within the community in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing. Lassen County includes census tracts within the full range of resource designations provided by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (CTCAC). The site selected to accommodate the County's RHNA of two (2) units is in a Moderate Resource Area.

Figure 3 California Tax Credit Allocation Committee Opportunity Area Map



### **3.4.2 Improved and Exacerbated Conditions**

Site #1 is located in a Moderate Resource Areas and is located near schools, transit, community services, and jobs. Fair housing conditions are not exacerbated by the housing development anticipated within the 2024 Housing Element planning period.

## **Section 3.5: Infrastructure Considerations**

### **3.5.1 Water**

The Sites Inventory identifies residential land that is currently undeveloped with access to services including water and sewer.

### **3.5.2 Sewer**

Sewer infrastructure varies significantly across different areas of Lassen County. Notably, the Susanville vicinity has access to sewer services through the Susanville Consolidated Sanitary District.

### **3.5.3 Storm Drainage**

Lassen County is part of the North Lahontan Hydrologic Region, where most surface water, including the Susan River, drains into lakes like Honey Lake instead of the ocean, leading to distinct local water conditions. In Lassen County, effective drainage and flood control are vital due to its unique hydrological features. The Public Works Department is key in maintaining infrastructure, ensuring clear drainage paths to prevent flooding and managing the County's streets and alleys.

### **3.5.4 Other Utilities**

The Lassen Municipal Utility District (LMUD), a public-owned utility provider, serving all regions included in the sites inventory. LMUD offers several residential rebates for appliances, heating and cooling systems, and solar. As of January 1, 2019, LMUD's net meter capacity has been met, and applications are accepting restricted to non-net-metered systems. Non-net-metered systems are trued-up monthly at a buy-back rate of 0.10 cents, per exported kWh. This rate is reviewed annually and adjusted by LMUD Board as needed.

The Lassen Regional Solid Waste Management Authority (LRSWMA) manages two municipal solid waste landfills and nine transfer stations. In Lassen County, waste collection services are carried out by private contractors. Presently, C&S Waste Solutions of Lassen County holds the exclusive franchise agreement for operating in the designated franchise area, with residential services including landfill, recycling, and organics collection, bulky item pickup, and debris boxes.

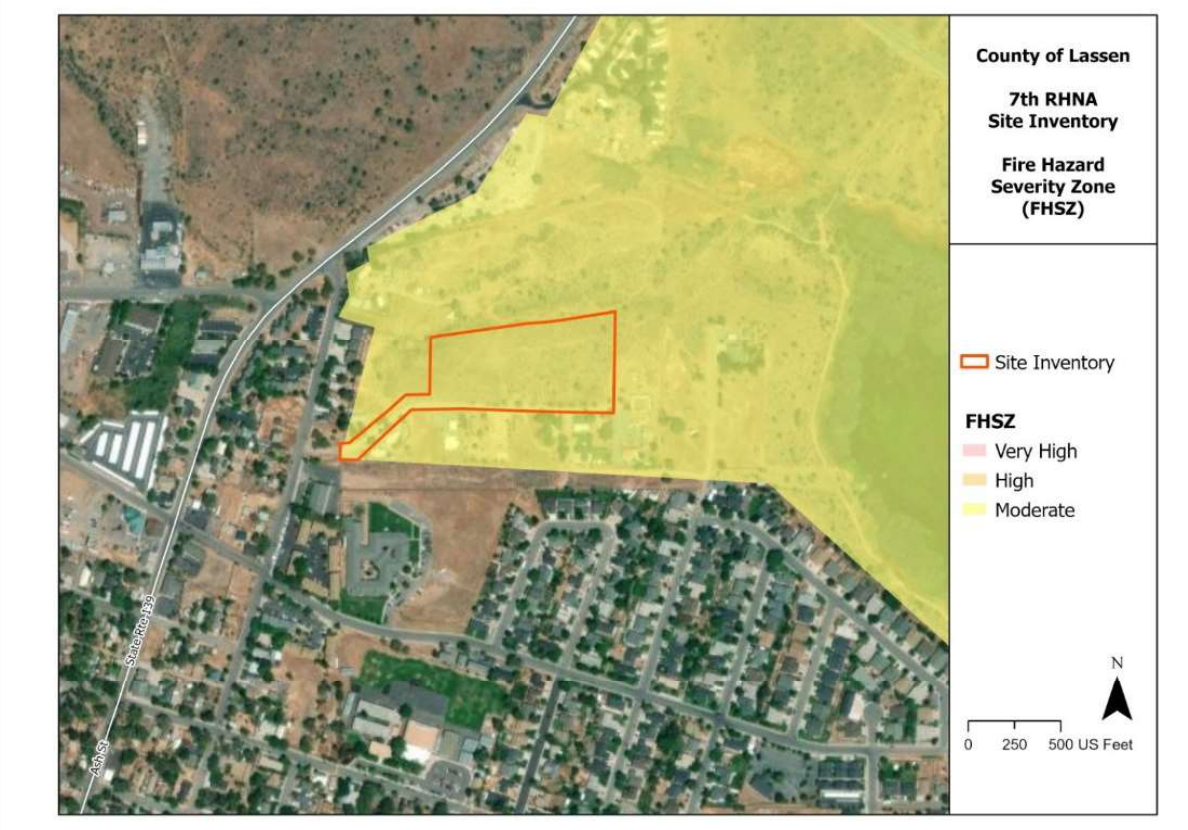


Section 3.6: Environmental Considerations

3.6.1 Fire

Lassen County contains Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ). Between 2004 and 2016, Lassen County experienced eleven wildfire events, impacting 322,845 acres of its 3,020,800-acre territory. Lassen County, the City of Susanville, and the Susanville Indian Rancheria have developed a comprehensive fire management strategy. This includes the General Plan's Safety Element, the City of Susanville Community Fire Safe Plan, the Lassen Fire Safe Council defensible space program, the CalFire Lassen Modoc Unit Fire Plan, Emergency Operations Plans, and the 2022 Lassen County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, all focusing on fire mitigation. As depicted in Figure 4, Site #1 falls within a Moderate FHSZ.

Figure 4 California Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ)

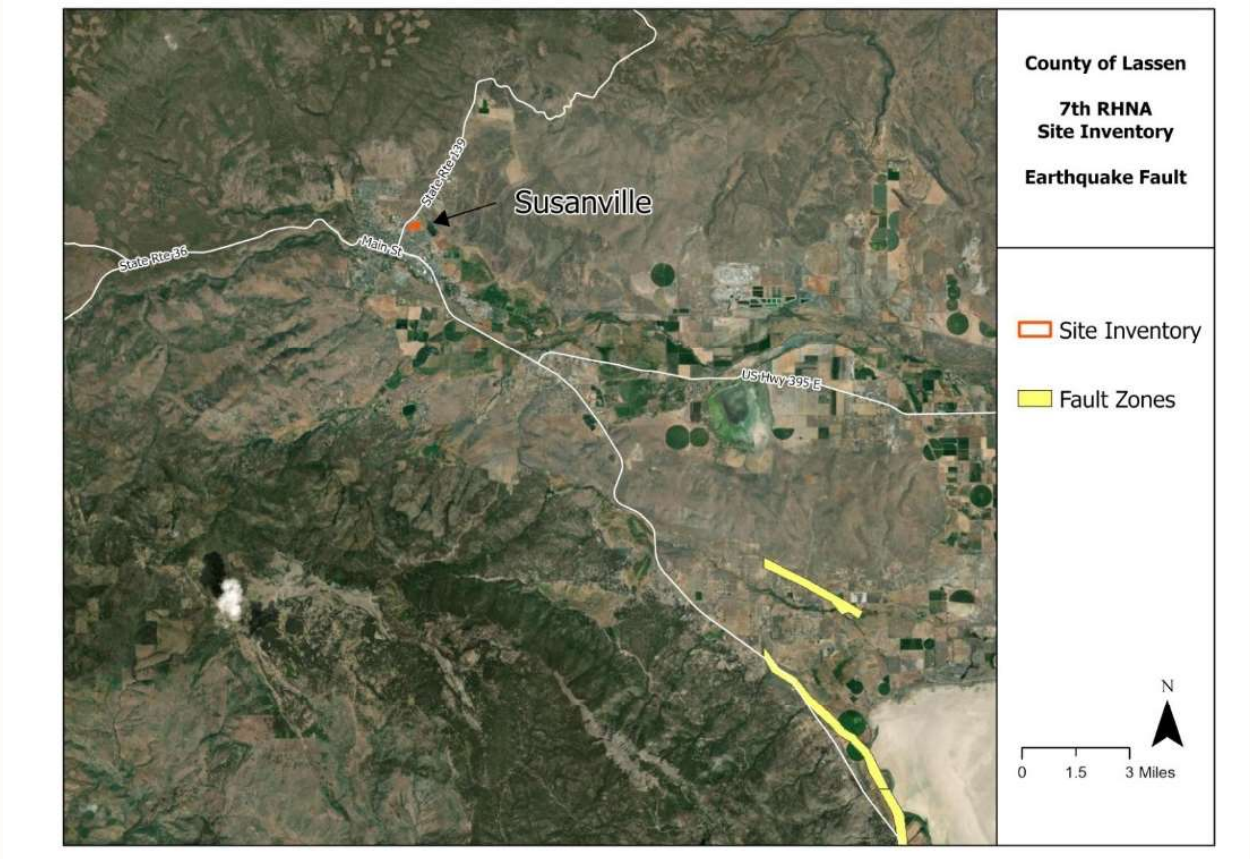




3.6.2 Earthquake

Lassen County is part of a region impacted by various earthquake fault zones. The County is situated near the southern end of the Cascade Range, a volcanic arc stretching from northern California into Canada, known for its seismic activity. The County seat, the City of Susanville, is located within the Honey Lake Fault Zone. Properties in the earthquake fault zones are required to have a geological evaluation prior to construction to avoid mapped fault traces of active faults. The Safety Element of the County incorporates policies tailored to manage development in these regions. As a result, no areas in close proximity to the fault or fault rupture zone have been designated for residential purposes. Housing development in the seismically active zones of the county must adhere to the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR)), crafted to safeguard structures from geological and seismic hazards, ensuring structural safety.

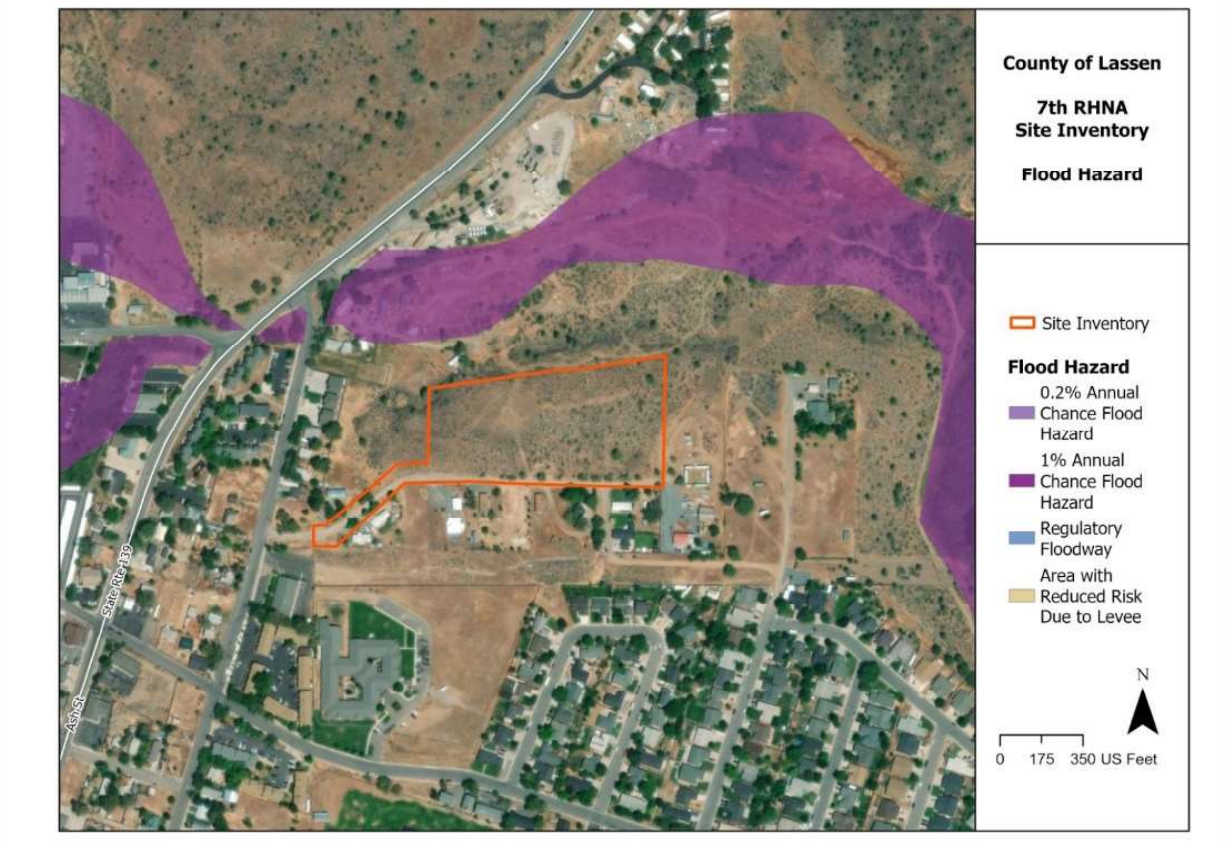
Figure 5 Earthquake Faults



3.6.3 Flood

The historical records of floods in Lassen County from 1965 to 2017 indicate a total cost of \$40,352,325.79. Properties located within the 100-year flood zone or facing other flooding hazards, have been labeled by the County with the Floodplain (F) Combining District zoning designation. Site #1 does not carry the F designation and is not located within a 100-year (1%) or 500-year (0.2%) Special Flood Hazard Zone. Consequently, the site does not contain flooding challenges that would necessitate mitigation and incur additional costs for development.

Figure 6 Flood Hazard Zones



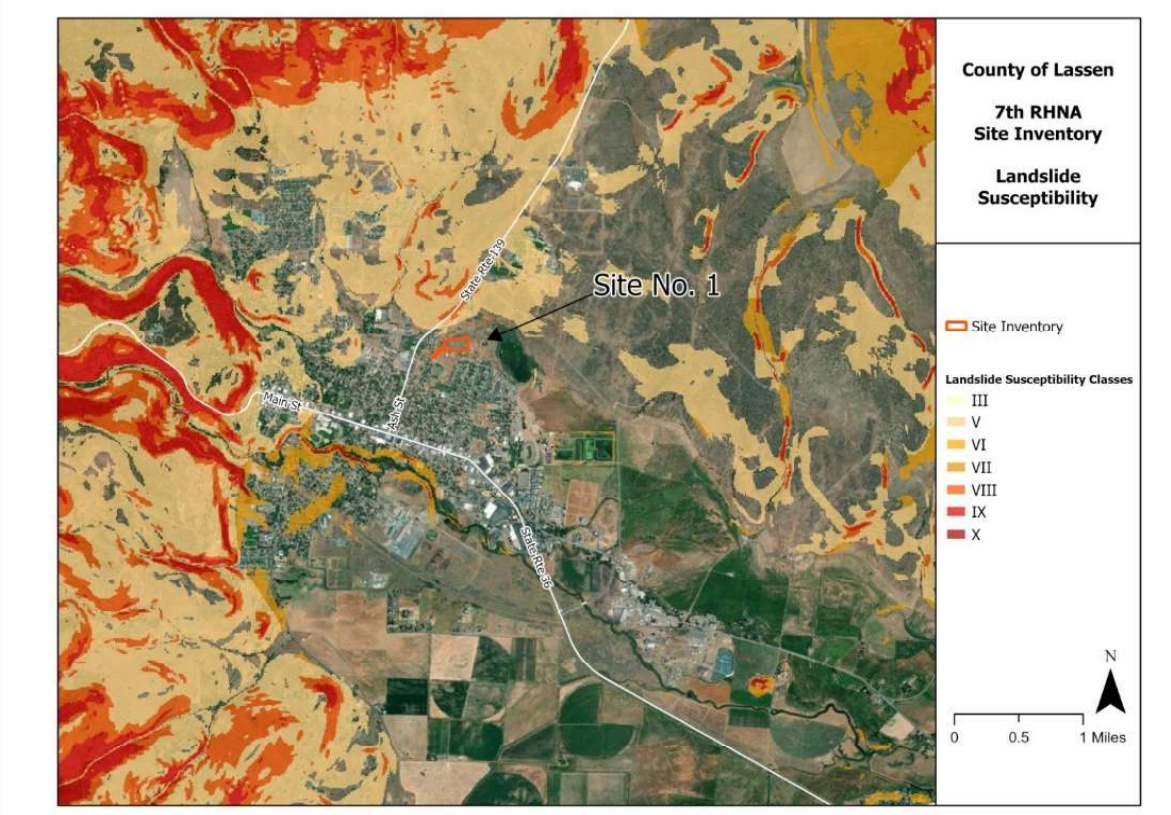


3.6.4 Landslides

The California Geological Survey is currently engaged in documenting and mapping both historic and potential landslides throughout the State. Predicting the location and extent of landslides proves challenging, typically relying on historical occurrences, soil characteristics, and topography. Presently, the California Geological Survey has not generated any landslide maps specifically for Lassen County. Nonetheless, areas characterized by steep slopes and weak soils hold the potential for landslides. Lassen County experiences fewer landslides, both in frequency and magnitude, compared to other regions in the state.

This map image layer is sourced from the California Department of Conservation (Figure 7). The map illustrates the potential for deep-seated landslides by considering regional factors such as the strength of rock formations and the steepness of slopes. Areas with weak rocks and steep inclines are at a higher risk of experiencing landslides. As shown in Figure 7, Site #1 is not located within a Landslide Susceptibility Class.

Figure 7 Landslide Susceptibility



Conclusion

Section 3 concludes the policy document of the Housing Element. The core of the Housing Element includes Section 1 (Introduction), Section 2 (Housing Strategy), and Section 3 (Housing Sites).



## SECTION 3: HOUSING SITES

The supplemental sections of the Housing Element address technical research requirements to support the Housing Element policy document:

- **Section 4 (Technical Background Report)** analyzes housing needs, resources, and constraints.
- **Section 5 (Fair Housing Assessment)** analyzes fair housing conditions and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH).
- **Appendices** provide background context on sites, community engagement, and Housing Element program implementation.

Lassen County is well positioned to successfully implement the policies, programs, and actions of this Housing Element. The 2024 Housing Element serves the housing needs of the next five years for current and future residents and fulfills the statutory requirements of the State of California.

The Housing Element demonstrates that the County has the housing sites needed to address and surpass its RHNA. Moreover, the selected site is located in the County in consideration of existing and enhanced fair housing requirements. Identified programs aim to alleviate barriers to housing production, ensuring that the County remains an affordable and lively community for a diversity of residents in the future.

