MANUFACTURED HOME COMMUNITIES IN CALIFORNIA

The policy environment in California is highly favorable for manufactured housing. Homeowners’ rights in California manufactured home communities are protected by a series of strong statutes. In addition, many state programs exist that provide financial resources for community preservation and encourage energy-efficiency enhancements for homes and communities, and municipalities are required by state law to address manufactured housing in their consolidated plans. Also, a recently approved federal pilot program will make financing available for manufactured homes in land lease communities in the state.

Still, certain laws that directly affect homeowners’ capacity to preserve manufactured home communities through long-term ownership could be strengthened, and the state’s titling policy features a few key provisions that would likely present obstacles to homeowners in communities seeking to convert their homes to real property. Furthermore, the state’s fiscal challenges limit the resources that are available for the development and preservation of affordable housing, including manufactured housing. Many of the state’s housing programs are currently severely underfunded, but advocates are pushing for new sources of financing.

A manufactured home community can be a vibrant neighborhood that is an asset to the community at large. However, because the residents own their homes but not the land on which the homes sit, they are uniquely vulnerable—to confiscatory rent increases; arbitrary rule enforcement; failure to maintain the roads, utilities and common areas; and even closure of the community. If the community closes, the neighborhood disappears and many residents may be forced to abandon their homes. Most states, including California, have special laws protecting residents of manufactured home communities, but some of the critical laws that would enable residents to preserve long-term control over the land beneath their homes through community ownership could be improved.

LAWS PROTECTING HOMEOWNERS IN MANUFACTURED HOME COMMUNITIES

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<tr>
<th>KEY</th>
<th>STRONG PROTECTION</th>
<th>WEAK PROTECTION</th>
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<td>Affirmative protections for fundamental freedoms</td>
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<td>Protection against retaliation</td>
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<td>Notice before closure</td>
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<td>Purchase opportunity</td>
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<td>Protection against arbitrary eviction</td>
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<td>Right to sell home in place</td>
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<td>Relocation expenses</td>
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<td>Administrative complaint procedure</td>
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<td>Requires lease of at least one year</td>
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<td>Requires community owner to maintain the community</td>
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<td>Gives residents right to enforce the laws</td>
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AFFIRMATIVE PROTECTIONS FOR FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

California provides good protections for residents of manufactured housing communities, including the right to peacefully assemble or meet in the park or common area for any lawful purpose. Community owners or operators cannot interfere with residents’ rights to freely communicate with one another regarding issues related to the community.¹

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Even states that do not provide affirmative protections for residents’ fundamental freedoms often prohibit community owners from retaliating against residents for exercising their legal rights. California does not have a special manufactured home community law that prohibits retaliation against community residents for asserting any right or engaging in any
activity protected by law, but the state does have a broad anti-retaliation statute in its general landlord-tenant law.²

**NOTICE BEFORE COMMUNITY CLOSURE**

About half the states require a substantial notice period before a manufactured home community closes. In California, residents must be given at least six months’ notice if the community’s closure is approved by the local municipality. If such approval is not required, then residents must be provided with at least twelve 12 months’ notice prior to the community’s closure.² A number of states require longer notice periods.

**PURCHASE OPPORTUNITY**

Homeowners in manufactured home communities are vulnerable because they do not own the land under their homes. California is one of nineteen 19 states with a policy on the books to require or encourage community owners to give residents the opportunity to purchase the land on which their home sits. However, the state’s law is a limited one. Residents do not have a right of first refusal, which would require the community owner to sell the community to residents if they matched the terms of a bona fide offer. Rather, the law requires notice to a resident association, if such an association exists, of the owner’s intent to sell the community. The notice period is a minimum of thirty 30 days but no more than one year.⁴

**PROTECTION AGAINST ARBITRARY EVICTION**

Homeowners in manufactured home communities are protected from arbitrary eviction or nonrenewal of their lease. Residents cannot be evicted, nor can the community owner refuse to renew their lease, unless they violate one or more provisions outlined in the law, including failing to pay the lot rent or other charges or violating a reasonable rule or regulation.⁵

**RIGHT TO SELL HOME IN PLACE**

In some states—including California—community owners can effectively prevent homeowners from selling their homes by reserving the right to reject any potential buyer as a resident. However, such approval cannot be withheld if the purchaser has the financial ability to pay the fees and charges and will abide by the rules of the community, unless a community owner reasonably determines that, based upon the purchaser’s prior tenancies, he or she will not comply with community rules.⁶

**RELOCATION EXPENSES**

About 12 states have programs, usually funded at least in part by community owners, to pay the costs of moving homes if a manufactured home community closes. California has not established such a fund.

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Some states offer a simple administrative procedure for resolving residents’ complaints about their manufactured home community. The “Mobilehome Ombudsman” program helps resolve complaints from community residents related to health and safety matters. However, the Ombudsman program, however, does not help residents address key issues, such as unfair or illegal practices by community owners or other violations of state law.⁷

**REQUIREMENT OF LEASE OF AT LEAST ONE YEAR**

California requires the owner of a manufactured home community to offer 12-month leases to homeowners. About 20 other states require leases of at least a minimum duration. This requirement provides a modicum of security of tenure. (However, in California, if a resident accepts a lease that exceeds one year, local rent control does not apply).⁹

**REQUIREMENT THAT COMMUNITY OWNER MAINTAIN THE COMMUNITY**

California maintains a mobile home park maintenance inspection program to inspect a community’s common areas, buildings, equipment and utility systems for proper maintenance and compliance with state codes. State law specifically requires community owners to maintain common areas and infrastructure in good working order and condition.¹⁰
RESIDENT ABILITY TO ENFORCE THE LAWS
In California, residents have the right to bring an action to enforce the community owner’s obligation to maintain the common areas and infrastructure in good working order. If the resident prevails, he or she may receive punitive or statutory penalties.11

RIGHT TO TREAT MANUFACTURED HOMES AS REAL PROPERTY

The way in which a state governs the titling of manufactured homes, especially when homes may be converted from personal property to real property, has major implications for owners and purchasers. Although a modern manufactured home may be indistinguishable from a site-built home to many observers, it is typically considered personal property, like a car or a television set, rather than real property, absent some sort of conversion to real property. This classification as personal property, along with other issues common to manufactured housing, often keeps homeowners from enjoying the same security and potential for wealth creation enjoyed by owners of site-built homes.

In California, a manufactured home on leased land can be treated as real property, but only if it is placed on a permanent foundation and the lease term is 35 years or more.12 Basing a titling law on the nature of the home’s foundation is an approach that has a number of flaws: foundation system standards that ensure safety and durability of manufactured homes are already determined by federal, state and local agencies independent of titling law; some community owners prohibit residents from placing their homes on “permanent foundations”; and “permanent foundation” is an outdated, ill-defined term. Furthermore, minimum lease terms are problematic because few residents ever receive long-term leases, and in states like California with extensive rent controls statutes, long-term lease provisions could inadvertently influence the current structure of those rent stabilization laws. Both minimum lease terms and permanent foundation standards in titling statutes award community owners with undue and unjustifiable control over homeowners’ freedom to convert their home titles to real property.

STATE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT NONPROFIT MANUFACTURED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION

LICENSING ISSUES FOR NONPROFIT MANUFACTURED HOUSING DEVELOPERS
Licensure and regulation of manufactured home dealers is almost exclusively a state function. However, in California, no special license is required to sell or deal in manufactured homes.

STATE WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS AND OTHER MANUFACTURED HOUSING REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS
The California weatherization program provides assistance to families living in manufactured housing under the same processes and rules as other households. The major gas and electric utility in the San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont area is Pacific Gas and Electric. It offers three efficiency programs, one of which is specifically targeted to residents living in manufactured housing.13 Under the other energy-efficiency programs, families living in manufactured homes appear to be eligible on the same terms as other households.

Credit: Homes in Westport Village in Visalia, CA, which was developed by Visalia Affordable Homes as an affordable senior community and featured in a 2008 Manufactured Housing “Affordable Best Practices” guide written by California Coalition for Rural Housing.
PUBLIC FINANCING

California is a leader in the use of manufactured homes in all aspects of affordable housing development and preservation. The state provides financial aid—in the form of short-term conversion loans, long-term blanket loans and long-term individual loans—and technical assistance to homeowners, nonprofits and local governments seeking to purchase and preserve manufactured home communities through the state’s Mobilehome Park Rehabilitation and Resident Ownership Program (MPRROP). Advocates are working to retool the MPRROP, which currently has a surplus of more than $30 million available for rehabilitation of parks and conversion to resident ownership. Individual homeowners in communities can also access publicly subsidized funds for the purchase or repair of manufactured homes.

The California Housing Finance Agency (CalFHA) specifically includes manufactured homes in some of its loan programs, while it excludes them from others.

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<tr>
<th>FIRST MORTGAGE PROGRAMS</th>
<th>Product Specifics</th>
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<tr>
<td>CalHFA HFA Loan Program</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are allowed, as long as they are on a permanent foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CalPLUS HFA Loan Program</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are allowed, as long as they are on a permanent foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CalPLUS Conventional Program</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CalHFA Conventional Loan Program</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are not allowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cal-EEM + Grant Program</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are allowed, as long as the applicant has a 700+ credit score, the loan term does not exceed 20 years, the age of property does not exceed 25 years and the home has a maximum LTV/CLTV of 90.00%</td>
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<tr>
<th>DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS</th>
<th>Product Specifics</th>
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<tr>
<td>California Homebuyer's Down Payment Assistance Program (CHDAP)</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are allowed, as long as they are combined with a FHA first mortgage and are on a permanent foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Credit Teacher Home Purchase Program (ECTP)</td>
<td>Manufactured homes are not allowed</td>
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CalHFA defines a first-time homebuyer as someone who has:
- Never owned real estate.
- Owned real estate but has not owned and lived in the property during the past three years.
- Owned a home three or more years ago, but sold it.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development includes manufactured housing in only one of its loan programs. The CalHome Program provides grants to local public agencies or nonprofit organizations for first-time homebuyer downpayment assistance, home rehabilitation, including manufactured homes not on permanent foundations, acquisition and rehabilitation, pre-purchase counseling, self-help mortgage assistance programs or technical assistance for self-help homeownership. This program is contingent on funding availability.

In November 2016, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development moved to expand into California a pilot program for financing energy-efficient manufactured and modular housing in land-lease communities, which has already been in operation in Oregon, New Hampshire and Vermont. The two-year pilot allows low- and moderate-income homebuyers to access to both USDA Section 502 single-family housing direct and guaranteed mortgages on new manufactured homes in parks owned by a nonprofit, cooperative or tribal community. New manufactured homes secured with a first mortgage or leasehold interest on the land and a first lien on the home structure are eligible. The pilot is a notable first such lending program for residents of manufactured home communities, where 30-year mortgages and affordable, fixed interest rates are typically not available.
STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL ZONING FOR MANUFACTURED HOMES
California prohibits municipalities from restricting the placement of manufactured homes in areas designated for residential housing. A city or county must allow a manufactured home on a foundation system to be installed on lots zoned for conventional single-family residential dwellings. A city or county may, however, preclude installation of older homes in certain zones.

MORATORIUMS ON CLOSURE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITIES
California explicitly allows municipalities to adopt interim zoning ordinances that prohibit uses that conflict with a zoning ordinance that the municipality is considering or studying. The interim ordinance may last for 45 days and may be extended for up to two years. Such an interim ordinance was successfully used in one California city to prevent land used for residential purposes from being transformed into a shopping center.

LOCAL TAX & OTHER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES
Municipalities in California do not appear to have adopted tax or other financial incentives for preservation of manufactured home communities. However, many have local rent control and place other restrictions on closure.

LOCAL RENT CONTROL
A number of communities in California have adopted rent control ordinances for manufactured home communities. State law recognizes rent control ordinances but provides that if the homeowner accepts a lease of more than one year, the home is not governed by any local rent control ordinance. Local rent control ordinances, and measures to prevent community owners from evading them, are much more important components of the regulation of manufactured home communities in California than in most other states.

MANUFACTURED HOUSING INCLUSION IN CONSOLIDATED PLANNING, MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

LOCAL POLICIES GOVERNING MANUFACTURED HOMES IN FOUR CALIFORNIA COUNTIES
This section summarizes local policies governing manufactured homes in San Diego, Santa Clara, Sonoma and Mendocino Counties, focusing on planning, zoning, consolidated plans, local codes, local preservation efforts and special programs.

San Diego County
Manufactured and mobile homes make up 3.7% of the housing stock in San Diego County. These homes are disproportionately located in the unincorporated areas of the county, where they make up 7.2% of the housing stock.

Planning
The Housing Element of the county’s General Plan, spanning the planning period 2013-2020, points out that mobile or manufactured homes are examples of affordable housing that are consistent with rural character and recommends that existing regulations facilitate this type of development. It recommends clustering and small lots in rural areas as a way of reducing land and infrastructure costs, and notes that mobile and manufactured homes are a more affordable single-family purchase option in these areas. The Housing Element also recommends “programs that support the development of alternative types of affordable housing, such as farmworker housing, second dwelling units, manufactured or mobile homes, shared housing, and employee or workforce housing.”

A 2013 Housing Element Background Report states that the median sale price for a manufactured home is $185,000, making it more affordable than other types of single-family housing. The cost to buy a vacant lot in an unincorporated area of San Diego County, buy a manufactured home and install the home on the lot runs about $282,000. The plan notes that mobile and manufactured housing provides homes for many lower-income families in the county’s unincorporated back county areas where high density housing is not feasible because of dependence on groundwater and septic systems.

Consolidated Plan
The “County of San Diego Consortium Consolidated Plan-Annual Funding Plan” for FY 2016-2017, published by the County of San Diego Department of Housing and Community Development, covers the county’s unincorporated areas and a number of cities: Coronado, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Poway, Solana Beach, Carlsbad, Encinitas, La Mesa, San Marcos, Santee and Vista. The plan notes that to encourage the development of housing affordable to lower-income households and special needs households, the county provides density bonuses and expedited permit processing for affordable housing developments, including mobile and manufactured homes.
The San Diego County Ordinances include detailed requirements for manufactured homes on private lots and for manufactured home communities. For homes on private lots, the code requires, among other things, a pitched roof, a roof overhang and exterior wall material of a type customarily used on conventional dwellings. For manufactured home communities, the code specifies such matters as setbacks, fencing, landscaping, open space, paving of interior drives, water and sewer connections, and density. The code prohibits permanent foundations in rental communities other than subdivided parks, parks where residents rent the homes and parks where the minimum lot rent term is 55 years. The code includes requirements for relocation of residents if a manufactured home community’s use is to be changed.

Special programs
A consortium of jurisdictions in the county offers a First-Time Homebuyer Program to qualified residents of public and manufactured housing and other families assisted by public agencies. Both funds and education are provided to help families attain and maintain homeownership. The Downpayment and Closing Program offers low-interest, deferred-payment loans of up to $70,000 or 33% of the purchase price (whichever is less). Both new and resale single-family homes, condominiums, townhomes and manufactured homes on a permanent foundation are eligible. The county also has an Urban County Home Repair Program for the 2016-2017 period, which provides low-interest deferred loans and grants to low-income homeowners and manufactured home owners for comprehensive home repairs related to the health and safety of the homeowner.

Santa Clara County
Planning
There is little mention of manufactured homes in Santa Clara County’s most recently available General Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report or Annual Action Plan. However, the County’s updated “Housing Element Update” for 2015-2022, published in 2014, documents that there are 18,582 manufactured homes in the county. The plan mentions the need for agricultural worker housing and notes that this housing has historically “involved short term, not permanent housing, in the form of mobile homes or manufactured housing permissible by issuance of a Special Permit, a minor form of land use approval, lesser in cost and requirements than a Use Permit.” It concludes that these procedures and requirements “provide an adequate basis for such employee needs while also ensuring basic public health, safety and welfare objectives can be met.”

The only mention of manufactured homes in the section of the document that describes the county’s goals is a report that the county had accomplished its goal of creating and disseminating user-friendly brochures, booklets, handouts and website material about “secondary housing” (e.g., “mother-in-law” units). The discussion states that “[s]econdary dwellings and manufactured homes provide a valuable and relatively affordable form of housing for family members, the elderly, students, in-home health care providers, the disabled and others.” The brochure that was produced focuses mostly on secondary dwellings, but also points out the cost benefits of manufactured homes and states that county planning, zoning and building requirements are the same for manufactured homes as for site-built housing.

Code/Zoning Ordinances
The County’s zoning ordinances define a manufactured home as a single-family dwelling as long as it meets the HUD Code. Manufactured homes are permitted by right in all residential districts. The County’s Housing Element Update confirms this treatment, stating that mobile homes and factory built housing are classified as single-family residences and are allowed in all zoning districts “where permitted,” and that permit requirements for these residences are “by right.” Manufactured housing is permitted as a form of either single-family residential construction or secondary dwelling (e.g., “mother-in-law” unit), and these homes are treated the same as site-built homes with respect to zoning. The county’s zoning ordinances also address the use of manufactured homes as short-term agricultural worker housing.

Local property taxes
A brochure from the Santa Clara Office of the Assessor explains the standards for taxation of manufactured homes. Manufactured homes are taxed either through the local property tax system administered by the county in which the home is situated or by payment of vehicle “in-lieu” license fees to the State. The local property tax applies to all new manufactured homes purchased after June 30, 1980, and all homes on permanent foundations, regardless of age. For these homes, the assessed value may be increased by no more than 2% annually, unless there is a change in ownership or new construction. The brochure notes that most manufactured homes are bought and sold based upon not only the quality and age of the manufactured home, but also based upon the location and amenities of the park, the Assessor has the difficult task under state law of separating the manufactured home value from the site value. This is a complex appraisal and the State Board of Equalization provides assessors with extensive guidelines on how to value these homes.

Local preservation efforts
A three-way partnership to preserve the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park in Palo Alto was approved in 2016 by Santa Clara County, the City of Palo Alto and the Housing Authority of Santa Clara County. The partnership entails contributions of $14.5 million each in affordable
housing fees by the City and the County, plus a financial contribution from the Housing Authority, if necessary. The Housing Authority will acquire and own the property, with the Park to be maintained, improved and operated by a nonprofit entity. The Buena Vista Mobile Home Park is home to approximately 117 mostly low-income Latino families—about 400 people in total—who would have been displaced if the owner’s plan to close the park had been implemented.

**Special programs**

San Diego County’s Owner-Occupied Residential Rehabilitation Program includes manufactured homes that need repairs and improvements to correct conditions causing them to be substandard. However, the program’s website says that it is not accepting applications at this time.

San Diego County also has a Mortgage Credit Certificate Program that provides financial assistance to first-time homebuyers for the purchase of single-family homes, townhomes and condominiums. Manufactured homes are eligible for this assistance.

**Sonoma County**

**Planning**

The Land Use Element section of the 2020 Sonoma County General Plan outlines the county’s residential land use policy. It notes that permitted uses in high-density residential areas are: attached single-family and multifamily dwellings, affordable housing projects as provided in the Housing Element and manufactured home parks. Primary land uses in medium density residential areas are single-family, clustered and multifamily dwellings, affordable housing projects as provided in the Housing Element, and manufactured home parks.

The Housing Element of Sonoma’s General Plan, adopted in 2014, stresses the importance of sustaining existing affordable housing programs and affordable units. Several of the goals listed in the plan address the problem of removing manufactured home parks from the affordable housing stock by converting them to condominiums. The plan notes that the state had passed S.B. 510 in 2010, which requires various protections when a park is converted, including a cap on rent increases for lower-income residents. The county plans to implement the law and adopt an ordinance. In addition, the Sonoma County Code imposes a number of requirements before a use permit can be issued that would allow the conversion, closure or cessation of use of a manufactured home park: (1) findings by a county board that there is adequate space in other parks for the residents to relocate, or that there is land already zoned and approved for development that will allow replacement housing for the residents, (2) a relocation plan and (3) an adequate impact report.

The plan also notes an ongoing county initiative to assist in the purchase of existing manufactured home parks in order to increase affordability, and to provide staff resources to nonprofits and residents when funding and staffing levels permit. It stresses the importance of continuing to administer the county’s Mobile Home Rent Stabilization Ordinance.

**Consolidated Plan**

The 2015 Sonoma County Consolidated Plan and FY 2015-16 Action Plan relates to what the plan terms the “Urban County,” consisting of the unincorporated area of Sonoma County plus the Town of Windsor and the cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Sonoma. Another way to describe the area is the entire County of Sonoma except the incorporated areas of Santa Rosa and Petaluma.

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The plan focuses on providing rental housing restricted to extremely low- and very low-income households, as they are the urban county residents who are least able to access the housing market. Based on 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, seven percent of residential properties (7,761) in the Urban County belong to the “mobile home, boat, RV, van, etc.” category. The plan also notes that “[t]here are over 1,160 units in affordable senior complexes in Sonoma County. Many additional senior units are in the 128 manufactured home parks county-wide (including Santa Rosa and Petaluma), which are protected in the Urban County by the county’s Mobile Home Rent Stabilization Program or by local Mobile Home Rent Stabilization ordinances enacted by the cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma and the Town of Windsor.”

The plan addresses its objectives for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program income: “The Urban County will continue to direct the vast majority of CDBG program income and reprogrammed funds to the Housing Rehabilitation program that serves the entire Urban County. Additionally, the Commission will continue to pursue and secure non-federal funding to operate and sustain the Housing Rehabilitation program, which has rehabilitated thousands of units since its inception in the 1970s. The program focus shall remain providing deferred-payment loans and construction management assistance to low-income owner-occupants residing in single family and mobile homes.” The plan will fund assistance for investor-owned units only if the owner executes a long-term affordability covenant.

The Sonoma County Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, published in 2012, identifies as a serious barrier to fair housing the fact that some manufactured home park owners have refused to let children play outside. It also expresses a concern with park owners’ failure to give lease contracts with residents and proposes a series of seminars as a solution.
Zoning
The county revised its zoning ordinances in 2010 so that now manufactured homes are allowed on any residential lot.65

Special Programs
The Sonoma County Community Development Commission has operated owner-occupied and rental housing rehabilitation program for three decades. The Owner and Rental Rehabilitation Program has made 662 housing rehabilitation loans to low-income households, 124 housing access modification grants to low-income households with disabilities and 487 Earthquake Bracing Grants for Mobilehomes.66 This program continues to be active, and demand continues to be high, especially for manufactured home rehabilitation. The program is available throughout the Urban County.67

The county plans had provided funding for production and rehabilitation of affordable housing, including manufactured homes, through a Redevelopment Agency Set Aside. The plan notes that the Redevelopment Agency has been dissolved and there are no more set aside funds, but that funding from the County Fund for Housing continues to be devoted to permanent affordable housing and that the program is being reevaluated.68

Mendocino County

Planning
The Housing Element of the Mendocino County General Plan was updated in 2015 and covers the 2014-2019 time period.69 It highlights manufactured and mobile housing as ways to access more affordable homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. The plan consistently uses the term “mobile home,” including for units that comply with the HUD code. It notes that, per the 2010 Census, there were 4,909 manufactured home units in the unincorporated area of the county, accounting for 13% of the housing stock. As of 2013, manufactured homes comprised 15.7% of housing stock in the unincorporated areas of the county.70 Approximately 35 manufactured homes were delivered between 2009 and 2013.71

According to the plan, manufactured homes range in price from approximately $35,000 to $80,000, depending on the size, amenities and age. According to the 2000 Census, there are 57 manufactured home parks in the unincorporated area of the County with a total of 1,463 spaces. Most manufactured home parks are located in the southern (964 spaces) and the coastal (365 spaces) regions, with fewer in the north (118 spaces). For homes in manufactured home communities, which the plan refers to as mobile home parks, the cost of renting a space, usually including water, sewer and garbage service, ranged from $270 to $640 per month as of an April 2009 phone survey. Most manufactured home parks reported few vacancies, and several in the coastal region reported waiting lists.72

The plan describes manufactured home parks as offering an affordable alternative to purchasing a single-family lot.73 In addition, manufactured home parks offer housing opportunities for elder people and special needs groups and are an affordable homeownership option for farmworkers and other low- and moderate-income households.74 While the County has a number of manufactured home parks, most are located in the incorporated cities.75

One of the goals of the Housing Element section of the plan is listed as preserving and improving existing housing stock, especially for low- and moderate-income households. One action proposed in the plan to address this goal is to explore establishing a program to facilitate the replacement of older mobile homes in order to remove substandard units from County housing stock.76 Later sections of the plan note that a number of homes have been replaced with new homes and that this is an ongoing activity of the County Department of Planning and Building Services.77

The plan’s section on housing accomplishments includes a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness, implementation and appropriateness of the goals, policies and objectives listed in the 2014 Housing Element. One of the actions that had been recommended in 2014 to conserve and improve the condition of the county’s stock was to “[p]rovide assistance to tenants and/or nonprofit organizations interested in purchasing and preserving mobilehome [sic] parks by applying for funding through the Mobilehome Park Resident Ownership Program or the Mobilehome Park Tenant Acquisition Program.” However, this program was assigned to the county Community Development Commission, which indicated that it does not feel it has the staff nor the time to complete this action, so the 2015 update recommending deleting the action as infeasible.78

The county has created a booklet, available online, giving details about the permitting and inspection process for installation of a manufactured home.79

Zoning
The Housing Element of the county’s General Plan states that the county allows manufactured homes on permanent foundations in all single-family zones.80 The plan notes that the county’s land use rules specifically authorize manufactured home parks in several areas, but that
they are disallowed in others. A Major Use Permit is required for manufactured home parks in all zones that permit them. It also notes that state law requires local governmental units to allow manufactured home parks in all residential zones, although a use permit may be required. A later section of the report states that the county has adopted an amendment to its zoning ordinances to bring them into line with this state law. The plan speaks favorably of allowing parks in all residential zones, noting that this may encourage the development of more parks and that permitting manufactured home parks in the higher density residential zones, where public services exist, may provide additional opportunities for park locations.

The plan observes that the county’s zoning ordinances also more stringent standards for density and site development for manufactured home parks than does the state Mobile Home Parks Act. The County requires a five-acre minimum size, a minimum of 10 lots (inland ordinance), common areas and recreational facilities, landscaping, fencing, etc. A later section of the plan states that the county has adopted an amendment to its zoning ordinances to reduce these constraints.

**Code**

The county’s Inland Zoning Code includes physical standards for manufactured home communities and to manufactured homes. The standards for manufactured home communities set a minimum area of five acres and a minimum lot size of 80’ x 50’, and address other matters such as parking spaces, recreation areas, storage, landscaping, utilities and roadways. The standards require a community recreation center if the community has 20 lots or more. The standards for individual homes are fairly minimal, requiring that in certain zoning districts they must be at least 720 square feet, have non-reflective roofs and siding, and have siding that extends to the ground (or to the top of the foundation if the foundation is solid concrete or masonry).

ENDNOTES

3. Section Cal.Civ. Code § 798.56, (g) 2
19. Id. at 6-8.
20. Id. at 6-10.
21. Id. at 6-14.
23. Id. at 80.
24. Id. at 94 (including more detailed data).
26. Id. at 50.
29. Id. at 97.
31. “General Plan.” County of Santa Clara, November 2, 2016. [https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpdf/PlansOrdinances/GP/Background/GPmay.aspx](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpdf/PlansOrdinances/GP/Background/GPmay.aspx) (covering the years 1995-2010, identifying certain areas of special environmental concern and noting that in areas designated as Special Flood Hazards, “development shall comply with special regulations regarding the construction and improvement of structures, mobile homes, water and sewer systems adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in order to minimize flood damage and potential contamination of surface waters”).
35. Id. at 77.
36. Id. at 155.
37. Id.
38. Id. at 253.
Innovations in Manufactured Homes (I’M HOME) is a national initiative managed by CFED which seeks to ensure that owners of manufactured homes have the opportunity to build wealth through homeownership by improving the quality of new and replacement development, enhancing homeowners’ ability to enjoy long-term land security, expanding access to safe home financing and encouraging a supportive policy environment.