



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council **DATE:** September 22, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

PREPARED BY: MJC

PRESENTER: Marie Jones, Planning Consultant

AGENDA TITLE: Receive Report and Adopt a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Submit a Prohousing Application to the Department of Housing and Community Development.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Adopt a Resolution Authorizing Application to and Participation in the Prohousing Designation Program.

BACKGROUND

Increasing the housing supply is a key priority for the City Council, as outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which includes the goal of adding 200+ housing units by 2026. Housing affordability has become a significant challenge, and many residents find it increasingly difficult to purchase and/or rent a home. The community faces a shortage of both rental and for-sale properties, driven in part by Fort Bragg's growing appeal as a place to live, retire, and work.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law, which provided \$350 billion in emergency funding for states, municipalities, counties, tribes, and territories across the nation. The City of Fort Bragg was allocated \$1,744,162 in ARPA funds. Following a Spring Survey of community priorities, the City Council approved the reallocation of these funds from the Broadband project to four key areas, with 50%, or \$800,000, dedicated to housing. A small portion of this funding has been utilized to revise ordinances and apply for the Pro-Housing designation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8C

On October 15, 2024, City Council directed staff to obtain Pro-Housing Designation from the State. The program rewards cities that adopt zoning and land use regulations that make housing development easier, cheaper, and faster. Cities select from a list of proven programs that focus on by-right permitting, reducing regulations, simplifying design review, reducing impact fees, providing financial subsidies, land, and more. Once awarded the Pro-Housing Designation, Fort Bragg would become eligible for state funding to support housing. The City Council directed staff to implement the following Pro-Housing policy changes:

- 1F. Establish minimum parking requirements that comply with density bonus law for residential development. (2 points) - Completed
- 2A. Establish a ministerial approval process for multifamily and mixed-use housing. (3 points) - Abandoned
- 2H. Replace subjective development and design standards with objective development and design standards (as shown in attachment 2) that simplify zoning clearance and improve approval certainty and timing. (1 point) -Completed
- 3A. Waive or reduce development impact fees for residential projects that include units affordable to Lower-Income Households. (3 points) - Abandoned

Since that meeting, the City has adopted the following ordinances to prepare for an application for the Prohousing designation:

- On March 24, 2025, the City Council approved an ordinance establishing density bonus law parking requirements for all multifamily housing projects regardless of whether they include affordable units or not. Additionally at this meeting the City Council provided direction not to proceed with changes to the ordinances that would make Multifamily Housing a permitted use by right (e.g. not requiring a Use Permit). This ordinance implemented the prohousing requirements for 1F but not 2A.
- On June 9th, 2025 the City Council held a Public Hearing and adopted various zoning amendments to the coastal and inland zoning codes to implement changes in State law in new and revised regulations regarding emergency shelters, group homes, low barrier navigation centers, supportive housing, and the granting of density bonus to non-vacant sites. While not a source of points, the City's zoning ordinance must be in compliance with State housing law, so this is a requirement to achieve Prohousing designation.
- On June 23, 2025, the City Council held a hearing and approved changes to the ILUDC and CLUDC requiring ministerial design review for multifamily units, and approved changes to the Citywide Design Guidelines to include objective standards for multifamily projects. This ordinance will implement Prohousing requirement 2A.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

To qualify for a prohousing designation the City must comply (and self-certify that compliance) with the following list of State land use and CEQA regulations related to housing permitting and review. Staff has reviewed the City compliance with each of these laws and found that the City is in compliance with each law.

- **Government Code (GOV) 65580-65589.11.** This sets all requirements for a certified Housing Element. Fort Bragg's Housing Element was certified in 2019.

- **GOV 65913.1.** Requires the City to, while revising its housing element, designate and zone sufficient vacant land for residential use with appropriate standards, in relation to zoning for nonresidential use, and in relation to growth projections of the general plan to meet housing needs for all income categories as identified in the housing element of the general plan. This has been done in the Housing Element.
- **GOV 65995.** This code sets legal requirements for establishing and levying school fees, including limiting school fee amounts to \$1.93/SF for residential development and \$0.31/SF for commercial development as adjusted for inflation in 2000 dollars.
- **GOV 65920.** The Permit Streamlining Act sets a minimum time to provide a Completeness Letter (30 days) and to approve or deny a multifamily housing project (60 days from time of complete application). If a City fails to meet the timing requirements of this act, the project is deemed approved. This law was passed in 2025 and now applies to all multifamily projects in Fort Bragg.
- **Public Resources Code (PRC) 21080.66.** Agencies now must approve or deny qualifying multifamily projects within 30 days of the conclusion of the specified tribal consultation process. Qualifying projects must be proposed on an infill site of less than 20 acres, be less than 85 feet in height, and not be located on a hazardous site. This new section of CEQA eliminates the CEQA process for all qualified multifamily infill housing projects so that such projects cannot be challenged in court.
- **PRC 21080.1, 21080.2, and 21151.5(a).** This law simplifies the CEQA review process for multifamily projects which do not qualify for the CEQA exemption above. For example, a CEQA document is only required to analyze impacts for which the City determined there may be a significant environmental effect.
- **PRC 21155-21155.4.** This law applies to requirements for transit priority projects as part of the State Sustainable Communities Strategy. This regulation allows certain transit priority projects that meet threshold criteria to complete an EIR that only examines significant impacts and is not required to complete an offsite alternatives analysis. The City of Fort Bragg has no transit stops which would qualify for the application of this law.

Additionally, the Prohousing process requires cities to follow the principles of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' "7 Principles for Addressing Encampments" which are as follows:

- Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response
- Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions
- Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach
- Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage
- Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options
- Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports
- Principle 7: Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure

The City of Fort Bragg, in partnership with local non-profits, follows these principles.

Additionally, to review the City's completion status for all qualifying points for the Prohousing designation, please see attachment 2. The attachment illustrates a likely 36 points, which is 6 points more than required for the Pro-Housing designation.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

The preparation of the Prohousing application is funded with ARPA Funding.

Participation in the program will require the additional expenditure of staff time and City funds to complete the following:

- The City must complete an Annual Prohousing Progress Report to HCD.
- The City must remain in compliance with all applicable state laws related to housing, this will result in additional annual expenditures to update the City's zoning ordinance to keep pace with the state housing laws.
- The City must continue to treat homeless encampments in compliance with the 7 principles of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

The Prohousing designation is in effect for three years. At the end of the three-year period the City may reapply.

If the City obtains a Prohousing Designation, it would be eligible to apply for the Prohousing Incentive Program (PIP), a state investment from the Building Homes and Jobs Trust Fund:

- [Prohousing Incentive Program \(PIP\)](#)

The Round 4 NOFA for the PIP program opened this month with applications due on March 31, 2026.

Local governments that receive the Prohousing Designation can also receive priority processing or funding points when applying for several funding programs, including:

- [Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities \(AHSC\)](#)
- [Infill Infrastructure Grant \(IIG\)](#)
- [Transformative Climate Communities \(TCC\)](#)
- [Solutions for Congested Corridors](#)
- [Local Partnership Program](#)
- [Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program \(TIRCP\)](#)
- [Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program \(STPG\)](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Encouraging more housing development within existing cities is a smart growth strategy that results in reduced vehicle miles traveled and thereby reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, as climate change results in increases in inland temperatures and fire risk, the addition of housing units on the coast will allow some people to move to the coast which is considered a climate refuge.

The proposed application is statutorily exempt from CEQA under the “Common Sense Exemption” (Section 15061b3).

ALTERNATIVES

Provide direction to not apply for the Pro-Housing designation

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution of the Fort Bragg City Council Authorizing Application to and Participation in the Prohousing Designation Program.
2. Prohousing Application “Self-Scoring Sheet”

NOTIFICATION

“Notify me” lists for Housing, Economic Development, Central Business District