



## PLANNING COMMISSION

---

Board of Supervisors Chambers  
400 County Center, Redwood City

### ITEM 3

Owner: ..... N/A

Applicant: ..... County Planning and Building Department

File Number: .... N/A

Location: ..... Countywide

APNs: ..... Various

Project Description:

**An informational update on the County's efforts to streamline and incentivize the production and legalization of second units**

---

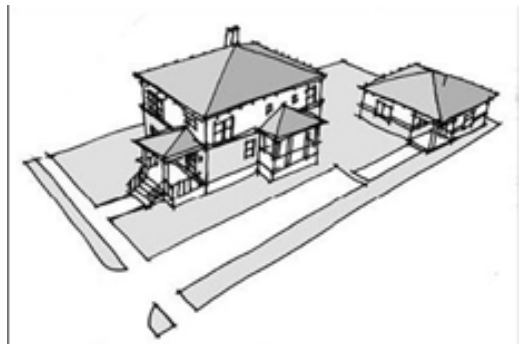
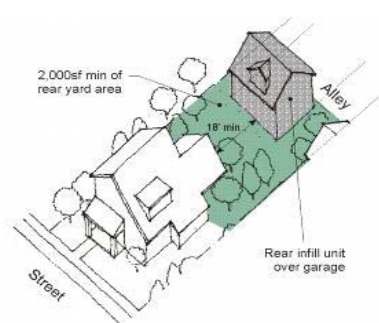
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT



## SECOND UNITS

### PROJECT COMPONENTS

- Update the County's existing second unit regulations (Zoning Regulations Chapter 22):
  - Simplify creation of new second units
  - Streamline legalization of existing, unpermitted second units
- Create an amnesty program to encourage legalization of existing units
- Create pre-approved design templates for new second units



PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT



## PROJECT IMPETUS

---

- California law **AB 1866** (2003)
  - Requires jurisdictions to update second units regulations for consistency with state standards
  - Eliminates all discretionary approval of second units; approvals must be ministerial
  - Requires that explicit purpose of second unit regulations is to simplify and encourage the creation of second units



## PROJECT IMPETUS

---

### Purpose of AB 1866:

**"The Legislature finds and declares that second units are a valuable form of housing in California.** Second units provide housing for family members, students, the elderly, in-home health care providers, the disabled, and others, at below market prices within existing neighborhoods. Homeowners who create second units benefit from added income, and an increased sense of security. **It is the intent of the Legislature that any second-unit ordinances adopted by local agencies have the effect of providing for the creation of second units** and that provisions in these ordinances relating to matters including unit size, parking, fees and other requirements, are not so arbitrary, excessive, or burdensome so as to unreasonably restrict the ability of homeowners to create second units in zones in which they are authorized by local ordinance."



## PROJECT IMPETUS

---

### **Board of Supervisors Housing White Paper and Study Session (May 2015)**

- Recognizes regional housing crisis driven by housing shortage and jobs-housing gap
- Identifies second units as a valuable strategy to address housing needs
- BOS directed staff to pursue updates to existing regulations, and strategies to incentivize new second units and legalize existing units (modeled in part on Santa Cruz program)
- Measure A funding allocated to this effort



## PROJECT IMPETUS

---

### San Mateo County Housing Element

- Approved by Planning Commission, adopted by BOS in 2014
- Policies 11.4, 18.2, 18.3, HE 32.1 through 32.4 address second units (and small home prototypes)
- Policies commit County to facilitate and incentivize second units, encourage and allow very small home types, and legalize unpermitted units



## SECOND UNITS - BENEFITS

---

### Second Units Benefit Homeowners and Second Unit Occupants

- Provides additional housing on existing lots
- Smaller and cheaper than many housing types – to build, and to occupy
- Allows additional residential space on-site for extended families
- Can provide a source of rental income for home owner
- Adds to property value
- Appropriate for seniors, lower-income groups, others
- Environmentally friendly: infill development, connected to existing infrastructure and services



## SECOND UNITS

---

### **Purpose of Second Unit Regulations (County Zoning Code, Chapter 22):**

"Increase the totality and diversity of the County's housing stock, in particular the stock of smaller and more affordable units, by allowing second units to be built on residential properties.

"Increase the housing stock of existing neighborhoods in a manner that is less intense than alternatives.

"Allow more efficient use of existing housing stock and infrastructure.

"Provide a means for residents, particularly seniors, single parents, and families with grown children, to remain in their homes and neighborhoods.

"Establish standards for second dwelling units to ensure that they are safe, habitable, and compatible with existing development."





## SECOND UNITS

---

**Many jurisdictions have completed or are undertaking similar efforts**

- Santa Cruz: most emulated model; includes amnesty, preapproved designs
- Redwood City (ongoing); Menlo Park (recently completed)
- Others: Marin, Half Moon Bay, Palo Alto, Mountain View, San Francisco

**Efforts endorsed by:**

- AARP
- SAMCAR
- Affordable housing advocates



## UPDATES TO EXISTING REGULATION

---

### Comprehensive update to:

1. Achieve consistency with state law
2. Streamline production and legalization of second units
  - Reduction in development/zoning standards
  - Standardization across zones
  - Eliminate all discretionary approvals (required by state law)
    - No discretionary design review
    - No public hearing
    - No public noticing
  - NOTE: Coastal zone second unit policies must be consistent with Local Coastal Program, and may require modified policies



## SECOND UNITS

---

### Updates to Existing Regulations:

- Modified setbacks, building separation
  - Standardized heights across districts (1-2 story maximum regardless of district)
  - Parking
  - Minimum building site
- 

- Allowed floor area/size likely to remain similar to existing standard
  - Attached second units still required to follow basic zoning standards
  - Legalization of existing units allowed under same standards as new units – or under standards in place at time of creation
-



## SECOND UNITS

---

### **Amnesty Program:**

- "No fault" prescreening – no penalty for application
- Fee waivers, penalty waivers
- Grant or loan assistance for rehabilitation

### **Process:**

- Consultant team
- Planning Department, Housing Department
- Rely on best practices, lessons from other jurisdictions



## SECOND UNITS

---

### **Preapproved Design Templates**

- Streamlined approval with off-the-shelf, neighborhood-specific designs
- Eliminates need for design by applicant
- Saves time and cost
- Guarantees design/zoning compliance

### **Process**

- Consultant team
- Planning Department, Housing Department
- Team with other jurisdictions through 21 Elements



## SECOND UNITS - TIMELINE

---

- Updates to existing ordinance: Planning Commission early 2016
- Amnesty Program: November 2015 – April 2016
- Pre-approved Design Templates – Mid-Late 2016



## SECOND UNITS

