



City of Cotati **Housing Element Update** **2023-2031**

Final Adopted Housing Element
HCD Certified – June 2, 2023

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Cotati General Plan presents goals, policies, programs, and supporting information related to the provision of housing for existing and future residents of the City. The purpose of the Housing Element is twofold:

- Present specific policies and actions for housing development to meet Cotati’s specific, identified housing needs; and
- Meet regional standards and achieve State certification, pursuant to statutory requirements.

1.2 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

The Housing Element of the General Plan is a detailed statement of the housing goals, policies, programs, and quantified objectives for the City. The Element is based on a comprehensive technical assessment of existing housing policies and programs; current and projected housing needs, especially related to low-income households and special needs populations; an analysis of market, environmental, governmental, and other factors that constrain housing production; an assessment of ways that the City can affirmatively further fair housing for its residents; an inventory of sites available for housing construction; and an assessment of new programs and policies that can enhance housing production in the City.

The purpose of the Housing Element is to guide decision-making by elected and appointed officials. Specifically, the Housing Element sets forth how the City will address the need for housing, especially by low- and moderate-income families, and special needs families and individuals. The Housing Element also provides housing-related data and information to the public.

1.3 CONSISTENCY WITH STATE LAWS AND GENERAL PLAN

State law requires that the General Plan include an integrated, consistent set of goals and policies. The City of Cotati’s General Plan contains elements relating to land use, circulation, housing, community wellness, noise, conservation, open space, economic development, and safety. The 2023 Housing Element provides goals, policies, and implementation measures that are consistent with all other elements of the General Plan; amendments to the City’s Land Use Element are planned for immediately after adoption of the Housing Element. As the General Plan is amended in the future, the City will ensure the Housing Element remains consistent with the General Plan.

New State law requires that the Safety Element be updated to address climate adaptation upon revision of the Housing Element. The City will ensure compliance with this requirement by updating and adopting its updated Safety Element to follow the 2023 Housing Element. The City will provide a copy of the Housing Element to the water and sewer service providers and has coordinated with these agencies regarding the State-mandated water and sewer service

priority for housing projects that will help Cotati in meeting its regional housing need for lower-income households (Government Code Section 65589.7).

Multiple statewide bills have been passed to address the inequitable distribution of pollution and associated health effects in low-income communities and communities of color. SB 535 requires the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to define disadvantaged communities and SB 1000 requires local governments to identify those disadvantaged communities in their jurisdiction and address environmental justice in their general plans accordingly. As defined by SB 535, Cotati does not currently have any disadvantaged communities. However, Cotati contains a Census tract designated as Low Resource in the 2022 TCAC Opportunity Areas and these neighborhoods will be analyzed and discussed as part of the Assessment of Fair Housing (Section 4.5).

1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public participation requirement of Housing Element law presents an opportunity to engage constituents 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.

The 6th Cycle Housing Element Update was conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic and outreach had to be adjusted to allow and encourage meaningful public participation and input without requiring community members to meet or gather in-person. Staff and consultants made use of multiple in-person and digital platforms to facilitate public input. In-person contact included door-to-door canvassing and tabling at events including the Halloween Carnival, Holiday Shop-and Stroll and Cotati Farmers Market. All public surveys and community events were presented bilingually to ensure that all residents had an opportunity to be heard.

As outreach continued, there was evidence of concern that State requirements conflict with community values, creating conflict and tension. These issues were addressed by staff and consultants.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element is organized into four main sections:

- **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 2015 Housing Element and the City's progress in its implementation.
- **Section 2** sets forth the City's Housing Strategy, which is comprised of the Goals, Policies, and Programs that it intends to implement over the next 8-year planning cycle. The City's Quantified Objectives are also included in Section 2.
- **Section 3** presents a detailed Housing Site Inventory, including a discussion of the availability of services, and compares this inventory to the City's projected housing needs.

- **Section 4**, the Technical Background Report, provides statutorily required data including an assessment of housing needs & programs, an analysis of non-governmental and governmental constraints to affordable housing provision, a discussion of special needs populations, and an assessment of fair housing. Pre-certified housing and demographic data provided by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG/MTC) is included here.

Given the detail and lengthy analysis in developing the Housing Element, the Technical Background Report also contains the following appendices:

- **Appendix A:** 5th Cycle Housing Element Implementation Progress
- **Appendix B:** Sites Inventory
- **Appendix C:** Community Engagement & Input
- **Appendix D:** Community Survey Results
- **Appendix E:** ABAG/MTC Housing Needs Data Packet
- **Appendix F:** ABAG/MTC Segregation Report

1.6 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 AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Acutely Low-Income** - Households earning not more than 15% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Affordable Housing** - Housing that costs no more than 30% of a low-, very low-, or extremely low-income household's gross monthly income. For rental housing, the residents may pay up to 30% of gross income on rent plus tenant-paid utilities. For homeownership, the residents may pay up to 30% on the combination of 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 2022, the AMI for a four-person household in County of Sonoma was \$112,800.
- **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 2021, the poverty threshold for a single person under age 65 was 14,097, for a three-family

unit with two children, it was \$21,831. (Note: this differs from the Federal Poverty Guidelines issued by Health & Human Services).

- **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. (Source: MissingMiddleHousing.com).
- **Moderate-Income Households** - Households earning 81-120% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.
- **Plexes** - a single structure that contains more than one dwelling unit. The units share common walls, and each typically has an outside entrance. Examples include duplex, triplex, quadruplex, etc.
- **Very Low-Income Households (VLI)** - Households earning between 31-50% of the County AMI, adjusted for household size.

1.7 DATA SOURCES

The 2021 Housing Element Update makes full use of the pre-certified data package provided by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which is contained in its entirety in the Section 4 Technical Background Report. In addition to the ABAG dataset, the following sources of data were used to help identify historic patterns of segregation, assess constraints to housing and the market conditions in Cotati; and to better identify specific housing needs:

- U.S. Census 2010 and 2020
- 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Workplace Area Characteristics (WAC) files (Jobs); Residence Area Characteristics (RAC) files (Employed Residents), 2010-2018
- U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Workplace Area Characteristics (WAC) files (Jobs); Residence Area Characteristics (RAC) files (Employed Residents), 2010-2018
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Farmworkers; 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2020 first-quarter industry employment
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2013-2017 release
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) ACS tabulation, 2013-2017 release
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Section 202/811 Supportive Housing Programs, 2010 Program Fact Sheet

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2020
- U.S. House of Representatives, US Code Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership, accessed January 1, 2022
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports (2019)
- California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, Opportunity Area Index, 2020, 2021
- California Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2022
- California Employment Development Department, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Sub-county areas monthly updates, 2010-2021
- County of Sonoma, Grand Jury Report, June 2022
- City of Cotati, Annual Progress Reports, 2015-2021
- UC Berkeley, Urban Displacement Project
- Redfin Housing Market Trends, May 2022
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Census of Farmworkers; 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 2020 first-quarter industry employment
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2013-2017 release
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) ACS tabulation, 2013-2017 release
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Section 202/811 Supportive Housing Programs, 2010 Program Fact Sheet
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2020
- U.S. House of Representatives, US Code Low-Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership, accessed January 1, 2022
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Continuum of Care (CoC) Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports (2019)
- California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, Opportunity Area Index, 2020, 2021
- California Department of Finance, E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2020-2022
- California Employment Development Department, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Sub-county areas monthly updates, 2010-2021.
- County of Sonoma, Grand Jury Report, June 2022
- City of Cotati, Annual Progress Reports, 2015-2021

- UC Berkeley, Urban Displacement Project
- Redfin Housing Market Trends, May 2022

1.8 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Cotati is located in central Sonoma County along US Highway 101 in the northern San Francisco Bay Area. It lies within the southeastern portion of the Santa Rosa Plain, bounded by the low, rolling coastal hills to the west and the Sonoma Mountains to the east. Several creeks run into the City from the surrounding mountains and hillsides. These mountains and hills, along with the surrounding crop fields and pastures, provide a rural backdrop to the City.

In the 1950's Cotati was the "Hub of Sonoma County" a close-knit community with its own water and sewer system and top-rated fire department. The drive for cityhood was inspired by its neighbor to the north, newly incorporated Rohnert Park. In order to maintain its character, Cotati rushed to gather signatures and draw boundaries. The city of Cotati was incorporated in 1963.

Cotati is one of only two towns in the U.S. with a hexagonal layout. The fire department, and La Plaza Park are in the center of the hexagon. Constantly rated as one of the best places to live, Cotati has a diverse community, good schools, and a variety of local businesses and activities.

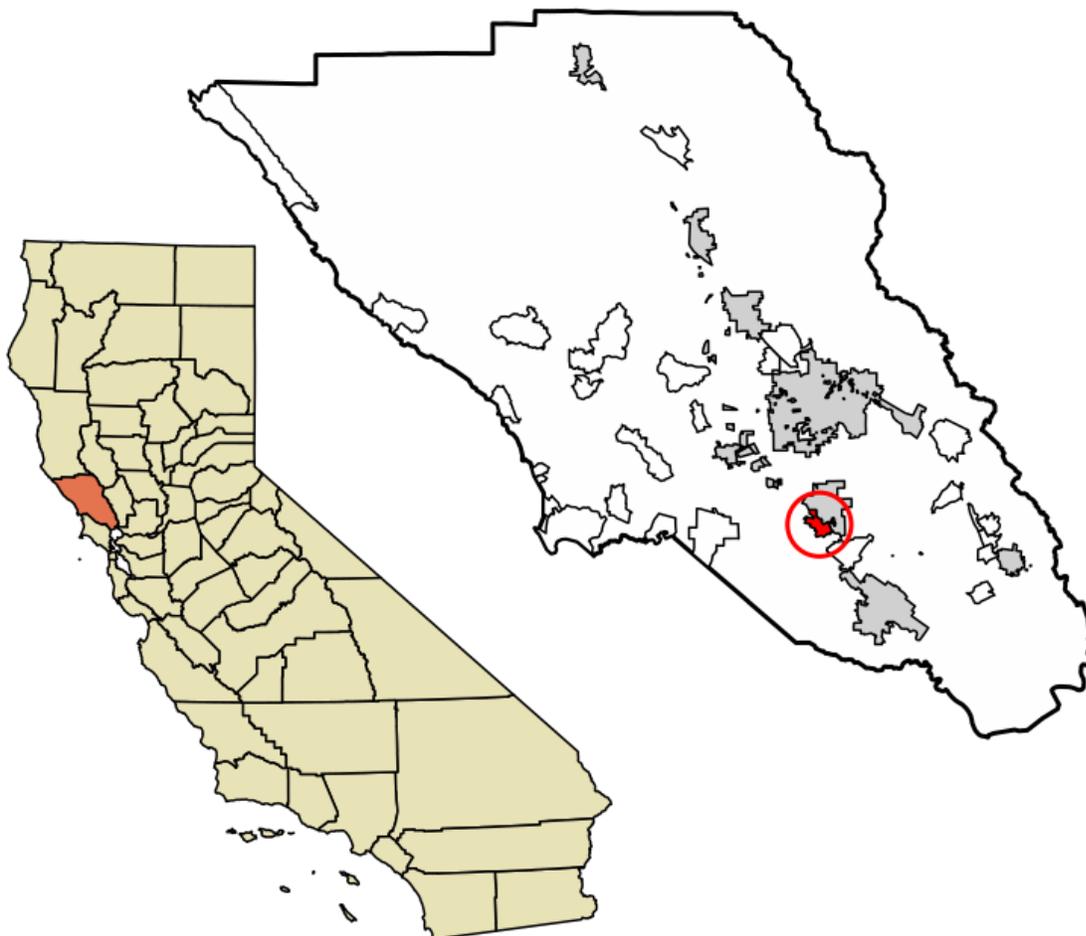
Sonoma State University is just outside of Cotati's city limit and has played a significant role in the City's history since moving to its current location in 1966. Because of the youthful influence from Sonoma State, Cotati has a lively night life.

"Use an Accordion, Go to Cotati" is a motto for the Cotati Accordion Festival. Established in 1991, it is one of the most significant accordion festivals in the United States. The festival draws accordion aficionados from all over the world to La Plaza Park to participate in a full weekend of fun, food and music celebrating the beloved squeezebox. In 1997, a statue of festival co-founder Jim Boggio playing an accordion was erected in La Plaza Park.

In 1990, citizens voted for a fixed urban growth boundary and focused development within the City borders. The City then enhanced the downtown area with Priority Development Areas to encourage development in the Downtown Core and Cotati Depot (Santero Way Specific Plan). In addition, the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) light rail system began service in 2017, including the Cotati Station situated on the edge of downtown toward the Sonoma State University campus.

Since 2000, population density has increased 17.6% to 4,000 per square mile. Of the jurisdictions in Sonoma County, Cotati has the least amount of exclusionary zoning, only allowing single family dwellings, at just over 40%.

Figure 1: City of Cotati Location within Sonoma County



Source: Wikimedia Commons

1.9 CHANGING HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As Cotati ages and demographics change, different housing needs have arisen, and new programs are needed to meet changing demands. This section explores the characteristics and the housing needs of Cotati residents and helps to provide direction in updating the City's Housing Element goals, policies, and programs. Comparisons between Cotati's data and that of Sonoma County and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) are also covered in this section.

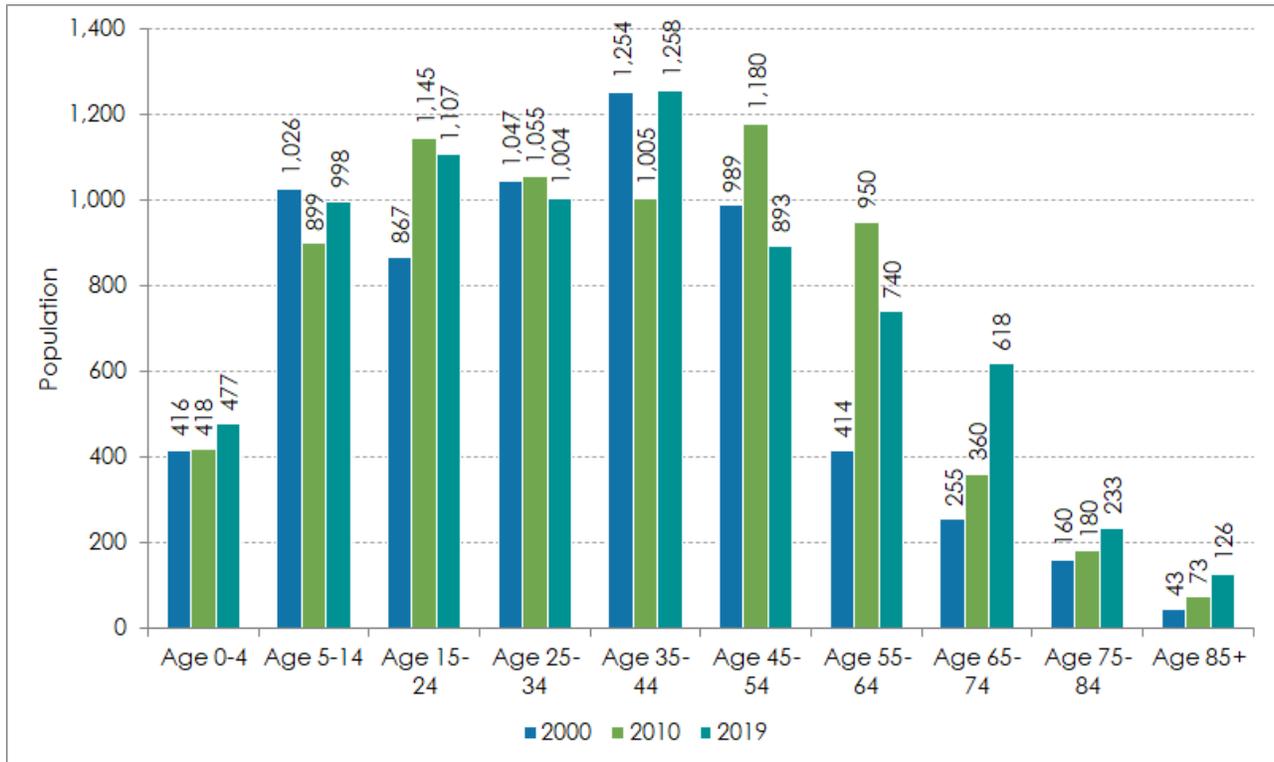
1.9.1 Population Characteristics and Trends

Cotati's population increased 4.4% between 2010 and 2020, from 7,265 to 7,584. In comparison, Sonoma County's population increased only 1% between 2010 and 2020, from 483,878 to 488,863. Cotati's population growth rate of 17.1% over the past two decades is comparable to the surrounding ABAG region at 14.5%.

Age Composition

Cotati's population is generally younger than the region's population. The share of the population under 18 years of age is 20.1%, which is slightly higher than the regional County share of 19.3%. Cotati's seniors (65 and above) make up 15.4% of the population, which is lower than the regional share of 20.7%.

Figure 2: Population by Age, 2000-2019



Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census statistics include the race and ethnicity of a city's population. The most prevalent racial and ethnic categories are as shown in Table 1. The 2010 and 2020 population estimates show that Cotati is experiencing increased percentages of Hispanic and Latino and Native American residents, and decreases in White, Asian, and Black residents. Additional discussion of Cotati's racial and ethnic composition is included in Section 4.

Table 1: Comparative Trends in Racial and Ethnic Composition, 2010-2020

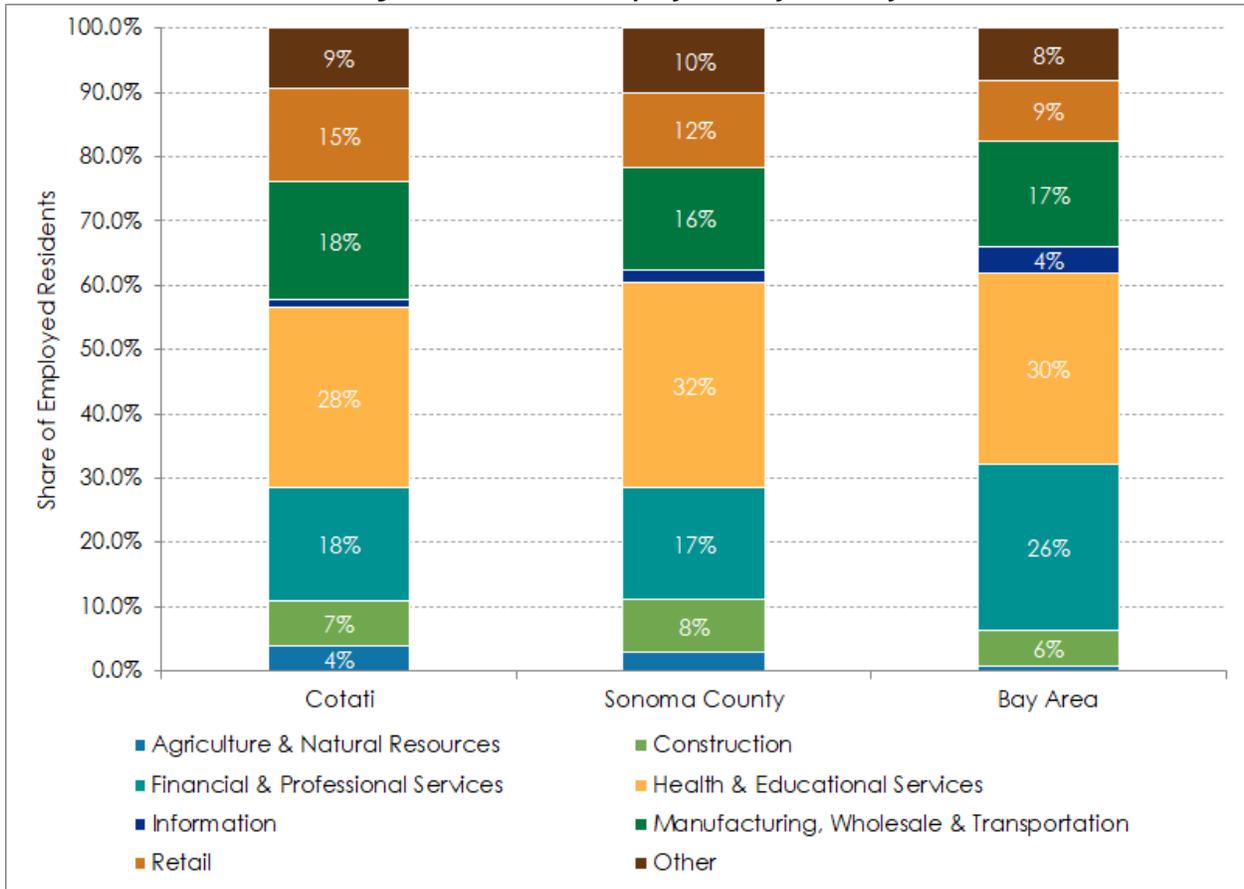
	Cotati		Sonoma County		California	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Hispanic or Latino	17.3%	22.3%	24.9%	27.3%	37.6%	39.4%
White (Non-Hispanic) alone	72.5%	70.2%	66.1%	58.5%	40.1%	34.7%
Black or African American alone	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	2.1%	5.8%	5.4%
Native American alone	1.0%	2.2%	0.7%	2.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian alone	3.9%	2.4%	3.7%	4.6%	12.8%	15.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Some other race alone	5.9%	N/A	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%
Two or More Races	5.5%	6.3%	2.7%	4.0%	2.6%	4.1%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2010, 2020

Employment and Income

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the City of Cotati has 4,060 residents in the workforce. The industries with the highest percentage of employees are Health & Educational Services with 1,132 employees (28% of total), followed by Financial & Professional Services and Manufacturing, Wholesale, & Transportation (both 18% of total).

Figure 3: Resident Employment by Industry

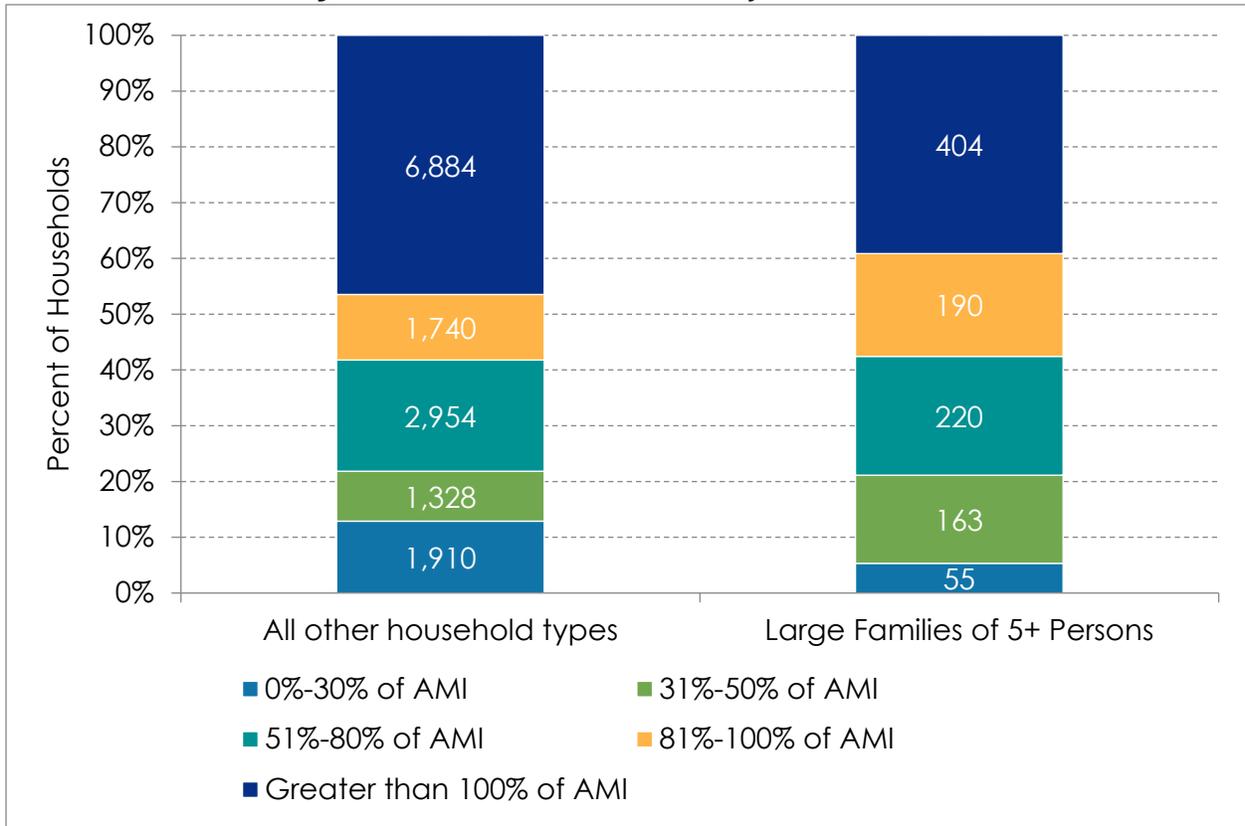


Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

1.9.2 Household Incomes and Housing Affordability

Cotati’s median household income was \$86,982 in 2019, according to the American Community Survey. This is slightly higher than the County median household income of \$86,173. Despite that, there are a considerable number of households (1,042, or 36.7%) with incomes at the “lower” level (80% of AMI or less). The distribution of income is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Household Income Level by Household Size



Source: U.S. Dept. Housing & Urban Development, *Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017*

When housing prices are very high, many households must spend a larger share of their income on housing. Households are considered housing cost-burdened when their total housing costs exceed 30% of their gross monthly income, and to be severely cost-burdened when their total housing costs exceed 50% of their gross monthly income. Households with very low and extremely low incomes are disproportionately burdened by housing cost.

Figure 5 below shows the number of cost-burdened and extremely cost burdened households by income level. While Cotati had a higher median household income than the County in 2017, there were 1,113 households overpaying for housing, or approximately 39% of households. Very low-income households in Cotati faced the direst need, with over 80% cost burdened.

Figure 5: Cost Burden by Income Level



Source: U.S. Dept. Housing & Urban Development, *Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017*

1.9.3 Special Needs Populations

Homeless

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission conducts annual point-in-time surveys of homeless populations. In 2022, 85 people were reportedly experiencing homelessness in Cotati, an increase from 37 people counted in 2020, according to the 2022 Sonoma County Homeless Census Comprehensive Report. Six people were sheltered, and 79 were unsheltered. Stakeholder input indicates that the majority of those unsheltered sleep in cars in the industrial section of Cotati, and that the methodology of the report may include some individuals outside of City limits due to the arrangement of Census tracts. Services for homeless individuals are available in Cotati, and the primary homeless services providers are North House and A Step Up, two group homes providing a total of 19 transitional housing beds for people experiencing homelessness, addiction, and behavioral health issues. Additionally, the County of Sonoma acquired a house on Arthur Street in 2020, which it owns and operates as transitional housing.

Disabled

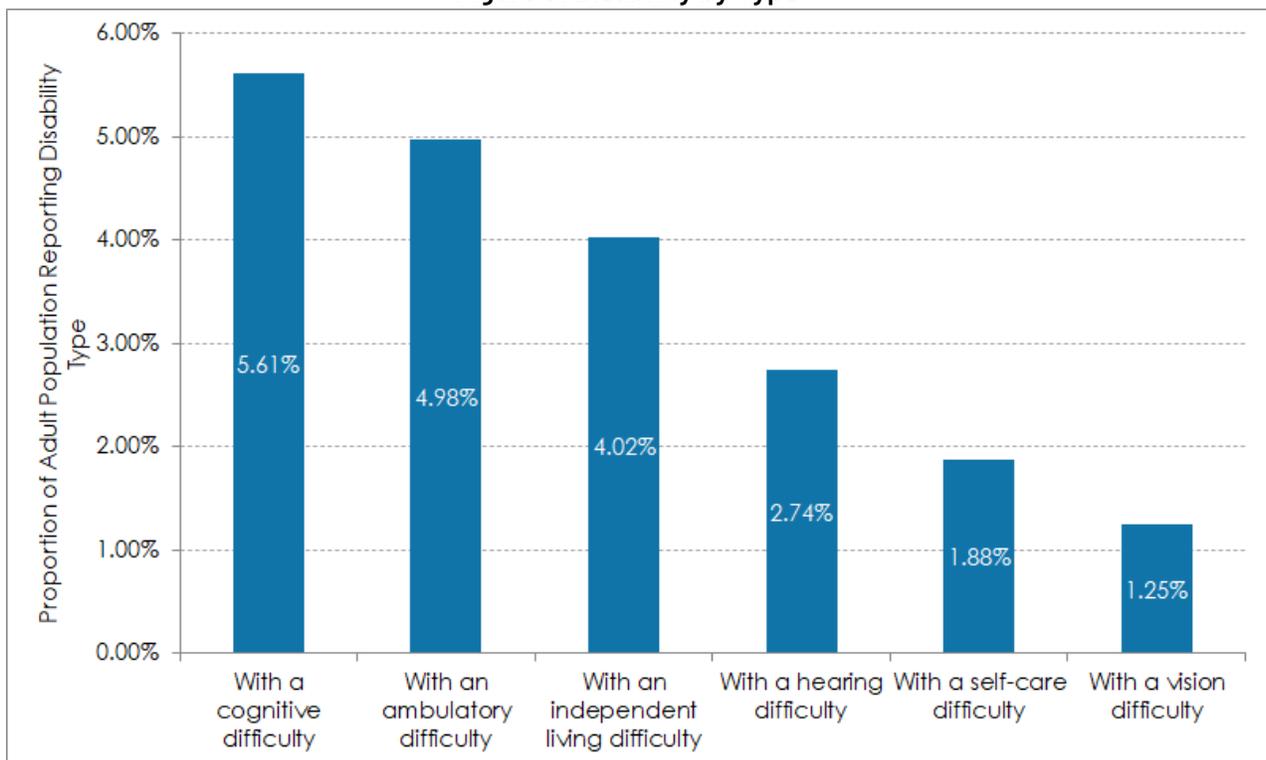
People with disabilities experience disproportionate rates of poverty and are the most likely population to experience homelessness, cost burden or inability to afford housing. Studies

show that persons with disabilities are more likely to experience discrimination when seeking housing compared to other protected classes. In California, 54% of the discrimination complaints received by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development were related to disability status.

Census data from the American Community Survey 2015-2019 indicate that 10.3% of Cotati residents are disabled: 5.61% of adults have a cognitive disability, 4.02% have an independent living disability, 1.88% have a self-care disability, 4.98% have an ambulatory disability, 1.25% have a vision disability, 5.61% with a cognitive disability and 2.74% with a hearing disability. These numbers are not exclusive, as some residents have more than one type of disability.

The most commonly occurring disabilities among seniors 65 and older were ambulatory (25.6%) and independent living (15.6%). These needs can be addressed through housing strategies that include universal design in new single-family construction (e.g., an accessible ground floor bedroom and bathroom).

Figure 6: Disability by Type



Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

Elderly

Elderly persons often have fixed incomes and may 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 modifications to enable them to remain in their homes. They may also need assistance in the form of a part-time or live-in caretaker.

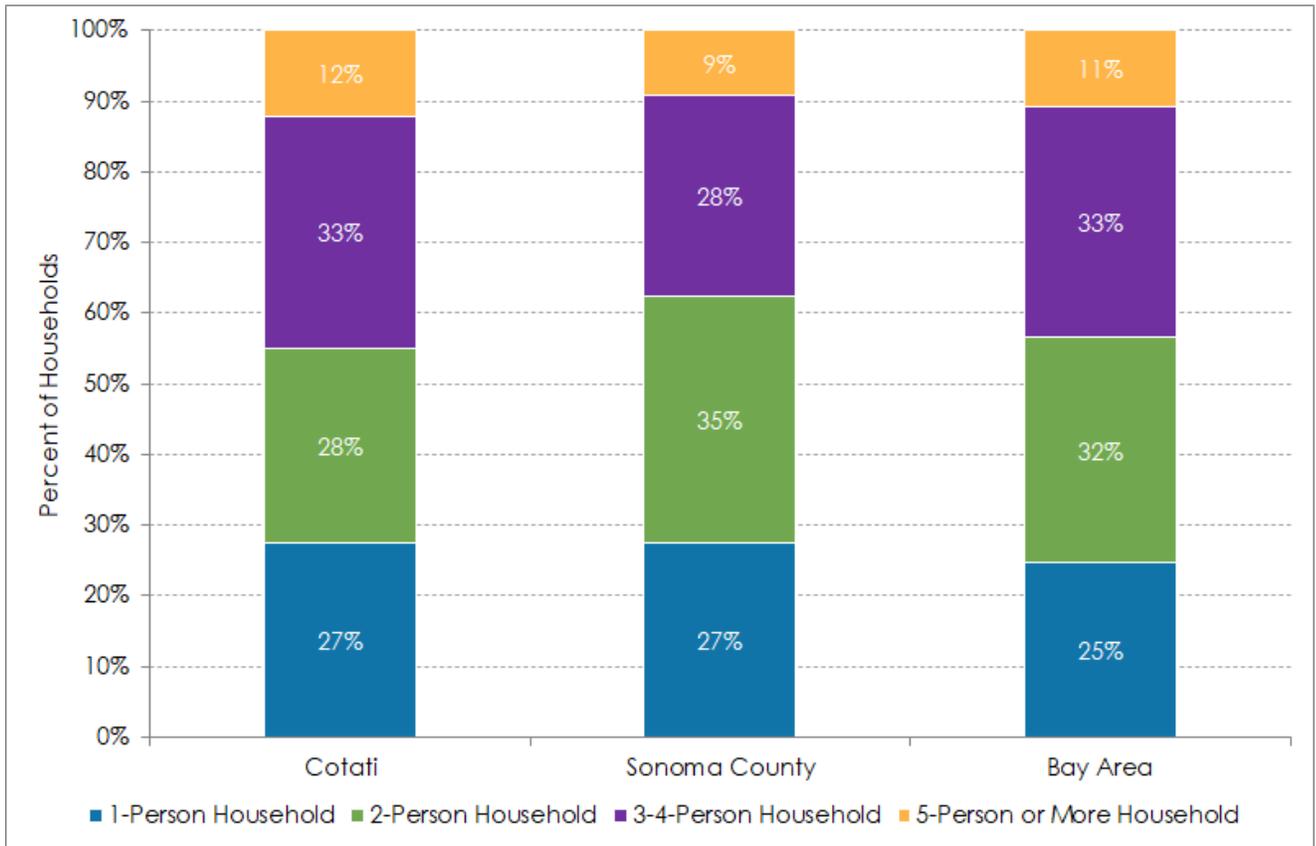
According to the American Community Survey 2015-2019, about 13.1% of Cotati's population is aged 65 and above, lower than the County share of 20.7%. However, 9.9% of the population is in the 55-64 age group, which is projected to increase the population of elderly residents by the end of the Housing Element period.

Large Households

Household size can be influenced by a lack of affordable housing options, an increase or decrease in family formations, families leaving an area, and cultural tradition of living with family members reaching retirement age.

In Cotati, the average household size of 2.72 is larger than the County (2.58). In Cotati, the most common household size is 3-4 people (32.8%), followed by 2-person (27.6%) and 1-person (27.4%) households, as seen in Figure 7. Households with five or more people make up 12.2% of the households. Compared to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) region, Cotati has a similar share of single-person households (27.4% compared to 25% regionally) and 5+ person households (12% vs. 11%).

Figure 7: Households by Household Size



Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

Female-Headed Households

Single parent households, particularly households headed by women, often have lower incomes and higher living expenses, often making the search for affordable, decent and safe housing more difficult. In addition to difficulties faced by these households in finding and maintaining affordable housing, these households also typically have additional special needs relating to access to day care/childcare, health care and other supportive services.

State law requires an analysis of female-headed households to ensure adequate childcare and job training resources are provided. Of Cotati's 2,758 total households, 14.3% are female-headed; of those, 50.3% had children at home. Of all female-headed households, 17.5% are below the poverty level.

Farmworkers

Farmworkers play a key role in the operation and delivery of the state's food system. Despite this, farmworkers face a number of economic disadvantages compared to the national population as a whole. Farmworkers tend to have low incomes, higher risk of living in poverty, and limited access to safe, healthy, and affordable housing choices. In 2012, 75% of farmworkers worked alongside or lived with family members according to HCD.

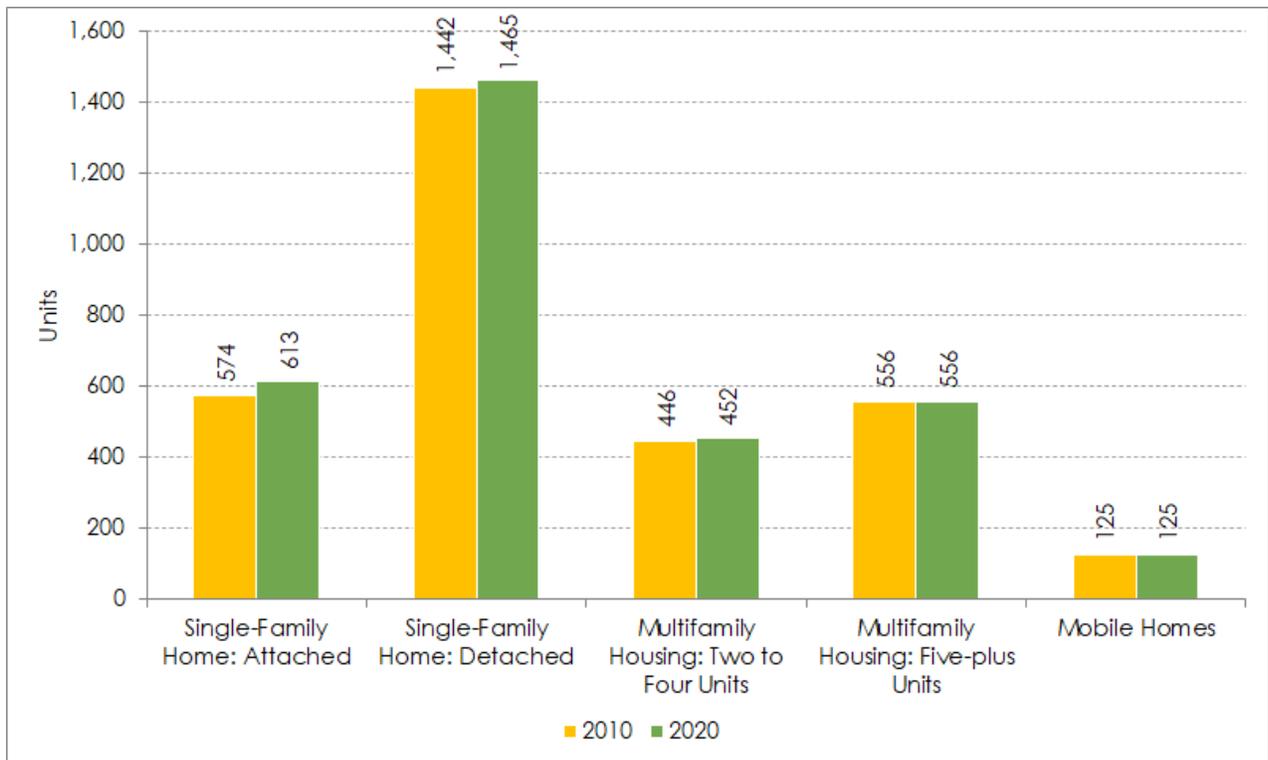
The 2015-2019 ACS identified 153 Cotati residents employed in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations; this represents 3.8% of the Cotati workforce.

1.10 CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING STOCK

Type

Cotati’s housing stock consists primarily of single-family units (64.7%), compared to 57% for the greater Bay Area region. As shown in Figure 8, in comparison to the region, the City has a smaller proportion of multifamily units and a similar proportion of mobile homes. However, the share of single-family zoning in Cotati is the lowest among incorporated jurisdictions in Sonoma County according to Generation Housing’s 2022 report, *State of Housing in Sonoma County*.

Figure 8: Housing Type Trends



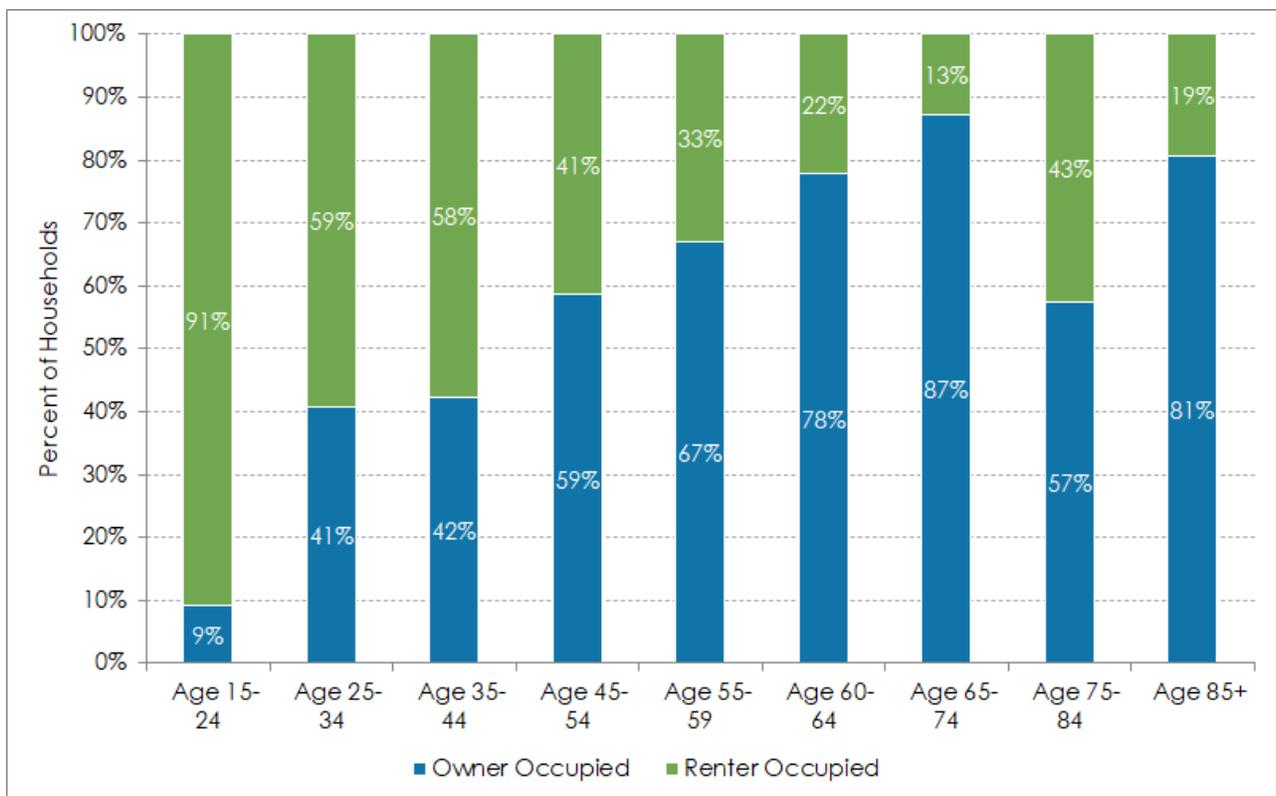
Source: California Department of Finance, E-5

Tenure

Housing security can depend heavily on housing tenure (i.e., whether homes are owned or rented). Cotati has the same rate of owner-occupied homes as the ABAG region at 56%. The City's housing stock consists of 2,758 occupied units, with 1,563 owner-occupied and 1,195 renter-occupied units.

The high cost of housing in the San Francisco Bay Area has made homeownership difficult for younger buyers and seniors on fixed incomes, as indicated in Figure 9 below. Most Cotati households earning below 100% AMI are renters, and the majority of households earning above 100% AMI own their homes. This is consistent with trends found across the County and the larger ABAG region.

Figure 9: Housing Tenure by Age



Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

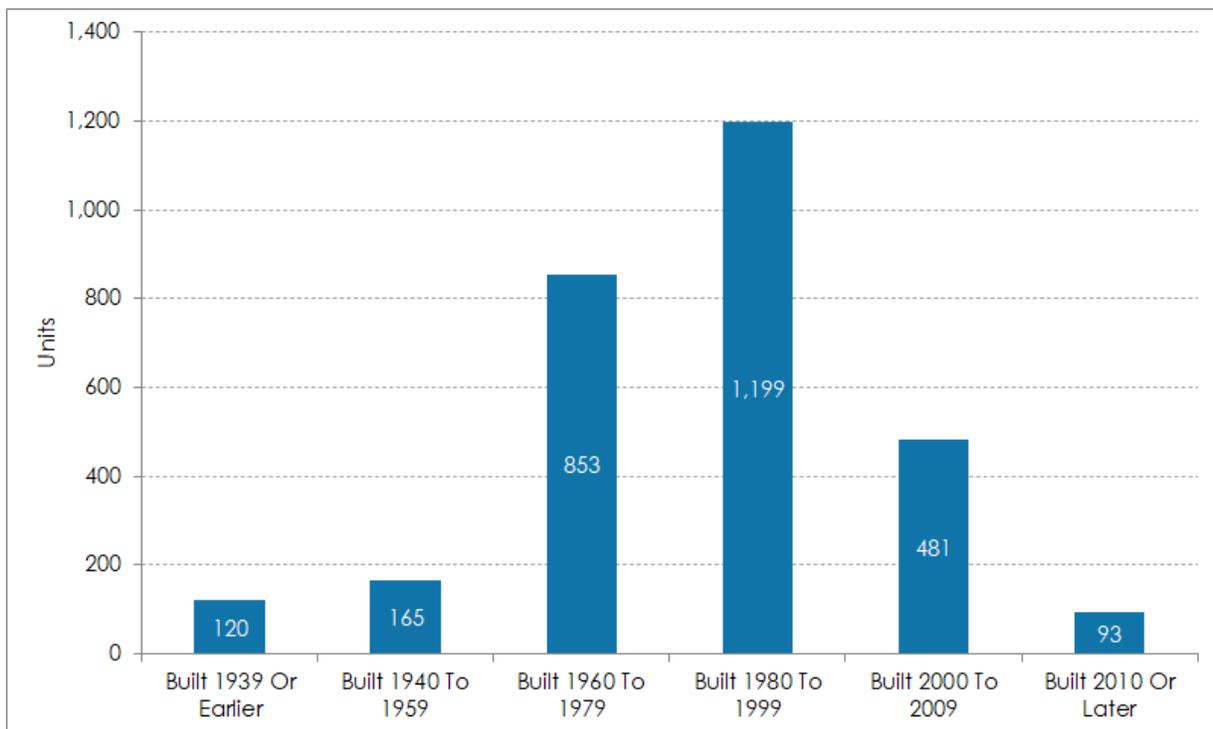
Age and Condition

The age of Cotati's housing stock is consistent with trends of the greater Bay Area region. While some homes date back to the early twentieth century, most of the housing stock was built during the housing booms of the 1960s to 1990s.

Substandard housing issues are of limited concern in Cotati, with only 1.2% of owned units and 0.8% of rented units with a deficient kitchen, and 1.2% of owned units and no reported rentals with plumbing issues. However, with over 1,000 units reaching 50 years of age during the next 8 years, rehabilitation needs will likely increase during this planning period.

The City's Code Enforcement Division estimates that there are 10 single-family homes in need of rehabilitation over the planning period, and zero in need of demolition. These properties are primarily occupied by seniors and people with disabilities who may need assistance to bring residences up to code. The City's multifamily housing stock is generally well-tended, and no units in need of rehabilitation or demolition within the planning period were identified.

Figure 10: Housing Units by Year Structure Built



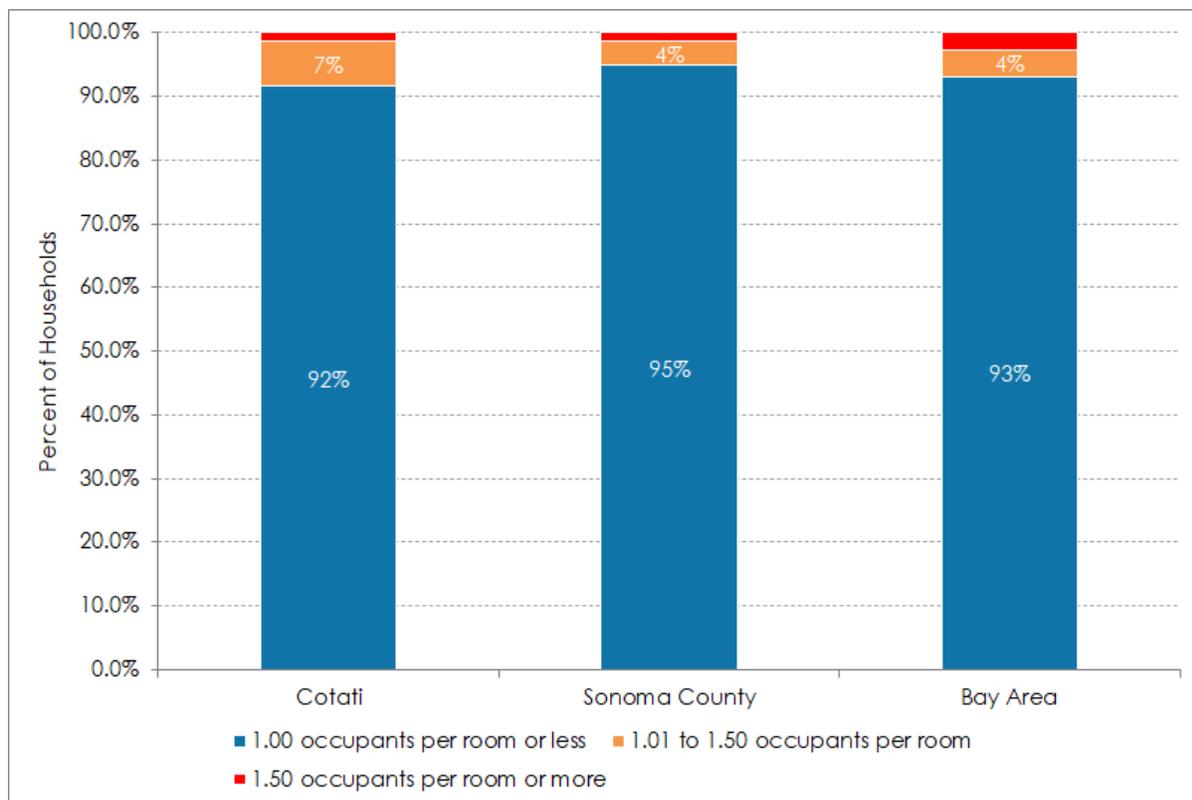
Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

Overcrowding

The ACS definition of overcrowding is more than 1.0 occupants per room, where the number of rooms includes all except kitchens, bathrooms, and hallways. Severe overcrowding is defined as more than 1.5 occupants per room. By these definitions, there are 195 overcrowded households and 37 severely overcrowded households in Cotati.

The rate of overcrowding in Cotati (8%) is higher than the County (5%) and ABAG region (7%). As in other cities, rental units in Cotati are more likely to be overcrowded and severely overcrowded than owner-occupied units, with 17.8% of rental units experiencing overcrowding compared to 1.3% of owned homes. In addition to the high cost of housing, this may be partially attributed to off-campus residences of Sonoma State University students.

Figure 11: Overcrowding Severity



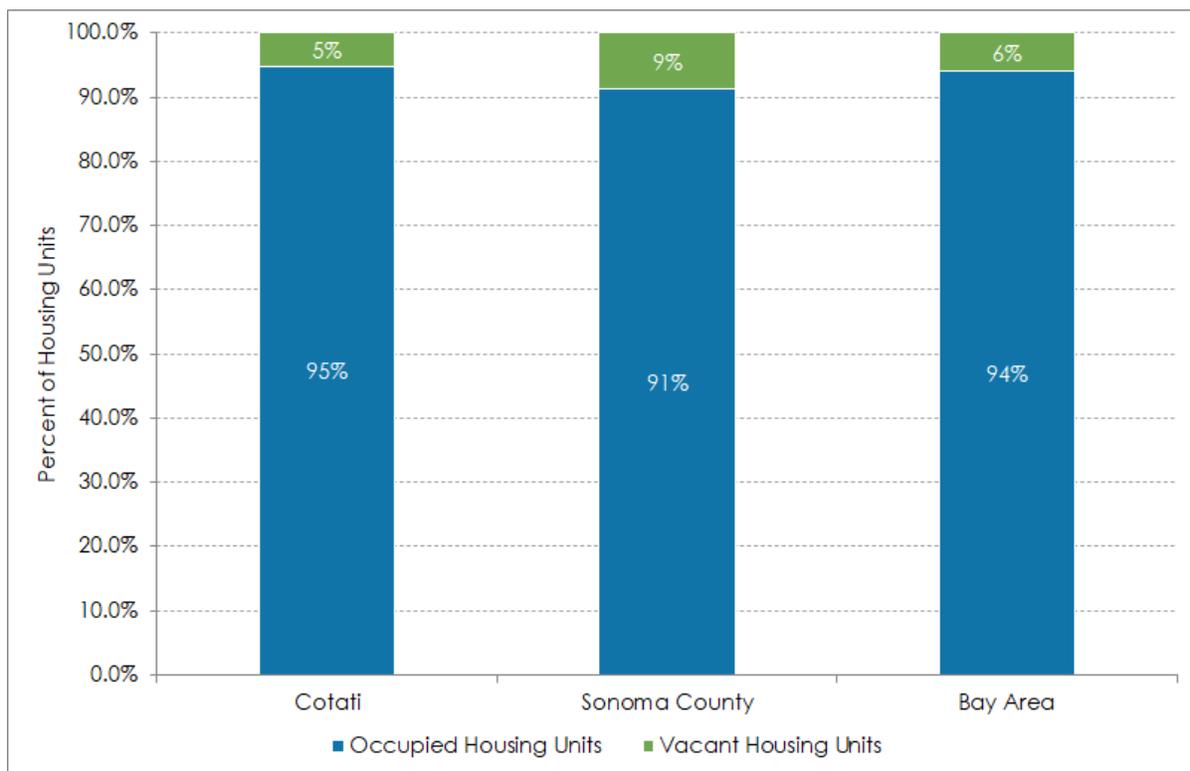
Source: U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, *Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, 2017*

Vacancy

Vacancy trends in housing are analyzed using a “vacancy rate” which establishes the relationship between housing supply and demand. For example, if the demand for housing is greater than the available supply, then the vacancy rate is low, and the price of housing will most likely increase. Additionally, the vacancy rate indicates whether the City has an adequate housing supply to provide choice and mobility. A “vacancy” occurs for several reasons; a home may be listed for sale or being prepared for a tenant. Homes can also be held for seasonal or occasional use by their owners. HUD standards indicate that a vacancy rate of 5% is sufficient to provide choice and mobility.

Cotati’s vacancy rate is 5%, with about 153 vacant units. A lower share (15%) of vacant units are for recreational, seasonal, or occasional use compared to the entirety of Sonoma County (48% of vacant units). This indicates that vacancy rates in Cotati are less influenced by the presence of short-term vacation rentals.

Figure 12: Occupancy Status



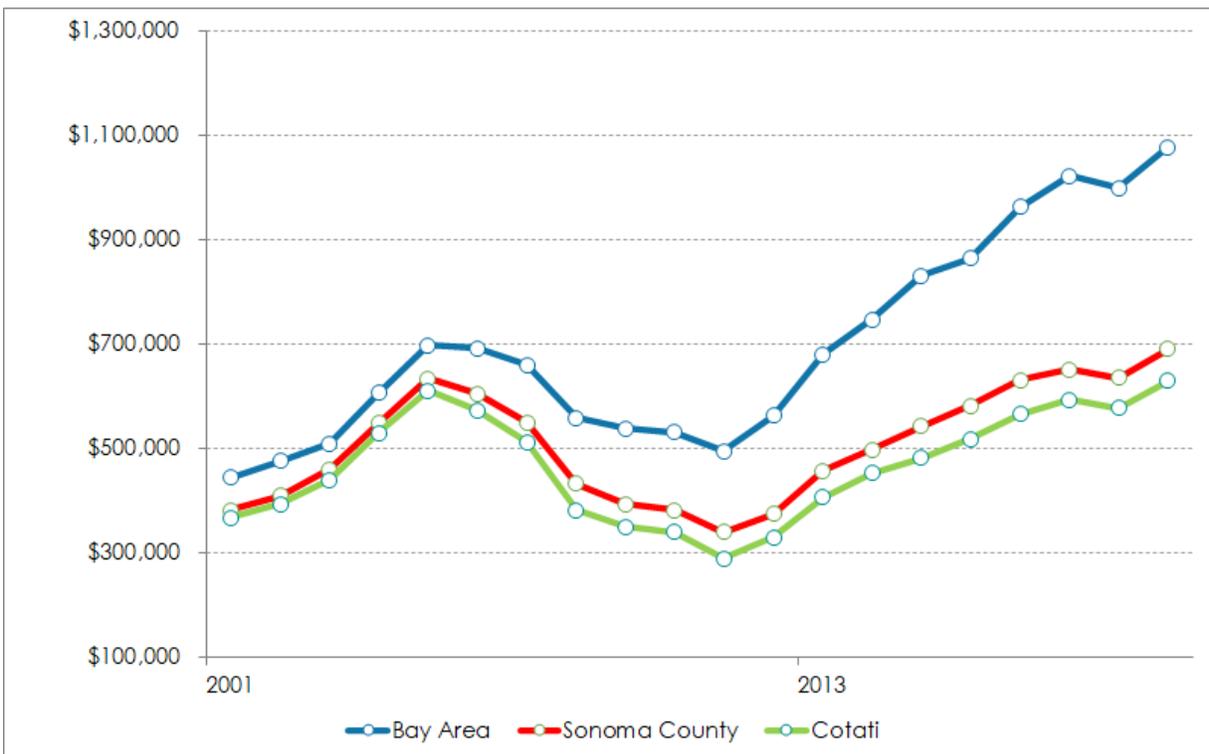
Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019

Prices

While Cotati's median home price trends closely match those of the larger region, purchase prices are consistently lower than the region according to the 2001-2021 Zillow Home Value Index (Figure 13). In April 2022, the median home value in Cotati hit a new peak of \$753,319. Over the last 20 years, Cotati has ranged between 58% to 83% of ABAG regional median home values.

Despite steady increases in home prices in the past ten years, rents and wages have remained relatively consistent in the last decade; see **Section 4**.

Figure 13: Median Home Values, 2001-2021



Source: Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI), 2001-2021

Preservation of Assisted Units at Risk of Conversion

There are no deed-restricted affordable housing developments within the City with a high risk of conversion to market rate in the next ten years. Programs to assist in the preservation of at-risk housing are discussed in Section 2 and Section 4.

1.11 SUMMARY OF CONSTRAINTS

As discussed in Section 4, governmental and non-governmental constraints directly affect the production of housing in a City. Non-governmental constraints such as land costs and construction expenses can limit the development of affordable housing. Relevant non-governmental constraints include availability of vacant land, the high cost of land and development, and community resistance.

Although financing is readily available for qualified homebuyers, home purchases may be difficult for lower and moderate-income buyers with limited down payments. Homebuyers using conventional financing may also be competing with all-cash offers for homes. These non-governmental constraints affect the cost of development in Cotati and serve as barriers to housing production and affordability.

In addition to non-governmental constraints, policies and regulations at the Federal, State, and local levels can affect housing production. Local governmental constraints such as processing requirements for development applications, design and development standards, density limitations, fees and exactions, and uncertainty associated with obtaining permits can affect the price and availability of housing. Potential governmental constraints in Cotati are explored in Section 4.

1.12 SUMMARY OF FAIR HOUSING ANALYSIS

Assembly Bill 686 (Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, or AFFH) requires state and local agencies to take proactive measures to correct any housing inequalities related to race, national origin, color, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religion, or other protected characteristics. All Housing Elements due on or after January 1, 2021, must contain an Assessment of Fair Housing. Agencies must ensure that their laws and programs affirmatively further fair housing, and that they take no actions that counter those goals.

Under State law, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, means “taking meaningful actions, in addition to combatting discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics.” Agencies must include in their Housing Elements a program that promotes fair housing opportunities while identifying areas of racial/ethnic concentration across the socioeconomic spectrum. In the context of a community’s housing needs, AFFH is not just about the number of housing units needed, but also about where the units are located and who has access to them.

AB 686 enacts new requirements for the Assessment of Fair Housing; this assessment is contained in **Section 4** along with a zoning history of Cotati and allowed housing types. Per HCD Guidance, the analysis assesses enforcement and outreach capacity, segregation and integration patterns, disparities in access to opportunity, disproportionate housing needs including displacement, and concentrated areas of poverty and affluence across racial/ethnic groups.

Data compiled in the Assessment of Fair Housing and Regional Fair Housing Analysis found high-priority challenges to fair housing and contributing factors to equal access to affordable housing in high opportunity areas in the City including:

- Displacement of residents due to economic pressures (rent increases, priced out);
- Lack of affordable units appropriately sized for large families;
- Community opposition;
- Lack of awareness of and funding for fair housing outreach and enforcement;
- Lack of public investment in neighborhoods, including services & amenities.

While it is not uncommon to find enclaves of persons with similar cultural background and values, it is necessary to analyze any area demonstrating racial or economic concentration to ensure that the community is not experiencing disparities in access to opportunities such as education, employment, and amenities. Economic, health and environmental metrics are all considered when determining a community or neighborhood's resources level. The composite score typically used to describe the resource level includes indicators of relative poverty and affluence in three areas:

- **Economic Score**, including indicators such as poverty, employment, median home values, and adult education;
- **Education Score**, including proficiency scores for math & English as well as high school graduation rates;
- **Environmental Score**, including air pollution indicators, traffic density, drinking water contaminants, impaired water bodies, hazardous waste facilities, and pesticides.

An in-depth analysis including an Assessment of Fair Housing is included in **Section 4. Section 2** includes specific policies, programs, and actions to be undertaken by the City to address these areas of concentration and to affirmatively further fair housing. **Section 3** contains the housing sites location information and maps as part of the AB 686 requirement that jurisdictions identify sites throughout the community in a manner that is consistent with their duty to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing.

Ensuring Equitable Zoning Practices

Single-family zoning is exclusionary when it occurs to the exclusion of other types of residential uses. While Cotati has a high proportion (65%) of single-family homes, it coexists with multifamily zoning. AB 686 requires the City to adopt programs to overcome and reverse historic patterns of exclusion, and to identify locations for affordable housing through the AFFH lens.

The approach taken in the 2023 Housing Element to address past exclusionary zoning practices and to affirmatively further fair housing is two-fold.

- First, programs are included that amend the City code to allow for all types of housing, including the multifamily apartments and duplexes that have previously been less common in suburban cities such as Cotati;
- Secondly, the location of potential housing sites to meet Cotati's lower-income RHNA is considered through an equity lens, not only by choosing locations in areas throughout the city but also by including programs to promote the development of missing middle houses, duplexes, triplexes, ADUs, and affordable JADUs in the city's single-family residential neighborhoods.

The Housing Element requires jurisdictions to zone for a variety of types of housing, and programs are included to allow staff-level approval of certain types of housing including low barrier navigation centers and permanent supportive housing in compliance with new state law.

Section 2 includes the specific policies and programs to reverse exclusionary zoning and to affirmatively further fair housing; **Section 3** contains the housing sites location information and maps. Sites to be considered for higher-density housing are included within Moderate Opportunity Areas, currently the highest resource designation in Cotati.

1.13 REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is a requirement of State housing law and is a determination of projected and existing housing needs for all jurisdictions in California. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) conducts the RHNA process every eight years. Every jurisdiction must plan for its RHNA allocation in the Housing Element by ensuring enough sites with appropriate zoning to accommodate their RHNA. The goal is to ensure that local plans have enough appropriately zoned land to accommodate existing and projected housing needs for all income levels for the entire 8-year planning period. Jurisdictions are not expected to build the housing, but they must plan and zone for it.

The RHNA methodology applies several factors to further the objectives of State law and meet the goals of the Plan Bay Area 2050. After a RHNA total is calculated, a social equity adjustment is applied to determine the four income categories. The social equity adjustment is based on household income and access to resources. One of the five objectives of State housing law is to ensure that there is not an overconcentration of households by income group in comparison to the county or regional average. To ensure that the RHNA methodology does not overburden low-income jurisdictions with more low-income households, a social equity adjustment is applied during the Income Group process. Higher income jurisdictions are required to plan for fewer market rate units and more affordable units, while lower income jurisdictions plan for more market rate units and fewer affordable units.

Cotati's RHNA for the period between January 2023 - January 2031 is 234 units, divided between income groups as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cotati Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), 2023-2031

Jurisdiction	Very Low Income (<50% AMI)	Low Income (50-80% AMI)	Moderate Income (80-120% AMI)	Above Moderate Income (>120% AMI)	Total
Cotati	60	34	39	101	234
<i>Source: ABAG Draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031</i>					

While the RHNA is assigned based on the four income categories above, the law also requires that communities plan for the needs of extremely low-income households, defined as those making less than 30% of the County AMI. The housing need for the extremely low-income group is generally considered to be one-half of the very low-income need. This Housing Element utilizes the statutory allowance of a 50/50 split as a framework for dividing the very low-income RHNA of 60 units in half by planning for 30 extremely low-income units and 30 very low-income units. Program actions are included to accommodate any shortfall.

Section 3 provides an analysis of the sites available to meet the City’s assigned RHNA, the Sites Inventory, and any constraints to development of the listed housing sites. Cotati’s entire RHNA can be accommodated on existing sites with appropriate zoning. Additionally, the City is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing and will undertake a strategic rezoning of parcels within its highest resource area (Santero Way Specific Plan Area) to provide more opportunities for housing affordable to the local workforce within areas with higher access to opportunity. Section 3 provides an analysis of the RHNA surplus, the required sites information, and the housing sites inventory.

1.14 2015 COTATI HOUSING ELEMENT REVIEW

Cotati successfully implemented a variety of housing programs in its 2015 Housing Element. An evaluation of the City’s progress toward achieving those programs, including an analysis of the differences between what was projected and what was achieved, provides useful data to determine any new or revised policies and programs for the 2023 Housing Element.

In the 2015-2023 Housing Element Update, the City planned for the expansion of the local housing supply for affordable and market-rate housing as well as maintenance and improvement of the existing housing stock. Implementation programs included:

- Providing adequate sites at a range of densities to accommodate future housing needs;
- Assisting in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of extremely low, very low, and moderate-income households;
- Conserving and improving the existing housing stock through Community Preservation rehabilitation loans and a handy worker program;
- Preserving the affordability of existing homes that were at risk of conversion to market-rate during the planning period;

- Addressing and, where appropriate and legally possible, removing government constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing for all income levels; and
- Promoting housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, familial status, or disability

Progress Implementing Programs

The City has been successful in implementing most of the programs in its 2015 Housing Element. As indicated in Table 3, the City was largely successful in implementing its programs to support new construction, while quantified objectives pertaining to rehabilitation and preservation were unsuccessful. Programs were successful when utilized, and programs that were successful in the 5th Cycle have been amended and carried forward in the 2023 Housing Element. Changes include commitments to supplement direct efforts with robust public and stakeholder engagement to maximize program efficacy. Special needs housing and services were largely successful during the 5th cycle, and special needs continue to be prioritized in the 6th cycle Housing Element. Effectiveness will be enhanced by programs to zone for a variety of housing types and affirmatively further fair housing. See Appendix A for a full list of the City’s implementation programs and their status.

Table 3: Progress in Achieving 2015 Quantified Objectives by Income

Income Group	New Construction Projected/ Actual	Rehabilitation Projected/ Actual	Preservation Projected/ Actual	2015 Quantified Objective	Total Units Realized 2015-2022
Extremely Low - Very Low	30 / 11	6 / 0	37 / 0	36	11
Low	35 / 19	4 / 0		45	19
Moderate	15 / 24	25 / 0	--	71	24
Above Moderate	100 / 82	25 / 0	--	152	82
Total	180 / 136	60 / 0	37 / 0	339	136

Lessons Learned

The City was able to meet a number of its objectives through successful programs, including those that preserved affordable units at risk of market-rate conversion, promoted the development of ADUs/JADUs, and allowed for streamlining of housing in the Neighborhood Urban (NU) Zone to support infill development. The City made progress through other programs that were partially achieved including programs supporting affordable housing development, as planned projects encountered difficulties and delays due to a lack of financing. Not all the programs were successful, as detailed in Appendix A.

The high cost of land and construction has made it a challenge for the City to reach all of its programs and quantified objectives. The market drives the cost of development and due to the high cost of construction and land in Cotati, it can be challenging for developers and

investors to procure land, build units and then sell or lease them at an affordable rate. These non-governmental factors had the largest effect on the success of the City's housing policies and programs.

Other factors that led to poor utilization of some of the programs included a lack of information about and promotion of some of the City's available housing programs such as the utilization of Section 8 vouchers among landlords and residents. Without a focused effort to promote the availability and ease of application for these programs, few residents, property managers, and developers are made aware of them. Additional promotion will help the less successful, yet still applicable programs reach a wider audience, including special needs populations and the providers who serve them, and increase participation.

1.15 PROGRAM CHANGES IN 2023 HOUSING ELEMENT

The 2023 Housing Element update is not a comprehensive "new" Housing Element, but rather an update of the 2015 Housing Element. The focus of the update process has been to keep the programs that are working, adding new policies and programs where community needs have changed or where necessary to comply with new State laws. New or revised goals, objectives, policies, and programs are included to meet changing needs and to incorporate community and stakeholder input. Ongoing policies and programs that have been successful are continued in the Housing Element update; limited-term programs that have already been accomplished have not been carried forward.

Appendix A provides an evaluation of the programs from the 5th Cycle Housing Element and the City's level of success in achieving them.

SECTION II: HOUSING STRATEGY

2.1 HOUSING STRATEGY

This Section contains the City's Housing Strategy for the 2023-2031 Housing Element planning period. State law recognizes the vital role local governments play in the supply and affordability of housing. Each local government in California is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city or county. To ensure adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community, the Housing Element must:

- Identify the agencies and officials responsible for the implementation of the various actions and how 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 homeownership, 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.

The following goals, policies, and programs are designed to address the existing and projected housing needs of the City of Cotati. Each program has one or more individuals, bodies, or agencies responsible for its implementation, along with a potential or committed funding source, and a schedule for its implementation during the 2023-2031 planning period. Programs implemented and not applicable for continuation since the last Housing Element in 2015 have been removed from this document. Unchanged policies and programs are continued as-is; new and amended programs are identified accordingly:

- **Goal H-1 Resilient & Safe Housing**
Conserve and improve the existing housing stock to provide adequate, safe, and decent housing for all Cotati residents
- **Goal H-2 Housing Production**
Provide adequate sites and pursue funding to accommodate the housing needs of all economic segments of the community
- **Goal H-3 Affordable, Attainable, & Accessible Housing**
Expand affordable housing opportunities for lower income households and persons with special housing needs, including seniors, disabled persons, large households, and homeless persons and families
- **Goal H-4 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing**
Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, gender, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, or sexual orientation
- **Goal H-5 Community Engagement**
Ensure public participation in the development of the City's housing policies, and ongoing collaboration with community stakeholders

For each goal, a set of policies and implementation programs is provided to assist the City in attaining the goal. Each implementation program contains the following information:

- Methods to promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or color.
- A concise statement of the specific City actions that will be taken to implement the program.
- Funding source.
- The City department or other agency responsible for implementation.
- Schedule for completion.

The expected results of each program are summarized as quantified objectives in Table 4.

Goal H-1: Resilient & Safe Housing

Conserve and Improve the Existing Housing Supply to Provide Adequate, Safe, and Decent Housing for all Cotati Residents

Policy H-1.1: Encourage housing rehabilitation and preservation to assist in the health, affordability, and vibrancy of neighborhoods. (Source: Previous Policy H 1.1)

Policy H-1.2: Encourage the stabilization and affordability of neighborhoods by assisting with homeownership opportunities. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.2)

Policy H-1.3: Seek all available funding, including CDBG, HOME, BEGIN, and CalHOME, to provide on-going housing rehabilitation and home ownership programs. (Source: New Policy, Previous Program 1-1)

Policy H-1.4: Enforce conformance with local building codes to ensure that housing is safe and sanitary and to minimize hazards to public health and safety. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.3)

Policy H-1.5: Encourage proper maintenance of essential public services and facilities in residential neighborhoods. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.4).

Policy H-1.6 Encourage the preservation and maintenance of mobile home parks. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.7)

Policy H-1.7 Monitor units at-risk of conversion and facilitate conservation or replacement of any assisted housing units that are planned for conversion to market rate rents. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.8)

Policy H-1.8 Require all residential development that receives housing rehabilitation assistance to enter into a covenant, deed restriction, or other mechanism to ensure: 1) the long-term affordability of the housing units, and 2) if the units convert to market-rate, that the City is reimbursed for its financial assistance with the rehabilitation. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.9)

Policy H-1.9: Encourage the development of accessory dwelling units in order to provide additional affordable and attainable market rate rental units in Cotati. (Source: Previous Policy H-1.10)

Policy H-1.10 Continue to expand energy and water efficiency in new and existing residential development to ensure sustainable practices and reduce long-term housing costs. (Source: Previous Policies H-5.1 & H-5.2)

Policy H-1.11 Participate in local and regional programs that provide housing rehabilitation, weatherization, and home ownership assistance. (Source: New Policy, Previous Program 1-1)

Policy H-1.12 Facilitate resident awareness of available housing rehabilitation and home ownership assistance programs by making information on the program available at City Hall and on the City's website. (Source: New Policy, Previous Program 1-1)

Program 1-1 Housing Rehabilitation

(Source: Previous Program 1-1)

Improve neighborhoods and housing by providing opportunities for home ownership and housing rehabilitation through the following activities:

- As funds become available, implement a Housing Rehabilitation Program which provides low interest loans for the rehabilitation of homes owned or occupied by extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income households with an emphasis on assisting extremely low and very low income households. Ensure that the housing rehabilitation program includes provisions for mobile homes and renovations to provide accessibility for disabled persons, to the extent that the funding source allows these types of improvements.
- As funds become available, promote awareness of the housing rehabilitation program through contacting neighborhood groups in residential areas with aging housing stock. Outreach shall include program information as part of code enforcement efforts in cooperation with the Building Department.
- Provide annual funding for a regional or subregional shared planner or grant writer position to prepare funding applications for housing rehabilitation, as budget allows.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* CDBG, HOME, BEGIN, etc.
- *Timeframe:* Seek funding annually; on-going, as funds become available; outreach conducted on an annual basis in the form of publicizing available funding opportunities in the City's newsletter.
- *Geography:* Citywide, prioritizing homes identified in need of rehabilitation

Program 1-2: Home Ownership

(Source: Previous Program 1-1)

Improve neighborhoods and housing by providing opportunities for home ownership by implementing a Home Ownership Assistance Program which provides low interest loans to assist first-time low and moderate income homebuyers in purchasing a home.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* CDBG, HOME, BEGIN, etc.

- *Timeframe:* Seek funding annually; on-going, as funds become available; continue Home Ownership Assistance Program through the City's inclusionary housing program, and conduct outreach to housing developers on including ownership units on a project basis.
- *Geography:* Citywide, low and moderate income households

Program 1-3: Non-Profit and Agency Coordination - Existing Housing Needs

(Source: Previous Program 1-2)

Continue working with and develop new relationships with local agencies, nonprofit housing providers, and local organizations. Participate in an annual discussion on Housing Fair between housing developers, decisionmakers, advocates, and other interested parties in partnership with the County, the subregion, and local organizations such as the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Disability Access, and Legal Aid of Sonoma County.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* CDBG, HOME, BEGIN, etc.
- *Timeframe:* On-going annual meetings and coordination with Sonoma County CDC; participate in Housing Fair annually, and report findings to City Council for direction and/or action.

Program 1-4: Capital Improvement Program

(Source: Previous Programs 1-3 & 2-5)

As part of the annual review of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), determine priorities for capital improvement projects required to maintain the community's aging or nonexistent infrastructure, particularly located in Lower Resource Areas designated in California Opportunity Area Maps. Review of the CIP shall also include verification that areas needing improvement are scheduled for funding to address these needs at a specific time in the future.

Additionally, the Capital Improvement Program shall ensure that infrastructure improvements in Lower Resource Areas improve the circulation and connectivity of the urban fabric to grant all Cotati residents opportunity and mobility. This will be accomplished through improvements scheduled in the Downtown Specific Plan Area, South Sonoma Business Park, and West Cotati Gravenstein Commercial Corridor, with projects improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to 49 affordable units planned within the West Cotati Gravenstein Commercial Corridor.

The City shall continue to prioritize lower-income housing development for water and sewer expansion, consistent with Government Code 65589.7 or its successor. Following adoption, provide the Housing Element Update to the City's water and sewer providers (e.g., the water and sewer division of the Public Works Department).

- *Responsibility:* Community Development and Public Works Departments
- *Funding:* General Fund and available funding for CIP projects
- *Timeframe:* Annually with CIP update

- *Geography:* Citywide, emphasis in specific plan areas within the western side of the City designated as Low Resource by TCAC Resource Map including aforementioned specific plans and PDA areas; adjacent to existing and planned affordable housing developments

Program 1-5: Preservation of Affordable Housing

(Source: Previous Programs 1-5, 1-6, 1-7)

To facilitate the preservation of both deed-restricted and other existing affordable housing, and protect residents from displacement, the City will:

- Maintain an updated inventory of affordable housing units, including rental and ownership units, that identifies the number of units by bedroom size and affordability level, funding/affordability source, and expiration date of affordability.
- Continue to monitor affordable housing developments with expiring deed restrictions, facilitate the acquisition of expiring properties, and conduct outreach to property owners.
- Monitor the status of publicly-assisted projects that may become “at risk” of losing affordable housing price restriction through personal contact by City staff with property owners and/or their representatives at least annually. Prior to the end of the 6th Cycle, staff will outreach to the property owners of all units at risk of expiring by 2038.
- When an affordable housing development is at-risk of converting, assist the owners in identifying resources, including available funding, for the continued provision of affordable units.
- Monitor affordable housing developments at risk of converting to market-rate, and specify actions to take by the City within sufficient time prior to expiration of deed-restriction.
- Upon receipt of notice of a proposed conversion of assisted affordable housing, the City will contact qualified entities as identified by HCD and provided within the Housing Element, and encourage their involvement in the acquisition of the units.
- The City and partner organizations will work with property owners of at-risk units and provide them with education regarding tenant rights and conversion procedures. The City and partner organizations will also provide information regarding Section 8 rent subsidies through HUD (special vouchers for existing tenants in Section 8 projects), the Sonoma County Housing Authority, and other affordable housing opportunities in the region.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* City of Cotati Affordable Housing Fund, Sonoma County Community Development Commission and HCD Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program

- *Timeframe:* On-going; proactive outreach around preservation notice law on an as-applicable basis to both property owners and residents no less than three years before the expiration of deed-restrictions.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 1-6: Preservation of Mobile Home Parks

(Source: Previous Program 1-6)

To facilitate the preservation of mobile home parks and protect residents from displacement, the City shall:

- Maintain an updated inventory of mobile home parks, that identifies the number of units by bedroom size.
- Educate residents and park owners to facilitate resident purchase of mobile home parks with information on funding sources such as HCD’s Mobile home Park Rehabilitation and Resident Ownership Program (MPRRP).
- Coordinate with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to support the preservation of mobile home parks.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* City/HCD Mobile Home Park Resident Ownership Program
- *Timeframe:* Continue to support mobile home park residents and owners, and distribute information about the program to mobile home residents by October 2023 and apply for MPRROP Grant during the planning period, when funds are available and resident interest exists. The City shall conduct direct outreach to mobile home park residents at least twice per Housing Element planning cycle and provide MPRROP program information on the City’s website. Affordability information updated within 6 months of adoption of this Housing Element update; maintenance of inventory is on-going.
- *Geography:* Existing mobile home parks, primarily along West Sierra Avenue

Program 1-7: Essential Housing Bond Financing Program

(Source: New Program, addresses local and regional needs and priorities)

In partnership with a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and non-profit asset manager, seek to utilize tax exempt bonds to fund: (1) the acquisition of existing market-rate multi-family buildings and restrict future rents to be affordable to households that earn extremely low to moderate incomes, and/or (2) the construction of new deed-restricted affordable housing. In order for asset managers to access these types of bonds, Cities must join a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and authorize the JPA to issue these bonds on behalf of the City. The asset manager then purchases the multi-family buildings or initiates new development, using only money from the bond financing, and sets the rents to be affordable to low to moderate income households. Municipal ownership reduces or eliminates the property tax burden and reduces the financing

interest costs due to the tax-exempt bond, reducing the carrying cost of the property and allowing the reduced rents to be realized.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* Housing Fund
- *Timeframe:* Establish JPA structure or join existing JPA by December 2023
- *Geography:* Citywide, existing and prior multifamily residential zones

Program 1-8: Residential Building Decarbonization

(Source: Previous Program 5-1 – Energy Conservation and Efficiency)

Promote energy efficiency and conservation in new and existing residential development through:

- Continuing to adopt building and other codes that meet or exceed energy conservation and/or efficiency standards established by the California Energy Code.
- As part of any General Plan or Specific Plan Update, ensure location of higher density residential housing near employment centers, high-quality transit and public services to discourage sprawl and conserve energy resources.
- Continuing to permit and encourage mixed uses and higher densities on in-fill and vacant sites in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) with public serving facilities, such as medical clinics, schools, and grocery stores, to discourage sprawl and encourage short vehicle trips and/or alternative forms of transportation.
- During preparation of specific plans and master plans, encourage location of higher density residential areas within walking distance of transit, employment-generating uses, schools, parks, community centers, and other amenities.
- Pursuing available grant programs to provide financial incentives for smart growth techniques and to provide property owners with low interest loans or grants to encourage weatherization improvements, solar/photovoltaic installations, electric vehicle charging, sustainable growth patterns, energy conservation, and energy efficiency.
- Provide information on residential building decarbonization and energy conservation for public distribution on the City's website, including photovoltaic solar systems, heat pumps, kitchen electrification, electric vehicle (EV) charging, weatherization, drought-resilient landscaping, rainwater storage, and residential "laundry-to-landscape" greywater systems.
- Create a city-wide standard for deployment of electric vehicle charging, based on residential use types.
- Provide clear and transparent guidance on permitting procedures for homeowners and developers interested in implementing residential building decarbonization.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department

- *Funding:* General Fund and Grant Funding
- *Timeframe:* On-going; information available by April 2023 and updated annually
- *Geography:* Citywide, specific plan areas as amended/established

Goal H-2: Housing Production

Provide Adequate Sites to Accommodate the Housing Needs of All Economic Segments of the Community

Policy H-2.1 Ensure that adequate land designated for residential and/or mixed-use development is available to accommodate the City's fair share of ABAG's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and monitor on an annual basis to ensure continual compliance with State law. (Source: Previous Policies H-2.1 & 2.2)

Policy H-2.2 Continue to require that residential development in the NU, NM, CG, and DSP zones meet the minimum density requirements identified in the Land Use Code, and report requests for reduced density on an annual basis. (Source: Previous Policy H-2.3)

Policy H-2.3 While the City is able to accommodate its share of the regional housing need without rezoning during the current Housing Element period, to the extent necessary, the City will consider land use re-designation and promotion of existing innovations like the Cottage Housing Ordinance in order to accommodate development capacity that affirm all other goals of the City's General Plan and maintain Cotati's rural character. (Source: Previous Policy H-2.4)

Policy H-2.4 Ensure that public infrastructure planning activities, including sewer, water, and drainage facilities, accommodate the City's fair share of regional housing needs and that developments including lower income units are granted priority in accordance with Government Code Section 65589.7. (Source: Previous Policy H-2.5)

Policy H-2.5 Ensure that the City's development requirements, including the standards established by the General Plan and Land Use Code, accommodate and provide for available housing sites that are appropriate for a range of income levels and housing types, including housing to accommodate special needs populations. (Source: Previous Policy H-2.6)

Policy H-2.6 Encourage mixed use development, including residential and live/work uses in commercial and office areas where the viability of the non-residential activities would not be adversely affected. (Source: Previous Policy H-2.7)

Policy H-2.7 Require housing developments to provide housing units at a range of affordability levels to assist in meeting the City’s housing needs as required by Chapter 17.31 of the Land Use Code. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.8)*

Policy H-2.8 Continue to address the impacts of large-scale commercial and office projects on housing needs through the affordable housing requirements established by Chapter 17.31 of the Land Use Code. Prioritize workforce housing developments and inclusionary units dedicated to lower and moderate-income workers. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.9)*

Policy H-2.9 Continue to facilitate, and encourage, the construction of accessory dwelling units pursuant to the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance, Cottage Housing Ordinance, and pursuit of “affordable by design” missing middle housing such as junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) and cohousing. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.10)*

Policy H-2.10 Facilitate modular, factory-built housing units on permanent foundations in residential zoning districts and a variety of housing types. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.11)*

Policy H-2.11 Encourage housing development on existing infill sites in order to efficiently utilize existing infrastructure. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.12)*

Policy H-2.12 Assist in the development of affordable housing, particularly extremely low and very low income units, through the use of in-lieu affordable housing funds as well as CDBG and HOME funds, when available. *(Source: Previous Policy H-2.13)*

Program 2-1: Adequate Housing Sites

(Source: Previous Program 2-1)

Continue to maintain an inventory of vacant and underdeveloped residentially designated land and, for sites appropriate for lower income and special needs development, identify the parcel number, parcel size, zoning designation, general plan designation, and allowed density with a density bonus for affordable units. Ensure that the inventory is available for public distribution at City Hall and on the City’s website. Update the inventory on an annual basis to:

- Remove any parcels that have been developed and ensure that the remaining parcels are adequate to accommodate the City’s fair share of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation.
- Identify additional high-density sites for lower income development if a short-fall of available sites to accommodate the City’s very low- and low-income allocation occurs. Note: The City currently has an excess of available parcels appropriate for very low- and low-income development.
- The City shall create and maintain a list of additional sites with appropriate zoning that could be added to the City’s Sites Inventory if and when an analysis provided

- through the Annual Progress Report indicates that sufficient sites may not exist to accommodate the City's remaining RHNA, by income level, for the planning period.
- To ensure sufficient residential capacity is maintained to accommodate the RHNA for each income category, staff will develop and implement a formal, ongoing (project-by-project) administrative evaluation procedure pursuant to Government Code Section 65863 within six months of adoption of the Housing Element. The evaluation procedure will track the number of extremely low-, very low-, low-, moderate-, and above moderate-income units constructed to calculate the remaining unmet RHNA. The APR will serve to document this evaluation and the evaluation procedure will also track the number of units built on the identified sites to determine the remaining site capacity, by income category, and will be updated as developments are approved. The Sites Inventory may be updated every year as the Annual Progress Report (APR) is completed, and the APR with the updated inventory will be available on the City's website.
 - No project approval or other action that reduces the density or development capacity of a site shall be undertaken unless sufficient remaining sites are available (or additional adequate sites are identified) to meet the City's RHNA obligation prior to approval of the development. Alternate sites shall be made available within 180 days of approval of the development, as required by Senate Bill 166. Identification of the replacement sites, and any necessary actions, to make the site(s) available, will be adopted prior to (or concurrent with) the approval of the development.
 - *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
 - *Funding:* General Fund
 - *Timeframe:* On-going; maintain a dynamic inventory of Housing Element sites by reviewing by April of each year and amending the list as needed; establish administrative evaluation procedure within six months of Housing Element adoption; ensure adequate alternative sites within 180 days of any project approval incurring net loss of Housing Elements sites capacity.
 - *Geography:* Citywide

Program 2-2: Streamlining Housing Development

(Source: Previous Program 2-6, amended to address stakeholder feedback and potential governmental constraints)

Stakeholders from the development community identified streamlining, fast tracking, and providing clear development standards and expectations as the primary mechanisms to reduce governmental constraints to residential development. In order to facilitate new residential development, the City shall implement the following actions:

- Continue to provide and encourage an optional pre-application process to meet with representatives from relevant City departments before submitting a development application.

- Continue to provide developers of residential projects opportunities to fast track the permitting process, with priority given to discretionary projects proposing affordable housing levels in excess of the minimum 15% inclusionary BMR housing units.
- Join in regional collaboration efforts that would streamline housing efforts or increase staff capacity. Ensure the City has sufficient staff capacity to streamline development and implement Housing Element programs, including through the use of supplemental contract staffing.
- Develop a written streamlined application process in accordance with SB 35 and SB 330, including the pre-application and the procedure. This process provides a streamlined ministerial approval process to qualified residential and mixed-use development projects. The written procedures and checklists shall be developed and made available at City Hall and on the City's website.
- Eliminate the City's growth management ordinance (GMO) in compliance with SB 330 (2019).
- Expand existing Objective Design and Development Standards for SB 35 projects to apply to multi-family, single-family and mixed-use projects to facilitate the development of at least 20 new units, consistent with the Quantified Objectives.
- Achieve compliance with new State Density Bonus provisions of AB 2345 and any other applicable changes to State law upon adoption of this Housing Element.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing, as projects are proposed; 2024 for City streamlining products and compliance with State law; proactive outreach conducted to housing developers with local and regional presence upon alteration and/or adoption of streamlined application process(es).
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 2-3: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

(Source: Previous Program 2-3)

Incentivize and promote the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) by providing technical assistance and resources for their development and rental through the following actions:

- Maintain ADU webpage with accessible information, a simple application, and contact information for questions about and assistance with accessory dwelling units.
- Partner with regional organizations that provide technical assistance, including site evaluations, for the development of ADUs and JADUs, and landlord/tenant support, such as the Napa Sonoma ADU Center and Homes for Sonoma. Share resources

provided by these organizations, including webinars and technical assistance programs, through the City webpage, newsletter, and social media.

- Facilitate the development of JADUs by developing promotional materials specific to JADUs and their funding and making these available on the City's ADU webpage.
- In partnership with regional organizations, promote and publicize new allowances for ADUs and JADUs to the public, including place-based promotion for locations with higher income eligibility limits for the CalHFA ADU grant program
- Reduce penalties for existing unpermitted units and establish a process to legitimize such units. Promote and publicize this program through City website and social media to encourage people with unpermitted units to bring these homes up to code.
- Annually report out on the City's successes in the production of ADUs and JADUs with the City's APR.
- Review ADU production two years into the planning period and compare with Housing Element projections. If actual production is below the projected level, and the City is not meeting its RHNA targets proportional to the duration of the planning period, review options for providing a small grant program to assist eligible residents with costs associated with permit processing or implement other cost-reducing measures to increase ADU development as the budget allows. Such a grant program shall prioritize ADUs affordable by design to lower and moderate-income residents, as funding allows.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* 2024; as specified for specific follow up actions including review of ADU/JADU production and affordability every two years with programmatic actions to accommodate the shortfall within six months of issue identification (i.e. replacement sites procedure identified in Program 2-1, and in a small grant program); establish process for legitimizing unpermitted ADUs by 2024; report on ADU/JADU production by April of each year; and proactive outreach actions including ongoing maintenance of existing ADU webpage, annual updates from nonprofit partners provided in the City's newsletter, and specific outreach conducted to residents/owners of unpermitted ADUs within three months of the Community Development Department gaining knowledge of such dwellings.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 2-4: Cottage Housing

(Source: New Program)

Continue to promote the Cottage Housing Ordinance established in the 5th Housing Element Cycle to incentivize smaller units and increase the supply of missing middle housing including multiplexes, courtyard cottages, and other such housing types deemed “affordable by design” and allowable under the Cottage Housing Ordinance. The City shall:

- Review the success of the Cottage Housing Ordinance on an annual basis and report unit counts as part of the APR, with a goal of at least 20 Cottage Housing units permitted over the planning cycle.
- Assess programmatic constraints with outreach to developers utilizing the ordinance no less than twice per Housing Element planning period.
- Investigate a supplemental ordinance utilizing SB 10 framework in order to streamline existing provisions of the Cottage Housing Ordinance and expand upon those provisions as deemed appropriate by the City Council.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Annual reporting in the APR; City Council to review SB 10 ordinance by December 2025
- *Geography:* Applicable zones as identified by Cottage Housing Ordinance and Council findings

Program 2-5: Continuum of Care and Crisis Response

(Source: Previous Program 2-4)

The City will work through the Continuum of Care and County to support funding for the provision of emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing to provide housing for persons experiencing and at-risk of homelessness. The City shall continue participation in the mental health crisis response (SAFE) Program, or a similar program, to defer police calls to an alternative response from mental health professionals.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department, Police Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 2-6: Santero Way Rezoning to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

(Source: New Program, addresses identified housing needs and fair housing)

In order to increase residential development in Moderate Resource areas and near amenities, the City will rezone sites within the Santero Way Specific Plan Area to increase residential capacity through Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) or a similar zone to allow more opportunities for residential development at or above the City’s default density. This includes 104 units identified in the City’s development pipeline. (Note: any prospective rezoning under this program is independent of the Housing Element’s site identification for accommodation of the 6th Cycle RHNA).

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* Regional Early Access Planning (REAP) Grants and General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Rezoning completed by January 31, 2026
- *Geography:* Santero Way Specific Plan Area

Program 2-7: Support Development of Proposed Projects

(Source: New Program, addresses housing needs and RHNA)

In order to ensure pending and approved projects will be available for occupancy within the planning period, the City will proactively support the processing, approval, and development of these projects (See Table 8). Specifically, the City will provide automatic fee subsidies and/or in-kind services valued at up to \$25,000 for 100% affordable housing developments that comply with the City’s adopted development standards, offer automatic fee deferrals until occupancy for all residential units, streamline permit processing by automatically moving these projects to the front of the queue, and proactively approve requests for extensions of approved entitlements on these sites as permitted by law. Additionally, the City will rezone parcels for the “Cotati Village” project (APNs: 144-050-009 & 046-286-021) to remove the unused PD designation and facilitate the proposed project on this site.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Support development on pipeline projects beginning in 2023, continuing throughout the planning period
Rezone Cotati Village site by December 2023
- *Geography:* Citywide; rezoning for Cotati Village

Goal H-3: Affordable, Attainable & Accessible Housing

Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities for Lower Income Households and Persons with Special Housing Needs, including Seniors, Disabled Persons, Developmentally Disabled Persons, and Homeless Persons and Families

Policy H-3-1: Ensure that the City’s development standards encourage development of a range of housing types, including multifamily, mixed use, high density residential, accessory dwelling units, cottage housing units, and single-family units; implement objective design and development standards in triannual building code review; and incentivize production of lower income housing. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.1)

Policy H-3-2: Provide incentives for discretionary affordable housing development that address community priorities, including density bonuses, expedited processing, relaxation in development standards through the use of

concessions and incentives, and either reduction, delay, or waiver of fees when financially feasible. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.2)

Policy H-3-3: Continue to provide density bonuses to eligible projects as required by Government Code Section 65915, including projects that meet the minimum amount of total units affordable to extremely low, very low and low income households or provide units restricted to occupancy for senior households. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.3)

Policy H-3-4: Seek and utilize available County, State and Federal programs and other funding sources that provide housing opportunities for extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income and special needs households. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.6)

Policy H-3-5: Encourage housing for large and intergenerational families, including through the promotion of accessory dwelling units. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.7)

Policy H-3-6: Continue to facilitate accessible universal design in new housing development and eliminate further barriers to safe and accessible housing for people with disabilities. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.8)

Policy H-3-7: Coordinate with regional and local service groups to facilitate linkages between at-risk individuals and families, and organizations that provide support services, such as rapid re-housing programs, house share programs, and services for the homeless. (Source: Previous Policy H-3.9)

Program 3-1: Zoning for a Variety of Housing Types

(Source: Previous Program 3-1, Addresses Government Code 65583 and 65583.2)

As part of development project review and processing, provide incentives for affordable housing that addresses communities priorities, including housing affordable to extremely low income households, and special needs housing, including: density bonuses, expedited processing, relaxation in development standards (e.g., reduced minimum lot sizes or setbacks, increased height limitations, reduced open-space requirements, reduced parking requirements), and either reduction, delay, subsidy or waiver of fees when financially feasible, and fast-tracked applications. Incentives shall include those identified above and by the Land Use Code and this Housing Element.

The City will review all City Zoning Codes and plans to determine if changes are needed to comply with State laws related to transitional housing, supportive housing, group homes, Low Barrier Navigation Centers, and Accessory Dwelling Units.

City staff will bring forward Municipal Code amendments to address recent changes to State law including, but not limited to the following:

- Allow Permanent Supportive housing, as defined in Government Code Section 65650, to be a by-right use in all zones where multifamily and mixed-uses are permitted by December 2023. (AB 2162)
- Allow Low Barrier Navigation Centers to be a by-right use in zones where multifamily and mixed-uses are permitted, including the nonresidential zones where multifamily is permitted, by December 2023. (Government Code 65660)
- Allow employee housing consisting of no more than 36 beds in group quarters (or 12 units or less) designed for use by a single family or household to be treated as an agricultural use by December 2023, as required by CA Health and Safety Code Section and 17021.6.
- Allow the development of JADUs within all single-family dwellings, including those in the NM and NU zones, and ensure all ADU/JADU requirements are compliant with State law by December 2023.
- Allow Residential Care Facilities for 7 or more clients as a permitted use in residential zones, subject only to clear, transparent, objective standards by December 2023.
- Amend Density Bonus ordinance for consistency with Government Code 65915, as amended by AB 2345, AB 2334, and any other applicable changes to State Density Bonus Law, including updated parking and height standards by December 2023.
- Amend the City's Zoning Code to permit manufactured homes in the same manner, in the same zones, and only subject to the same requirements as other single-family residential uses by December 2023.
- Amend the City's Zoning Code to use the maximum parking requirements in Government Code Section 65915 for all multifamily projects without the need for any developer request by December 2023.
- Amend parking requirements and management standards for emergency shelters pursuant to State law, including AB 139, by December 2023.
- The City will complete amendments to Specific Plans to ensure compliance with State laws related to transitional housing, supportive housing, group homes, Low Barrier Navigation Centers, and Accessory Dwelling Units by June 2024.
- The City will allow developments by right of at least 20 units per acre pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2(i) when 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower-income households on sites identified to accommodate the lower income RHNA that was previously identified in past Housing Elements by January 2026.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund

- *Timeframe:* Land Use Code revisions adopted in 2023; amend remaining plans regulating land use by June 2024; complete required rezonings by January 2026
- *Geography:* Applicable zones citywide

Program 3-2: Funding for Affordable and Special Needs Housing

(Source: Previous Program 3-3)

Continue to seek available funding for lower income and special needs housing to provide affordable housing and special needs housing that addresses the City's priorities and the Quantified Objectives for 58 new affordable units. Funding for housing shall include the following actions:

- Support applicants of discretionary projects for County, State, Federal, or other funding applications for affordable (extremely low, very low, and low income) and special needs (seniors, homeless, at-risk of homelessness, large households, disabled persons, developmentally disabled persons, female-headed households, agricultural workers etc.) housing programs, including the Affordable Housing Innovation Program funds, BEGIN, CalHome, Emergency Housing and Assistance Program Capital Development, Housing Related Parks Program, Low Income Housing Tax Credits Multifamily Housing Program - General and Supportive Housing Components, Predevelopment Loan Program, and Transit-Oriented Development Housing Program. Continue to prioritize support of applications for discretionary projects that provide a significant percentage of units to serve the City's extremely low income, very low income, transitional/supportive, senior, or large family housing needs.
- Continue the Housing Fund, with contributions collected from private and public sources to implement and/or supplement the City's housing programs. Use the Housing Fund to make housing available to very low to moderate-income Cotati residents, with an emphasis on very low and low income units for individuals and large families, affordable senior housing, and transitional/supportive housing.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department, Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC)
- *Funding:* Housing Fund and/or various County, State, Federal or other funding sources
- *Timeframe:* On-going, with annual application for County CDBG and HOME Funds and other state and federal funds, when appropriate and available; proactively conduct outreach to developers of projects within the City on a project basis, and outreach to at least three regional developers actively building units under the prioritized criteria.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 3-3: Maintain Adequate Staff

(Source: Previous Program 3-6)

Continue to maintain adequate staff in the Community Development Department to process and review housing development applications in a timely manner and to implement the housing programs contained in this Element, through the following actions:

- Coordinate with ABAG/MTC, the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, or other regional partners to supply contract planners and supplemental staff services as needed to facilitate the production, protection, monitoring, and preservation of housing in the City.
- Formalize the role of Housing Administrator or Coordinator as a duty of in-house staff and/or a third-party administrator, as funding allows.
- Augment staff capacity with consultants as deemed necessary to execute City Housing goals.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund and any available grant funds for housing programs
- *Timeframe:* On-going
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 3-4: Housing Choice Vouchers

(Source: Previous Program 3-7 - Tax-Exempt Financing)

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federal subsidy program that helps families afford market-rate, private rental housing. Furthermore, landlords housing Section 8 tenants benefit from federally guaranteed rental income. Under State law (SB 329 and SB 222), landlords in California are legally required to accept rental applications from applicants using Section 8 and VASH vouchers and other forms of rental assistance.

The City shall continue to require developers utilizing tax-exempt financing to include language in agreements with the City permitting persons and households eligible for HUD Section 8 rental assistance or Housing Voucher Folders to apply for below-market-rate units provided in the development.

The City shall provide information on the City's website regarding the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, including income eligibility, landlord resources, and a link to the Section 8 application hosted by the Sonoma County Community Development Commission.

The City shall monitor the status of the Section 8 waiting list on a quarterly basis and issue a citywide notification via the City's mailing list upon periodic opening of the waiting list, with a goal of reaching 100% of qualifying households.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund and any available grant funds for housing programs

- *Timeframe:* On-going; quarterly monitoring
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 3-5: Review Processing Fees

(Source: Previous Program 3-8)

Pursue use of Housing Fund dollars to subsidize the development impact fees of extremely low, very low, and low-income units, where the City fell short of 5th Cycle RHNA targets.

Ensure compliance with SB 330 (Housing Accountability Act), and adherence to streamlining deadlines, thereby reducing the overall cost of housing developments by mitigating unnecessary delays.

Ensure compliance with AB 602, as detailed in Program 5-4.

Conduct comprehensive review of processing fees and procedures to identify potential constraints to housing development.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund, Housing Fund, and any available grant funds for housing programs
- *Timeframe:* Ensure compliance with SB 330 and AB 602 during fiscal year 2022/23, prior to June 30, 2023; conduct comprehensive review of processing fees by December 2025, and complete beneficial revisions to City fees identified in the study by June 2026.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 3-6: Prohousing Designation

(Source: New Program)

Through addressing constraints to development and fair housing opportunity, the City will investigate the local feasibility to receive the Prohousing Designation from the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Receiving this designation will provide the City an advantage in applications for competitive funding sources, including the Infill Infrastructure Grant and funding from the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program.

The City will review its implemented policies and programs within one year of Housing Element adoption to determine its eligibility for the Prohousing Designation Program. If eligible, the City will apply to receive the Prohousing Designation by 2025.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund and any available grant funds for housing programs
- *Timeframe:* 2025
- *Geography:* Citywide

Goal H-4: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Promote Housing Opportunities for All Persons Regardless of Race, Gender, Age, Marital Status, Ancestry, National Origin, Color, or Sexual Orientation

Policy H-4-1: The City will work to eliminate all unlawful discrimination in housing with respect to age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, ethnic background, disability, medical condition, or other arbitrary factors, so that all residents can obtain decent housing throughout the City. (Source: Previous Policy H-4.11)

Program 4-1: Anti-Displacement Actions

(Source: New Program, Addresses AB 686)

Lower and moderate-income renters are at increased risk of displacement. The City shall take measures to reduce the risk of displacement through the City, especially in areas of increased investment and development, through the following actions:

- Pursue grant opportunities to create a residential rehabilitation program for lower income residents. Work with the Community Development Commission to apply for HOME, CalHome, and CDBG funds, as well as promote Section 504 Home Repair Program loans and grants to provide housing rehabilitation loans and weatherization services for income-eligible households to improve living conditions. Strive to expand application rates by 10% annually throughout the planning period.
- Explore a Condominium Conversion ordinance to limit the loss of rental housing stock, with a goal of conserving 10 rental units that may otherwise be converted as reflected in the City's Quantified Objectives.
- Continue to promote programs for housing stability and eviction prevention. Prepare a directory of trusted community partners willing to promote these programs. Utilize these partnerships to share resources in a culturally sensitive manner and incorporate place-based outreach on a biannual basis in coordination with Program 4-3 (Nondiscrimination & Fair Housing Information) and Program 4-4 (Reasonable Accommodation).
- When implementing Program 1-7 to convert market-rate properties to deed-restricted affordable, prioritize developments subject to a higher likelihood of displacement as determined by existing affordability levels, housing tenure, or special needs.
- The City will exercise preference in deed-restricted affordable housing units for Cotati residents, members of the Cotati workforce, families enrolled in the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District, members of local tribes including the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and employees of Sonoma State University.

This provision will be applied as allowed under State law and subject to the duty of public agencies to affirmatively further fair housing.

- The City will require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code Section 65915(c)(3) when any new development occurs on a site in the Sites Inventory if that site meets any of the following conditions: a) currently has residential uses or within the past five years has had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished; and b) was subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low or very-low income; or c) subject to any form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power; or d) occupied by low or very-low income households. The City will conduct outreach to residents of 100% of nonvacant sites within the City's Sites Inventory that may be replaced by new construction within 90 days of permit application on any given site(s).
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund and Grant Funding
- *Timeframe:* On-going; pursue grant opportunities annually, as funds are available; present condominium conversion action items to Council by end of 2025; identify strategies for place-based outreach in partnership with stakeholders by end of 2025; prioritize developments with higher likelihood of displacement on an ongoing, project basis; establish local preference policy by end of 2024; outreach to residents of nonvacant sites at risk of displacement within 90 days of permit application.
- *Geography:* Citywide, including local non-residents affiliated with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District, local tribal organizations, and Sonoma State University as described above

Program 4-2: Housing Discrimination Complaints

(Source: Previous Program 4-1)

The City shall take measures to distribute information regarding fair housing rights, programs, and complaint procedures through the following actions:

- Refer fair housing complaints to service providers including Legal Aid of Sonoma County and Fair Housing of Sonoma County, which provide free fair housing information and assistance to all residents of Sonoma County.
- Continue to address fair housing issues in participation, through the Urban County consortium of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) or other sources, with Legal Aid of Sonoma County, Fair Housing Sonoma County and Fair Housing of Marin (organizations that provide assistance for housing discrimination complaints and tenant/landlord mediation). This participation will include the cross-jurisdictional annual Housing Fair coordinated by the Napa Sonoma Collaborative and include a broad spectrum of fair housing stakeholders (Program 1-3).

- Since 2019, the City of Cotati has had an established practice responding to landlord complaints that are received from tenants, including potential discrimination issues and concerns. The City's Building Inspector will meet on site with concerned tenants to hear the complaint and concerns, identify any issues related to building code or housing occupancy standards and those regarding landlord/tenant relations or lease agreements. The concerns/issues are directed to the appropriate authority including the Sonoma County CDC, Legal Aid of Sonoma County, and/or Community Development Director for further discussion and evaluation. The City anticipates utilizing this process for 1-2 such complaints per year, or 10-12 times throughout the planning period. The intent of the program is to ensure that discrimination issues are proactively addressed to prevent displacement and that the City's trust relationship with the community is maintained.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Director, overseeing Code Enforcement Division and Building Division
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going; check public counter weekly to ensure that fair housing brochures are available to the public; change information that is available on an annual basis upon changes to fair housing law; City involvement in every case that comes forward, ensuring that grievances are addressed and all aspects of the law are enforced; civil matters referred to Legal Aid of Sonoma County.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 4-3: Nondiscrimination & Fair Housing Information

(Source: Previous Programs 4-2 & 4-3)

The City shall take measures to provide and publicize information regarding fair housing programs, housing rights, and complaint procedures, including the following actions:

- Include nondiscrimination clauses in rental agreements and deed restrictions for housing constructed with City assistance by 2025.
- Require bilingual (English/Spanish) availability of rental agreements in developments constructed with City assistance by 2025.
- Continue to maintain an inventory of existing affordable rental housing and affordable ownership opportunities and programs on the City website.
- Continue to provide information regarding equal housing opportunity laws and the City's equal housing opportunities procedures to the public at City Hall, the Police Department and the City's website. Include information about Fair Housing of Sonoma County and at least 2 other relevant stakeholders including tenant advocacy groups to ensure residents with grievances can connect to the appropriate agencies and services. Update fair housing information annually to include any applicable updates to fair housing law. Proactively outreach on a

biannual basis to special needs communities in coordination with the outreach components of Programs 4-1 and 4-4.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going; bilingual (English/Spanish) availability of rental agreements in developments with City assistance by 2025; affordable housing webpage and equal housing information updated annually.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 4-4: Reasonable Accommodation

(Source: Previous Program 3-4)

Continue to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided for persons with disabilities, including developmental disabilities, through the following actions:

- Ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation are over the counter, fast, and free. Conduct a biannual (every two years) review of the City's regulations, procedures, and processes to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided for disabled persons.
- If barriers to reasonable accommodation are identified, undertake appropriate revisions to address the issue within six months, or prioritize as funding allows. If no reasonable accommodation requests are made in any given two-year period, include a statement of program availability in the City's newsletter and proactive outreach in coordination with local disability rights stakeholders such as the Disability Services & Legal Center (DSLCL).
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Biannual review conducted by April 1.
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 4-5: Limit Code Enforcement Activities

(Source: Previous Program 1-4 - Addresses AB 686)

Continue to prioritize residential code enforcement activities for situations that pose an immediate threat to public health and safety. Such activities do not include minor alterations made to residences without benefit of permit when such alterations are made to accommodate a special need or disability of the resident(s), or for interior alterations made to allow or honor the residents' cultural needs or practices, unless those alterations pose an immediate threat to the safety of the residents or neighborhood. In instances of health and safety requiring significant repair, connect residents and property owners with rehabilitation programs and legal assistance. Ensure that Code Enforcement representatives receive training for cultural sensitivity and allow adequate capacity for services to be conducted.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* Establish Code Enforcement cultural sensitivity training procedures and practices by May 2025
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 4-6: Culturally Appropriate Facilitation and Involvement

(Source: New Program - Addresses AB 686)

Facilitate the involvement of underrepresented residents, businesses, and organizations in all aspects of the planning process, utilizing culturally appropriate approaches to public participation and involvement.

Require affordable housing providers to conduct outreach to historically underrepresented populations, including people of color, when affordable housing programs are being marketed.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going
- *Geography:* Citywide

Goal H-5: Community Engagement

Ensure Public Participation in the Development of the City's Housing Policies

Policy H-5-1: Encourage and facilitate public participation in the formulation and review of the City's housing and development policies. (Source: Previous Policy H-6.1)

Program 5-1: Annual Report

(Source: Previous Program 6-1)

Prepare an Annual Report to the City Council in the format approved by HCD which describes 1) implementation of Housing Element programs to date, 2) the amount and type of housing activity as related to the Housing Element's goals, policies, and programs, 3) an updated summary of the City's housing needs, and 4) other housing information as described in these Goals. Submit this report to the Department of Housing and Community Development by April 1 of each year, and share via the City's newsletter.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund

- *Timeframe:* Provide annual report to City Council in the first quarter of each year and submit to HCD by April 1
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 5-2: Workshops and Public Hearings

(Source: Previous Program 6-2)

Facilitate workshops and public hearings to provide the public, housing developers, and service providers with an opportunity to review and discuss proposed changes to the City's Housing Element. The City shall continue to hold informational presentations on evolving housing regulations and opportunities annually with the APR.

- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going; public workshop on APR annually in March
- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 5-3: Stakeholder Engagement

(Source: Previous Program 3-2 - Planning for Affordable and Special Needs Housing)

In addition to engaging the residents and workforce of Cotati, to engage stakeholders directly involved in housing, the City shall:

- Continue to notify local and regional housing developers about the availability of public lands in compliance with the Surplus Lands Act.
- Participate in housing stakeholder workshops or Housing Fairs that includes housing developers, property managers, community leaders, advocates, and special needs group stakeholders. These workshops are intended to identify potential housing projects, priorities, and funding opportunities. Pursue participation in events with active housing developers, community organizations, and neighboring jurisdictions such as Rohnert Park or other non-entitlement jurisdictions of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission as applicable.
- The Housing Fair will support the ongoing proactive outreach deliverables outlined in AFFH Programs 4-1 to 4-4, to ensure that culturally sensitive and relevant community engagement materials are developed and disseminated in consultation with at least 3 local subject matter experts per year, including but not limited to those listed above. Housing Fair outcomes will be reported to the City Council on an annual basis to affirmatively further fair housing and support program objectives.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going; surplus lands notification on an opportunity basis; participation in Housing Fairs on annual basis.

- *Geography:* Citywide

Program 5-4: Accessible & Transparent Information

(Source: New, Addresses AB 602, SB 319)

The City will increase accessibility and transparency of housing development standards and opportunities and meet the new transparency and development fee requirements of AB 602 and SB 319 by implementing the following actions:

- Post all required information about development standards and fees on the City's website along with relevant information on zoning, development standards, and affordable housing-related ordinances.
- Ensure compliance with AB 602 requirements for new development impact fee studies and publicizing resulting fees.
- Create and publish a summary that identifies the sites on the City's Sites Inventory and make the summary available online in map format. Provide site-specific development information and support whenever possible to provide a clear development process for interested housing developers.
- *Responsibility:* Community Development Department
- *Funding:* General Fund
- *Timeframe:* On-going on project basis; development standards (including AB 602 updates) on website by end of 2024; sites summary and map by end of 2024.
- *Geography:* Citywide

2.2 QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES

One of the requirements of State law (California Government Code Section 65583(b)) is that the Housing Element contain quantified objectives for the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The quantified objectives set a goal for Cotati to achieve based on needs, resources, and constraints. State law recognizes that the total housing needs identified by a community may exceed available resources and the community's ability to satisfy this need. Under these circumstances the quantified objectives need not be, and are not intended to be, identical to the total housing needs.

The quantified objectives shown in Table 4 represent goals. They are estimates based on past experience, anticipated funding levels, and anticipated housing market conditions. The quantified objectives are not designed to be minimum requirements. Rather, they are based largely upon implementation programs that have measurable outcomes. However, the Housing Element contains several policies and implementation programs that reduce barriers and create opportunities for affordable housing. These policies and programs assist in meeting the City's housing needs but are more qualitative in nature and are difficult to quantify.

Table 4: Summary of Quantified Objectives, City of Cotati, 2023-2031

Program Types	Extremely Low-Income	Very Low-Income	Low-Income	Moderate-Income	Above-Moderate Income
New Construction	20	19	19	26	98
Preservation of Affordability	10	10	8	0	0
Rehabilitation	1	1	1	0	0
Conversion	0	0	0	0	0
ADUs/JADUs	12	12	12	4	40
Total	43	42	40	30	138

SECTION III: HOUSING SITES

3.1 CONTEXT

Under Government Code Section 65583(a)(3), the City must identify suitable adequate sites with capacity to fulfill its fair share of regional housing needs, as determined by ABAG’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). These sites can include vacant sites zoned for residential use, vacant sites that allow residential development, and underutilized sites that are capable of being redeveloped to increase the number of residential units. These sites must have the realistic potential for new residential development within the Housing Element planning period. Additionally, jurisdictions may receive credit towards their RHNA for units in planned, approved, and pending residential projects, projected development of accessory dwelling units, and through other adequate alternatives described in Government Code Section 65583.1(c).

Cotati has a RHNA of 234 units, divided among the following income categories:

Table 5: Cotati Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), 2023-2031

Jurisdiction	Very Low Income (<50% AMI)	Low Income (50-80% AMI)	Moderate Income (80-120% AMI)	Above Moderate Income (>120% AMI)	Total
Cotati	60	34	39	101	234
<i>Source: ABAG Draft Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan: San Francisco Bay Area, 2023-2031</i>					

Cotati is meeting its RHNA through the following means:

- Planned, approved, and pending projects projected to develop during the planning period;
- Sites identified in the Sites Inventory, including sites on vacant and non-vacant land;
- Sites identified for rezoning under an Adequate Sites Program;
- Conversion of units from non-affordable to affordable under an Adequate Sites Program Alternative; and
- ADU development projections.

Legislation passed since the last Housing Element update has added more stringent requirements for the Sites Inventory. Assembly Bill 1397 addresses standards for the adequacy of inventoried housing sites, including non-vacant sites and sites that were identified in previous Housing Elements. Senate Bill 166, the “No Net Loss” law, requires a jurisdiction to ensure a Housing Element Sites Inventory maintains capacity to accommodate the RHNA by income group throughout the entire Housing Element planning period. Because of this requirement, this sites inventory includes a 36% buffer for lower-income units and an 190% buffer for moderate-income units, uses realistic affordability and capacity assumptions, and relies on a variety of strategies to ensure the City addresses its housing needs. Additionally,

programs are included within the Housing Element to ensure the City complies with new 'No Net Loss' requirements and maintains sufficient sites in inventory. Pursuant to Chapter 667, Statutes of 2019 (SB 6), the site inventory is also prepared using the standards and electronic forms adopted by HCD. The full site inventory can be found in Appendix D.

3.2 PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT AND RHNA CREDIT

As allowed by Government Code Section 65583.1 and 65583.2(a), Cotati is counting the projected development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and the capacity of planned, approved, and pending residential projects towards their RHNA. After considering these sites, the City is projected to develop 721 units, sufficient units to surpass its entire RHNA allocation. However, these units are not anticipated to meet the RHNA by income level, with an outstanding need for moderate- and lower-income units. Housing sites and adequate sites programs have been identified to meet the capacity for the remaining moderate- and lower-income RHNA and to provide a buffer of unit capacity for No Net Loss considerations.

3.2.1 ADUs and JADUs

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a secondary dwelling unit located on residentially zoned property that has an existing single-family or multifamily residence. Due to their small square footage, ADUs can provide affordable housing options for family members, friends, students, the elderly, in-home health care providers, the disabled, and others. Junior ADUs (JADUs) are even smaller living units that can be built out of existing space in homes and garages. JADUs have independent cooking facilities and outside access, however they may share sanitation facilities within the primary home.

Jurisdictions may count the potential for ADU development as credits towards their RHNA, based on an analysis that includes recent development trends, local demand, available resources or incentives, and anticipated affordability. Analysis and discussion of local trends, demand, and affordability are contained within this section, and analysis and discussion of resources, incentives, constraints, and development standards for ADUs and JADUs are included within the Technical Background Report.

Recent California legislation has facilitated increased permitting and production of ADUs. From 2018 to 2022, the City permitted an average of 4 ADUs annually, ranging from 2 to 8 permits per year. The City anticipates the upward trend in the development of ADUs and JADUs throughout the 6th Cycle will increase and is supporting that assumption with programs to facilitate and incentivize production.

Table 6: ADU Permits Issued or Completed by Year in Cotati

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
ADU Permits	2	4	4	2	8	20
"Safe Harbor" (RHNA Assumption)	Average of 4 ADUs permitted per year / 32 in planning cycle					
Projection with Programs (Quantified Objective)	Average of 5 ADUs permitted per year / 40 in planning cycle					

Source: 2018-2021 Housing Element Annual Progress Reports; Community Development Department, 2022 City of Cotati Permit Data.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) prepared a report and issued affordability recommendations for projecting ADU development based on a survey of local ADU rental costs. This data was used to generate the regional distribution of ADUs shown in Table 7. Cotati is using the affordability assumptions provided in this report to ensure the distribution of affordability reflects local development trends.

This distribution of affordability will be applied to a projection of 4 ADUs or JADUs built annually, for a total of 32 units over the planning period credited towards Cotati's RHNA (Table 7). This increased projection will be supported by policies and programs to facilitate ADU development (Policy H-1.9, Program 2-3: Accessory Dwelling Units). The City will review ADU development two years into the planning period and implement further incentives if the City is not on track to meet its RHNA targets through its ADU projections. The City will also implement policies and programs to facilitate ADU development (Policy H-1.9, Program 2-3: Accessory Dwelling Units) and strive to meet a quantified objective of 5 ADUs per year.

Table 7: Assumed Affordability for 6th Cycle ADUs

	VLI	LI	MI	AMI	Total
Regional Distribution of ADUs by Income Level	30%	30%	30%	10%	100%
Projected ADUs by Income Level for 6 th Cycle Projection Period	10	10	9	3	32

3.2.2 Planned, Approved, and Pending Projects

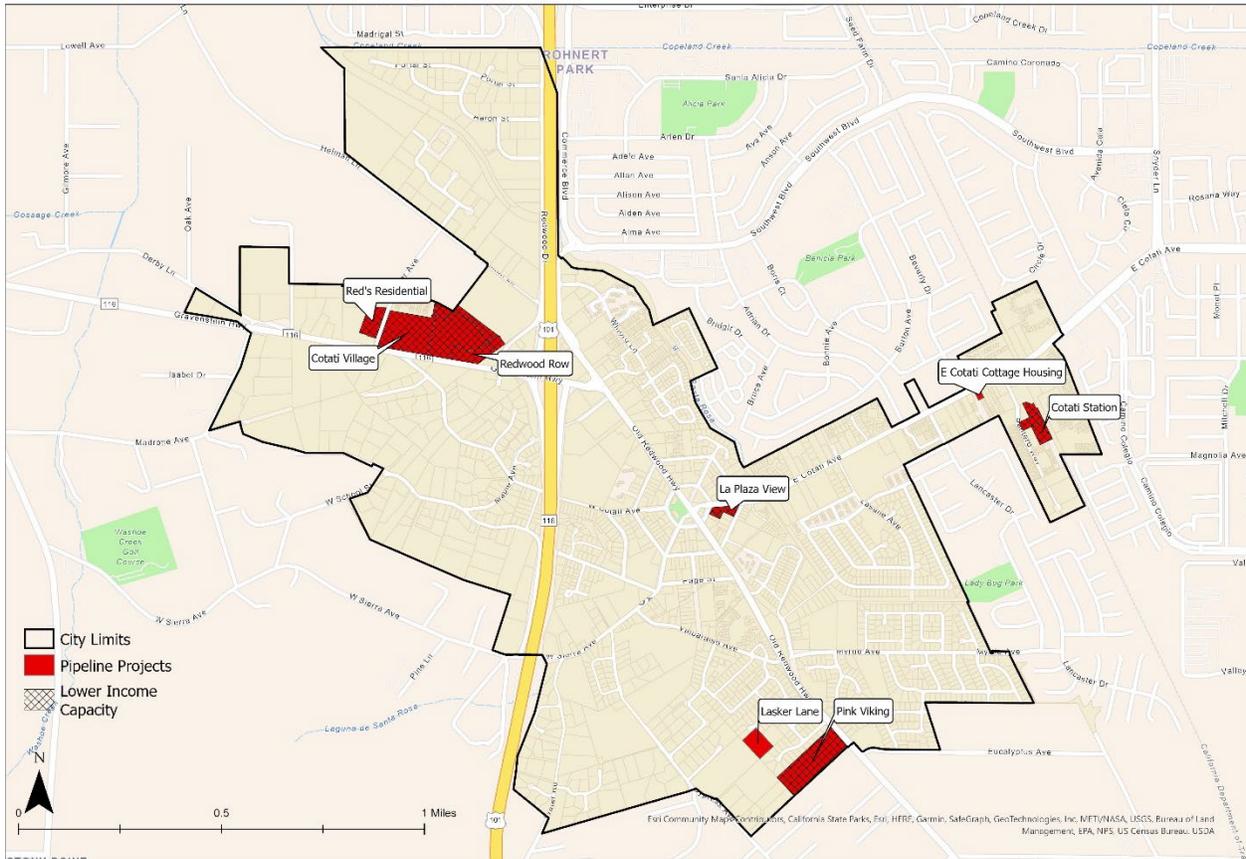
Jurisdictions may also count planned, approved, and pending residential units as credits towards their RHNA. These units can be counted based on affordability and unit count, provided it can be demonstrated that the units can be built within the planning period. Affordability (income category) is based on the actual or projected sales prices, rent levels, or other mechanisms establishing affordability of the units within the project, including affordability requirements achieved through the City's inclusionary housing program and/or project entitlement negotiations. A brief description of each project is provided below.

These projects are all expected to be completed during the planning period. Current growth control measures, discussed in Section 4.4.2 of the Technical Background Report, are not being enforced and will be removed under Program 2-2. Growth control measures will not affect the approval and development of these projects.

Table 8: Planned, Approved, and Pending Projects for RHNA Credit

Project	ELI	VLI	LI	MI	AMI	Total	Status	Anticipated Occupancy
Cotati Station	0	8	3	8	79	98	Approved	2024
Cotati Village	0	18	0	0	159	177	Under Review (SB330)	2025
East Cotati Cottage Housing	0	0	0	2	4	6	Approved	2024
La Plaza View	0	0	45	11	0	56	Under Review	2025
Lasker Lane	0	0	0	0	6	6	Approved	2025
Pink Viking	0	1	2	3	30	36	Under Review	2025
Redwood Row	4	5	8	8	145	170	Under Review (SB330)	2025
Red's Residential	4	10	0	0	112	126	Under Review (SB330)	2025
RHNA Credit	8	42	58	32	535	675	--	--

Figure 14: Location of Planned, Approved, and Pending Projects



Cotati Station

Cotati Station is an upcoming residential development located within the Santero Way Specific Plan area (APNs 144-320-033, 034, 035, 036, and 144-480-022). The City approved a density bonus for a total of 98 residential units consisting of 79 market rate units and 19 below market rate units (8 moderate-income units, 3 low-income units, and 8 very low-income units) which will be made affordable through a deed restriction. Affordability agreements and fee deferral agreements were in place in 2022, and a building permit application is expected in 2023. There are no known barriers to development.

Cotati Village

Cotati Village is an upcoming 177-unit multifamily housing development located at the northeast corner of Highway 116 and Alder Lane (APNs: 144-050-009 & 046-286-021). The project will include 159 market rate units and 18 very low-income units. The lower-income units are provided through the City's Inclusionary Ordinance and will be deed restricted. The applicant previously rezoned these sites to PD for a different prospective project at a lower density; the current Cotati Village Project does not make use of the PD zoning but instead is proposed under the original CG zoning. To facilitate the development of this project, the City is committed to rezoning to remove the unused PD designation (Program 2-7) and return it to

its original CG designation to allow the current project at no cost to the developer. The applicant is finalizing design plans, and the hearing for this project is expected mid-2023.

East Cotati Cottage Housing

The East Cotati Cottage Housing project is a six-unit missing middle cottage housing development proposed at 902 East Cotati Avenue (APN: 144-302-030). This project was approved on February 21, 2023 and is among the first to utilize flexible zoning provisions of the City's Cottage Housing Ordinance passed in 2021 and promoted through Program 2-4 of the Housing Element. The project includes four units between 1,000 and 1,300 sq.ft in size, assumed to be affordable to above moderate-income households, and two 500 sq.ft. ADUs, classified as moderate-income units based on the small unit size, supported by the analysis in Section 3.2.1. The building permit application is expected later in 2023, and there are no known barriers to development.

La Plaza View

La Plaza View is a 70-unit* multifamily housing development located on vacant land within the downtown hexagon on East Cotati Avenue between La Plaza and Charles Street (100 East Cotati Ave; APNs 144-274-002, 014, and 015). In July 2022, the City approved the project for 23 market rate units, 2 moderate-income units, 1 low-income unit, and 1 very low-income units. The developer submitted a second application on March 1, 2022 under streamlined ministerial SB 35 approval provisions that allow greater building heights and density for projects containing at least 50% affordable units. The project will be 100% affordable with 56 lower-income units and 14 moderate-income units, all of which will be deed restricted. Local tribal representation accepted AB 168 consultation which continues to be underway as of March 2023.

**Due to ongoing consideration of two development proposals, the City is assuming a realistic capacity of 80% of the larger project at proportional affordability levels of 80% low-income and 20% moderate-income.*

Lasker Lane

Lasker Lane is a six-unit, market rate, single-family housing development approved at 65 Lasker Lane (APN 144-470-007). The project is fully entitled, and the City is working with the previous owner's heir(s) to support construction of this vested project.

Pink Viking

Pink Viking is an upcoming 36-unit single-family housing development proposed at 8841 Old Redwood Highway (APN 046-223-018). The project will include 30 market rate units, 3 moderate-income units, 2 low-income units, and 1 very low-income unit. The moderate- and lower-income units are provided through the City's Inclusionary Ordinance and will be deed restricted. This project is awaiting the finalization of environmental documentation, and the hearing is expected in Fall 2023. California Tiger Salamander mitigation is the only known

barrier and is not expected to constrain development as the costs have already been considered by the developer (see further discussion in Section 3.8.4).

Redwood Row

Redwood Row is a proposed 170-unit mixed-use townhome development on a vacant 10.41-acre property located at the northwest corner of Redwood Drive and Gravenstein Highway adjacent to Lowe's Home Improvement in the Commercial Gravenstein Corridor zoning district (APNs: 046-286-017, -18, -19, and -20). The moderate- and lower-income units are provided through the City's Inclusionary Ordinance and will be deed restricted. This project is in review and awaiting environmental documentation, including California State Water Resources Control Board approval of mitigation measures. There are no other known barriers to development.

Red's Residential

Red's Residential is proposed as a mixed-use development consisting of 126 multi-family units spread across four residential buildings on a 5.3 acre site. The project proposes to provide 13 units affordable to very low-income individuals and families in order to qualify for a 50% density bonus. The City has approved a lot line adjustment to facilitate this development. The project is located at 7515 Alder Avenue within the Commercial Gravenstein Corridor (CG) zoning district (APNs: 144-040-011 and 144-040-021). The lower-income units will be deed restricted as required by density bonus law. The project was vested in March 2023. California Tiger Salamander mitigation is the only known barrier and is not expected to constrain development as the costs have already been considered by the developer (see further discussion in Section 3.8.4).

3.3 REALISTIC CAPACITY OF SITES ZONED FOR HOUSING

As shown in Table 9, the City has identified enough units through RHNA Credits (projected ADU development and pending, approved, or permitted projects) to meet its 6th Cycle RHNA for the above moderate-income category and for total units. To identify enough sites for its moderate- and lower-income RHNA, the City prepared an inventory of sites available and suitable for housing development. Information about these sites is included below.

Realistic development capacity for these sites is based on development standards and land use controls (see Section 4.4.2 of the Technical Background Report), access to infrastructure, necessary site improvements, other constraints, and recent development trends (see Table 11). Residential development trends, detailed in Section 3.5, show that projects are typically developed at over 100% of maximum allowed capacity, using density bonuses or similar provisions. This analysis utilizes a lower realistic capacity factor of 85% to account for No Net Loss requirements. Realistic development capacity for nonvacant sites accounts for the likelihood of non-residential development.

Figure 15: Location of Housing Opportunity Sites

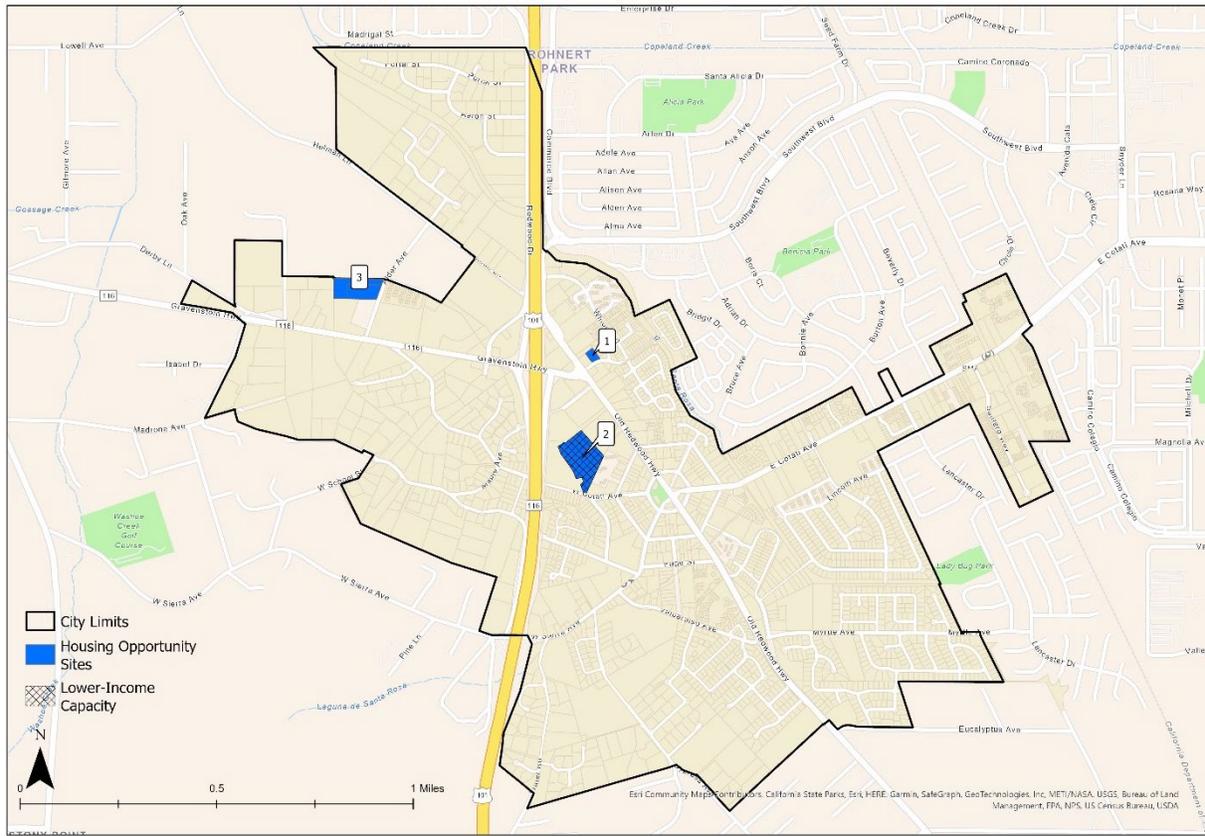


Table 9: RHNA and Site Capacity

	Lower Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	Total
RHNA Allocation	94	39	101	234
Pipeline	108	32	535	675
ADUs/JADUs	20	9	3	32
Housing Sites (Current Zoning)	30	39	36	105
Total Units	158	80	574	812
RHNA Surplus	64	41	473	578
Percent Buffer	68%	105%	468%	147%

Table 10: Capacity of Sites Allowing Residential Development

#	Site Address/ Location	APN	Zone	Max Density (units/ac)	Acres	Units	Affordability
Vacant Sites							
1	7734 Old Redwood Hwy	144-080-022	NG	20	0.43	5	AMI, MI
Nonvacant Sites							
2	150 St Joseph Way	144-170-009	NG	20	5.65	61	AMI, MI, LI
3	7457 Alder Ave	144-040-017	CG	15	1.98	39	AMI, MI
	7455 Alder Ave	144-040-013	CG	15	1.89		
Total						105	30 LI 39 MI 36 AMI

3.3.1 Vacant Sites

Site 1: 7734 Old Redwood Highway



Site 1 is a vacant 0.45-acre site within the Northern Gateway zone of the Downtown Specific Plan area, set back from the highway, with no ground floor requirements for retail or commercial development set by the Specific Plan. This area is regulated by a form-based code and does not have a maximum allowable density, but the City's development standards allow for development at approximately 20 units per acre (further analysis in Section 4.4). This site has similar characteristics (parcel shape, size, proximity to downtown) as Example #2 on Table 11: Development Trends, which is developing above 25 units per acre, and similar land use controls as Example #4, which is developing at over 60 units per acre. The site is adjacent to both residential and commercial uses and is intended for mixed-use development.

- Capacity: (20 units/acre)(0.45 acres)(85% realistic capacity)(67% factor for likelihood of residential development) = 5.1 units, rounded down
- RHNA Income Category: 3 moderate-income, 2 above moderate-income units
- Infrastructure: Parcel is served by water, sewer, and dry utilities.
- Prior Use: Parcel was used in the 4th and 5th Cycle Site Inventories. This site is not being used to accommodate the lower-income RHNA and is not subject to rezoning requirements.

3.3.2 Non-Vacant Sites

Site 2: 150 St. Joseph Way



This site is a 10.07 acre nonvacant parcel owned by the Catholic Church containing a church building, parking lot, and 5.65 acre of undeveloped land. The site is surrounded by residential and underutilized commercial areas. The site is within the Northern Gateway zone of the Downtown Specific Plan area, with no ground floor requirements for retail or commercial development. This site has similar characteristics (parcel size, proximity to downtown) to Examples #6, #7, and #8 on Table 11: Development Trends, which are developing at an average of 21 units per acre, and similar land use controls as Example #4, which is developing at over 60 units per acre.

- Capacity: (20 units/acre)(5.65 vacant acres)(85% realistic capacity)(67% factor for likelihood of residential development)= 61.1 units, rounded down
- RHNA Income Category: 30 low-income, 16 moderate-income, 15 above moderate-income units
- Infrastructure: Parcel is served by water, sewer, and dry utilities.
- Prior Use: Parcel was used in the 4th and 5th Cycle Site Inventories. Under Program 3-1, this site will allow for residential development at 20 units per acre for housing developments in which at least 20 percent of units are affordable to lower-income households.

Site 3: Alder Ave



This 3.87 acre site consists of two adjacent, developer-owned parcels. One parcel is underutilized, and the other is vacant. The site is near residential development and underutilized. This site has the same zoning as Examples #6, #7, and #8 on Table 11: Development Trends, which are developing at an average of 21 units per acre, and similar characteristics (multiple parcels, site size) as Examples #4 and #5, which are developing at an average of over 50 units per acre.

- Capacity: (15 units/acre)(3.87 acres)(85% realistic capacity)(80% factor for likelihood of residential development) =39.5 units, rounded down
- RHNA Income Category: 20 moderate-income, 19 above moderate-income Units
- Infrastructure: Parcels are served by water, sewer, and dry utilities.
- Prior Use: Parcels were not used in a previous Site Inventory

3.3.3 Sites Suitability Analysis

Summary of Site Suitability

The identified sites have realistic development potential and are suitable to count towards the City's RHNA. Over 87% of the City's lower-income RHNA is met through capacity of pipeline projects and ADU projections, with nonvacant sites used mainly to increase the City's buffer of available sites. Available sites identified to meet the City's lower-income RHNA have the necessary large sites analysis and will allow residential development at 20 units per acre. Pending projects with identified lower-income capacity are likely to develop during the planning period, as discussed in Section 3.2.2, and the lower- and moderate-income units in those projects will be made affordable to the identified income groups through a deed restriction as required by the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Density Bonus provisions or are assumed to be affordable to moderate-income units based on the Accessory Dwelling Unit analysis in Section 3.2.1. All identified sites have infrastructure access. Sites that have been used in previous planning periods that were identified to meet the City's lower-income RHNA are subject to a program to allow by-right development at 20 units per acre if 20% of the site's units are affordable (Program 3-1). The City can accommodate over 50% of its lower-income RHNA with pipeline projects and ADU development.

Lower-Income Suitability Analysis

Site 2 has been identified to meet the lower-income RHNA. Through implementation of Programs 3-1, this site will allow development at Cotati's default density of 20 units/acre. This site has capacity to accommodate over 16 units.

Large Sites Analysis

While only 5.65 acres of the parcel are identified with development potential, Site 2 is located on a 10.07 acre parcel. Regionally, churches and other public institutions have expressed interest in selling excess vacant land to interested developers, and it is likely that this could happen on this site. This property owner has been approached by developers interested in developing a portion of their property. The City has current experience with development on a large site (Redwood Row, discussed in Section 3.2.2). The size of the parcel does not affect the suitability of the site to accommodate housing for lower-income households.

Nonvacant Sites Analysis

Sites 2 and 3 are nonvacant sites, identified as underutilized sites with development potential to meet the RHNA. Development potential was identified based on developer interest, developer trends, demand for residential compared to demand for current uses, any knowledge of existing contracts, improvement-to-land value, and other specific site conditions as follows:

- Site 2: This site contains church facilities and parking lot, with over half of this site being undeveloped. The property owners, the Catholic Church, have expressed interest in residential development on this site, including in a meeting with City staff on January 18, 2023. There has been significant developer interest in the large vacant areas of the Northern Gateway zone, including this site, and owners of the adjacent parcel expressed interested in purchasing a portion of this site. Regionally,

churches and other public institutions have expressed interest in selling excess vacant land to interested developers, and it is likely that this could happen on this site. There are no known contracts or leases that would prevent sale or development of the undeveloped half of the site. Additionally, recent legislation continues to facilitate the development of housing on lands owned by religious institutions, including the enacted AB 2244 (2022) mandating parking reductions on faith-based lands.

- Site 3: This site includes two adjacent parcels, including one vacant parcel and one nonvacant parcel under the same ownership. The nonvacant site has a rural residential land use code, with no residential units shown on available data. The site appears to contain smaller old structures and automobile storage and has an improvement-to-land value of 0.17. Demand for residential development is higher than the demand for the current use and there are no known contracts or leases that would perpetuate the existing use. The site is adjacent to proposed, approved, and existing residential development.

Sites Allowing Non-Residential Uses

Sites identified with capacity to meet the RHNA that allow nonresidential and mixed-use developments are located in the Downtown Specific Plan area (Sites 1 and 2), and in the CG zone (Site 3). Based on development proposals over the last ten years, capacity factors have been applied to these sites to account for the likelihood of residential development compared to nonresidential development. Citywide, most sites allowing both residential uses and non-residential uses have primarily received interest for residential development.

Within the Downtown Specific Plan Area, there have been 2 proposals for nonresidential development and 4 proposals for residential development over the last 10 years, so a capacity factor of 67% is applied to sites in these zones. Notably, purely residential development has not been a permitted use on these sites until the recent Downtown Specific Plan update, anticipated to be adopted Spring 2023, and through the implementation of Program 3-1. Once these changes are in place, it is anticipated that the proportion of residential proposals will increase.

Within the CG zone, there has been 1 proposal for nonresidential development and 4 proposals for residential development over the last 10 years, so a capacity factor of 80% is applied to sites in this zone.

Over 50% of the units to accommodate the very low and low-income housing need are identified within planned and approved projects.

Sites Used in Multiple Planning Periods

Sites 1 and 2 were used in multiple planning periods. Under Program 3-1, these sites will allow 100% residential development by right if 20% of units are affordable, allowing densities of at least 20 units per acre. This program will ensure that sites have realistic development potential within the planning period.

3.4 PROGRAMS TO ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING

Program 1-7: Essential Bond Financing Program

The City of Cotati, in partnership with local nonprofit Burbank Housing Development Corporation (Burbank), is pursuing use of an essential bond financing strategy for the development of affordable housing. In this model, the City joins a California Joint Powers Authority (JPA), authorizes the JPA to issue bonds on behalf of the City, and uses these funds for the construction of affordable housing. This is an innovative strategy that can help the City overcome financial constraints to housing development.

Program 2-1: Adequate Housing Sites

The City will continue to maintain an inventory of vacant and underdeveloped residentially designated land and, for sites appropriate for lower income and special needs development, identify the parcel number, parcel size, zoning designation, general plan designation, and allowed density with a density bonus for affordable units; ensure that the inventory is available for public distribution at City Hall and on the City's website; and update the inventory on an annual basis.

Program 2-3: Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are a priority for the development of housing in Cotati. The City will prioritize the availability of preapproved plans provided by the Napa Sonoma ADU Center, assist the efforts of the Napa Sonoma ADU Center and Homes for Sonoma, and provide penalty relief to ADU dwellers without the benefit of a permit to incentivize the development of ADUs and support for residents. The City will review the efficacy of these subprograms within two years and support further interventions to support both the ABAG-approved affordability assumptions and further ADU development in the community throughout the planning period.

Program 2-4: Cottage Housing

The City's Cottage Housing Ordinance adopted in 2021 allows a doubling of density allowed in underlying zoning with Council approval of a Cottage Housing development plan. This requires the construction of smaller units that are affordable by design, and in return, provides more flexible requirements for housing development on smaller lots at a greater unit capacity.

Program 2-6: Santero Way Rezoning

The City is rezoning land within its Santero Way Specific Plan Area to increase the allowed residential capacity in Moderate Resource areas near transit. This program is not being used to meet the RHNA but will help the City meet its housing needs and address AFFH.

Program 2-7: Supporting Development on Inventory Sites

To support residential development to meet the RHNA, the City is committed to supporting ongoing development projects and to rezoning to increase residential capacity.

Program 3-1: Sites Used in Multiple Planning Periods

The City is relying on sites that have been used in the last two planning periods to meet its lower-income RHNA. In order to use these sites, the City will allow residential development by right at 20 units per acre when 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower income households. This program will apply to Sites 1 and 2.

Program 4-1: Anti-Displacement Actions

The City is relying on a nonvacant site that may have residential units to meet its RHNA. The City will require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code Section 65915(c)(3) when any new development occurs on a site in the Sites Inventory if that site meets any of the following conditions: a) currently has residential uses or within the past five years has had residential uses that have been vacated or demolished; and b) was subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents to levels affordable to persons and families of low or very-low income; or c) subject to any form of rent or price control through a public entity's valid exercise of its police power; or d) occupied by low or very-low income households. This program will address displacement risk on these sites.

3.5 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND REALISTIC CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Realistic capacity assumptions have been calculated based on recent development, developer input, market trends, and local knowledge. Most recent residential projects in the City have developed at or above maximum allowable density, as shown in Table 11. The City also has examples of development on large and small sites, examples of mixed-use development, and development of affordable housing below the City's default Density. The City is using a restrained realistic capacity factor of 85% to account for No Net Loss Requirements.

Table 11: Development Trends

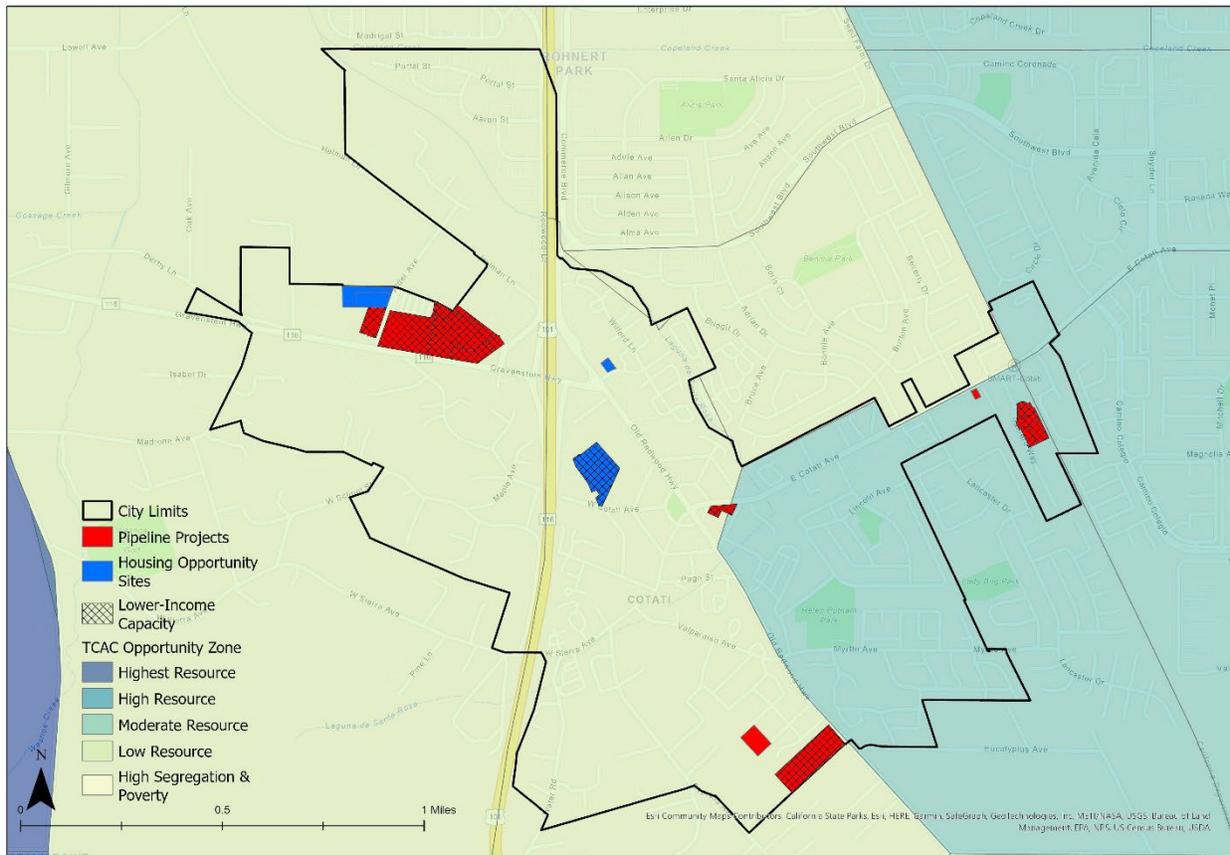
#	Housing Development	APN	Total Units	Acres	Zone	Max Density	Density Achieved	Percent of Max Density
						units/acre		
Market Rate Housing with Affordable Units (All Projects 2018-2023)								
1	Kessing Ranch 100 Valparaiso (2018)	144-450-002	47 units: 2 VLI 2 LI 3 MI 40 AMI	9.6	NL	6	4.9	82%
2	Cottage Housing Project* 902 E. Cotati Avenue (Approved 2023)	144-302-030	6 units: 2 MI 4 AMI	0.23	NM	10	26.1	261%

100% Affordable Housing (All Projects 2018-2023)								
3	Jamie Lane Unaddressed Parcel (2021)	144-301-012	5 units: 5 MI	0.63	NM	10	8	80%
4	La Plaza View* 100 East Cotati Ave. (Approved 2022)	144-274-002, 014 & 015	56 units: 45 LI, 11 MI	0.88	DSP (LP)	N/A	63.6	N/A
Mixed Use Development with Affordable Units (All Projects 2018-2023)								
5	Cotati Station* Santero Way (Approved 2022)	144-320-034 through -036	98 units: 8 VLI 3 LI 8 MI 79 AMI	2.41	SWSP	N/A	40.7	N/A
6	Cotati Village* NE Corner of Hwy 116 & Alder Lane (Pending)	144-050-009	177 units: 18 VLI 159 AMI	7.19	CG	15	24.6	164%
7	Redwood Row* Redwood Drive and Gravenstein Hwy (Pending)	046-286-017, -18, -19, and -20	170 units: 4 ELI 4 VLI 8 LI 8 MI 145 AMI	10.4 1	CG	15	16.3	109%
8	Red's Residential* 7515 Alder Avenue (Pending)	144-040-011	126 units: 4 ELI 10 VLI 112 AMI	5.62	CG	15	22.4	149%
Average							25.8	141%
<i>*These projects are included in the discussion of Planned, Approved, and Pending projects in Section 3.2.2.</i>								

3.6 FAIR HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS

Housing sites identified to meet Cotati’s RHNA are distributed throughout the community in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing. Cotati contains Low and Moderate Resource areas. Of the 13 sites in inventory, 5 sites are in a Moderate Resource area (Figure 16), containing 17% of total unit capacity and 17% of lower-income unit capacity. A full analysis of inventory sites compared to components of the Fair Housing Assessment is included in the Technical Background Report, in Section 4.5.7.

Figure 16: Housing Opportunity Sites by Opportunity Area



Source: HCD/TCAC Opportunity Area Maps, 2022

3.6.1 Improved Conditions

Housing sites and pipeline projects are distributed throughout the City, with no concentration of sites for one income group. The sites will increase access to opportunity in and around the Downtown and near the train station and increase the stock of affordable housing.

3.6.2 Exacerbated Conditions

Sites on the Western side of the City are located in a Lower Resource area. Particularly, sites West of the freeway have less access to transportation and are further from amenities and resources. An infrastructure program is included to address this need (Program 1-4), and a

rezoning program is included to add additional residential capacity in the City's Moderate Resource area, near transit (Program 2-6).

3.7 INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The City has adequate infrastructure to accommodate the development of its RHNA, including water, sewer, and dry utilities. Infrastructure capacity is summarized below with a more detailed discussion of infrastructure included within the Technical Background Report.

3.7.1 Water

Cotati's main water supply comes from the Russian River surface water, and three groundwater wells located in Santa Rosa Plain Subbasin which are provided by Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) through two transmission pipelines. The City is entitled to receive up to 1,520 acre-feet per year under the water supply agreement with the SCWA. Cotati also obtains about 1/3 of its water supply from three municipal groundwater wells. While the City has historically used groundwater to supply more than half of its demands, its current water management strategy is to draw its primary water supply from the SCWA and utilize groundwater to supplement its needs during peak demand periods or periods of drought.

3.7.2 Sewer

The City of Cotati owns and operates the wastewater collection system and provides sanitary sewer service to approximately 1200 acres in and around City limits. Sewage and wastewater generated is transported to the Santa Rosa Subregional Wastewater Reclamation System for treatment at Laguna Treatment Plant. There is one sewer project identified in the Capital Improvement Program from Fiscal Year 2020/21 through FY 2024/25. The City completed a sewer project in 2020/21 on William and Olof Streets, and will continue construction on West Sierra Avenue in FY 2022/23. Methane capture and energy generation to offset energy usage occurs at the Santa Rosa Subregional Treatment Plant.

3.7.3 Other Utilities

Electricity: As of 2019, the City of Cotati uses 100% renewable electricity (Evergreen) provided by Sonoma Clean Power. The City opted into the local Community Choice Aggregation (Sonoma Clean Power), which automatically enrolled all residential and commercial customers into Clean Start (higher mix of local renewable electricity), unless the customer opts out into PG&E.

Solid Waste: The City of Cotati does not have any active or planned solid waste facilities. Cotati is served by a franchise waste hauler (Recology), with solid waste disposed of at the Central Landfill in Sonoma County. Recycling and composting services are also included as part of the solid waste collection and processing system.

3.8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

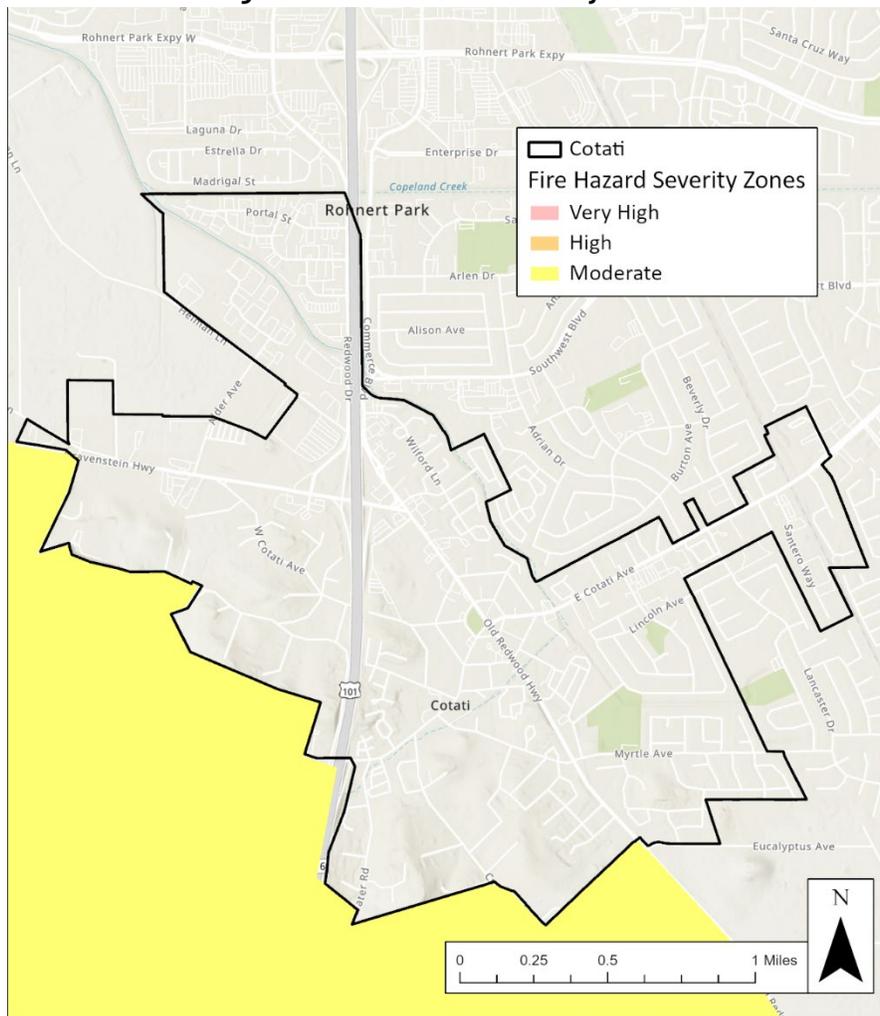
Sonoma County has developed a multijurisdictional hazard mitigation plan in partnership with local government to identify measures to reduce risk from natural hazards. The City of Cotati has its own local hazard mitigation plan, which was developed as an element of Sonoma County's multijurisdictional plan.

According to hazard risk ranking, earthquakes and wildfires are categorized as high-risk hazards while floods, severe weather, and landslides are considered medium-risk hazards.

3.8.1 Fire

There are 7 residential structures found in high relative hazard and 341 residential structures found in moderate relative hazard for wildfire. Wildland urban interface fires are prevalent in Sonoma County. No land within the City or inventory sites are within State-designated fire hazard severity zones. This is relatively minor in comparison to the region, and wildfire does not pose a substantial displacement risk in Cotati.

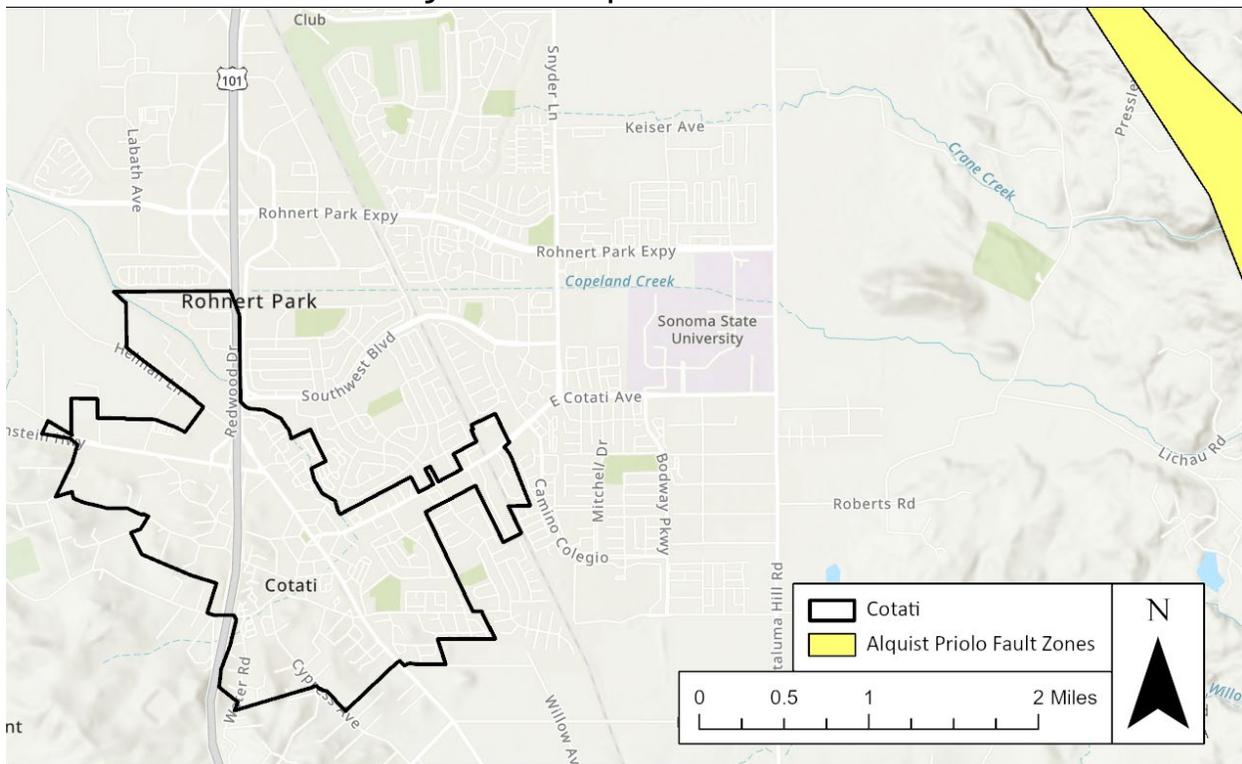
Figure 17: Fire Hazard Severity Zones



3.8.2 Seismic Hazards

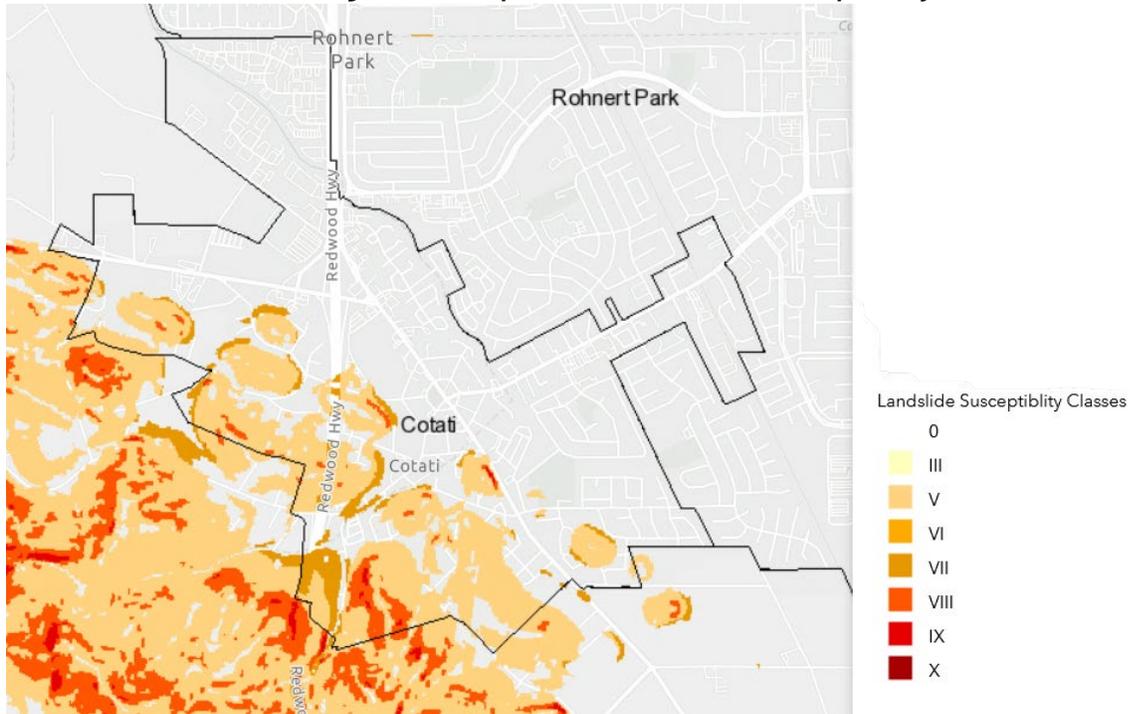
Cotati has been exposed to earthquakes in the past and remains highly likely to be exposed in the future. The City is positioned southwest of the Rodgers Creek fault, a system with a 33% projected likelihood of a major earthquake (magnitude 6.7 or greater shaking) in the 30-year projection period. Seismic hazards mainly affect Site 3 but would not preclude development on this site. Cotati does not feature any known major fault lines running directly under City limits, unlike neighboring jurisdictions with faults including San Andreas and Rodgers Creek, and earthquakes do not pose a substantial displacement risk in Cotati.

Figure 18: Earthquake Hazard Zones



Source: California Geological Survey, Earthquake Zones of Required Investigation

Figure 19: Deep-Seated Landslide Susceptibility



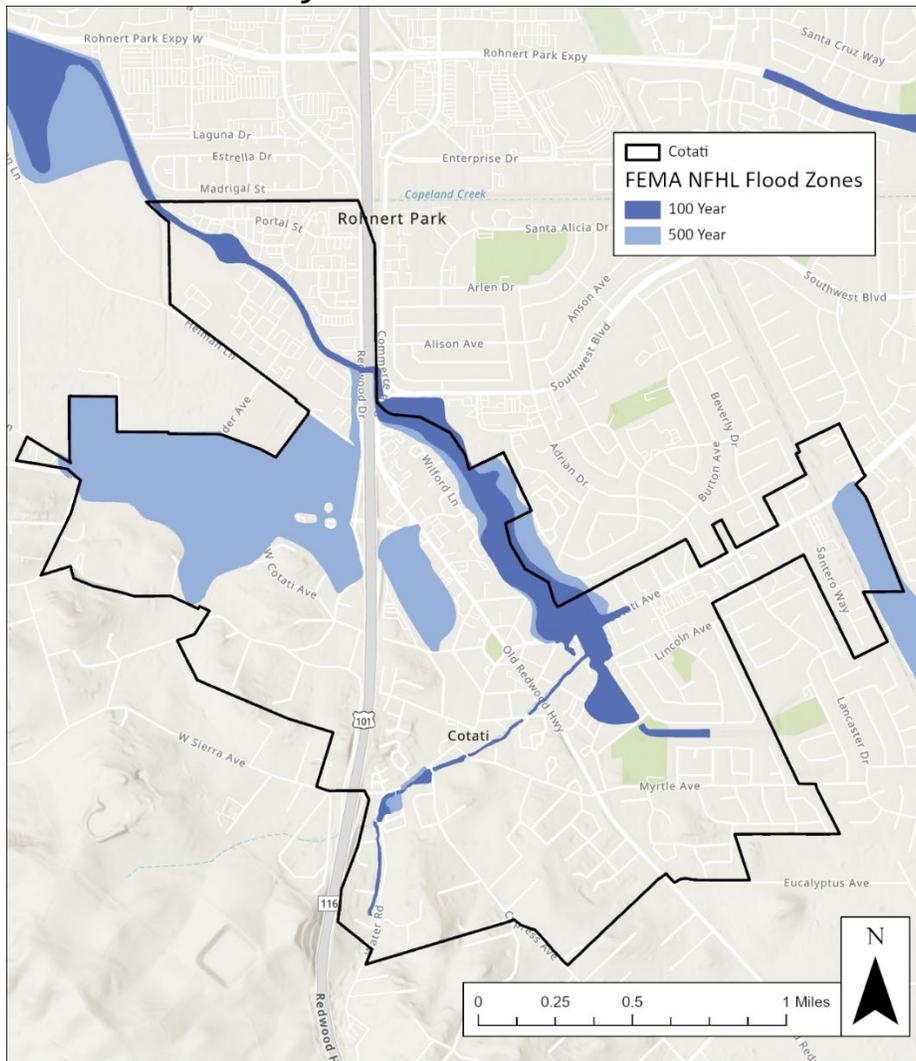
Source: California Geologic Survey Data Viewer, CGS Map Sheet 58

There are 63 residential structures identified in the high landslide exposure category and 301 residential structures in the moderate exposure category. The City's Zoning Map concentrates development within portions of the urban core lacking hillsides and not susceptible to landslides.

3.8.3 Flood

The northeastern portion of Cotati is subject to flooding from the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Cotati Creek. Approximately 4.8 percent of the land within the city limits located within is subject to one percent of flooding in any given year and about 7.7 percent within the Urban Growth boundary are considered high flood hazards with the FEMA flood zone AE (a 100-year flooding scenario with base flood elevation determined). No sites are within the 100-year flood zone. The 500-year flood zone impacts sites 2 and 3 but does not preclude development on these sites.

Figure 20: Flood Hazard Zones



Source: FEMA, National Flood Hazard Layer, 2008

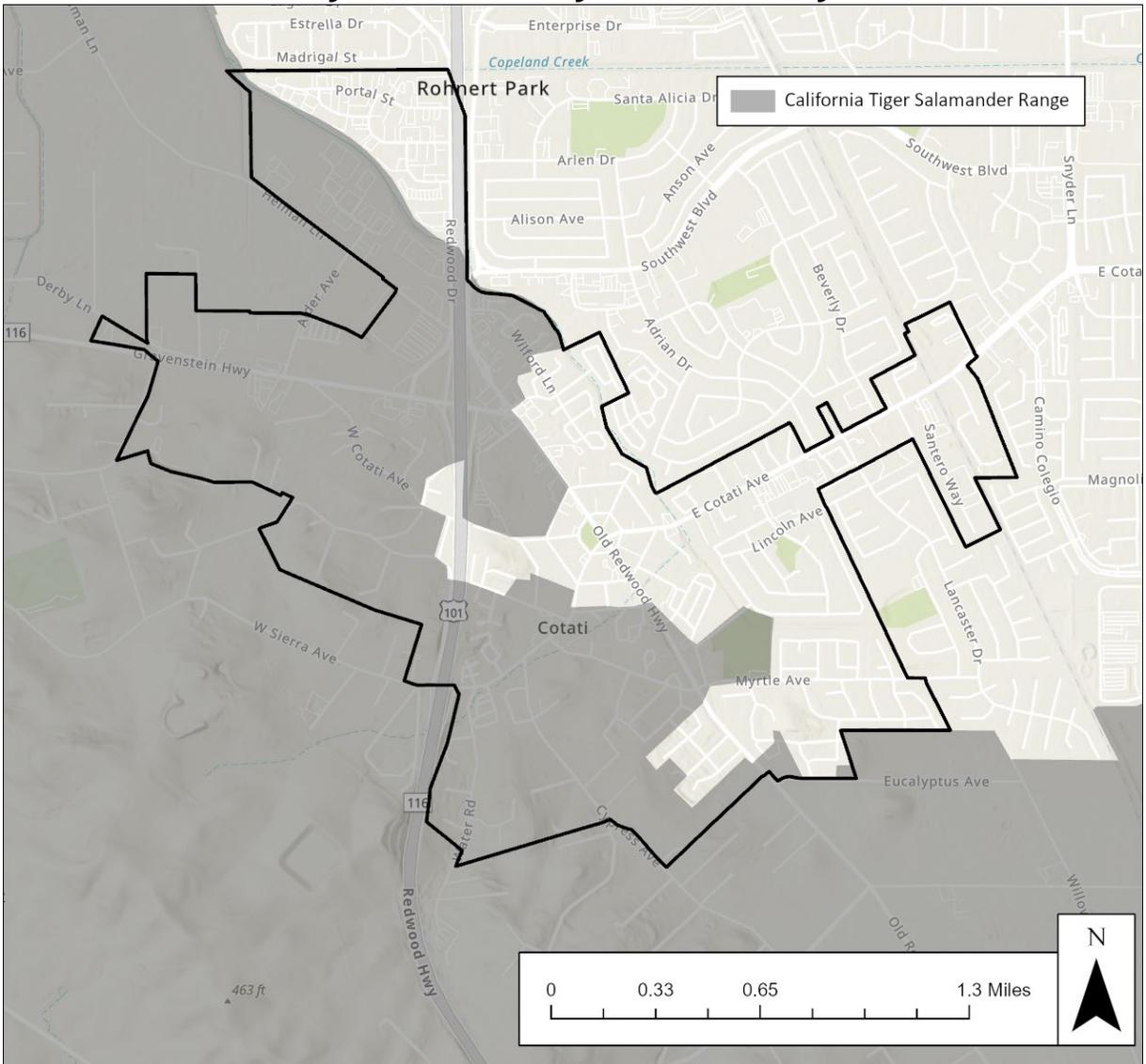
The Downtown Specific Plan area is the only priority development area that has experienced localized flooding in the past, and no other areas are known to be susceptible to hazard risks. Based on the 100-year scenario of flood risk assessment, 200 residential buildings may be exposed to flooding. Flood zones in Sonoma County have historically displaced communities directly along the Russian River and in other areas of the Russian River watershed with relatively minimal damage in Cotati. Flooding in Cotati does not pose a substantial displacement risk.

Among critical facilities, the City of Santa Rosa’s wastewater treatment plant (where Cotati wastewater is sent) has experienced significant flooding on several occasions and is likely to be exposed to flooding in the future.

3.8.4 Special Status Species

Some areas of Cotati are the native habitat of protected species, including the California tiger salamander (CTS). The Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy (SRPCS) was published in 2005 and provides the biological framework for conservation of the CTS on the Santa Rosa Plain. The designation of critical habitat, shown in Figure 21, was last revised in 2011 and does not include urbanized areas of Cotati, including the downtown and SMART Station area.¹ Some inventory sites are located within the CTS range. Recent development and proposed projects within these areas demonstrate that CTS mitigation will not limit the ability to meet the RHNA using these sites.

Figure 21: California Tiger Salamander Range



Source: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Tiger Salamander Range, 2020

¹ Federal Register Volume 76, Issue 169, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment of California Tiger Salamander, 2011

3.9 CONCLUSION

The City of Cotati is well positioned to successfully implement the policies, programs, and actions of this Housing Element. The 2023 Housing Element serves the housing needs of the next eight years for current and future residents and fulfills the statutory requirements of the State of California. The Housing Element demonstrates that the City has the housing sites and planned projects needed to address and surpass its Regional Housing Needs Allocation without the need to rezone sites. Moreover, the selected sites are integrated throughout the City with adequate distance from environmental hazards in consideration of existing and enhanced fair housing requirements. Programs have been identified to mitigate constraints to the production of housing, and to ensure that Cotati can continue to be an affordable and vibrant community for a wide variety of residents in the years to come.