

Resolution Number 25-03

County of Sonoma
Santa Rosa, California

June 5, 2025
GPA25-0001

**RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE
COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, FINDING THE
PROPOSED SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE CONSISTENT WITH
THE SONOMA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AND
RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
APPROVE A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT REPEALING THE
PUBLIC SAFETY ELEMENT AND ADOPTING THE SAFETY
ELEMENT UPDATE, AND ADOPT AN ADDENDUM TO THE
GENERAL PLAN 2020 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 65300 requires each city and county to adopt a general plan; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65302(g) requires and establishes the legislative framework for general plan safety elements and requires safety elements to be reviewed, and if necessary, revised upon each revision of the housing element or local hazard mitigation plan, but not less than once every eight years; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65302(g)(4) requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated as necessary to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies beginning on or before January 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65302(g)(5) requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated as necessary to identify residential developments in any hazard area identified in the safety element that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes, upon revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65302.15 requires that on or after January 1, 2022 the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to identify evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability and evacuation locations under a range of emergency scenarios; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 ("General Plan 2020") by Resolution No. 08-0808 on September 23, 2008, and certified the Final EIR for General Plan 2020 by Resolution No. 08-0807 on the same date; and

WHEREAS, the County last amended the Public Safety Element of General Plan 2020 by Resolution No. 14-0355 on September 9, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors adopted an update to the General Plan Housing Element by Resolution No. 23-0429 on August 23, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the County of Sonoma is updating the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Public Safety Element (“Safety Element Update”) and preparing a new Environmental Justice Element, in accordance with Government Code Section 65302(h), in advance of a comprehensive update to the General Plan to comply with state requirements for general plan updates; and

WHEREAS, the County sent an invitation to consult under Government Code Section 65352.3 and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to California Native American tribes on June 19, 2024, and no Tribe requested consultation; and

WHEREAS, on July 23, 2024, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors held an informational workshop at its regular public meeting time to discuss the proposed Safety Element Update and provide direction to staff on policy approaches; and

WHEREAS, the County conducted extensive community engagement and outreach since December 2022, including working directly on project components with a community advisory group, attending community events, hosting focus groups, conducting an online survey, and joining community advisory council and community group meetings; and

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 2140, passed in 2006, enacted Government Code Sections 8685.9 and 65302.6, which allow California cities and counties to be eligible for additional state cost-share on eligible public assistance projects under the California Disaster Assistance Act if the city or county adopts their local hazard mitigation plan into the general plan safety element; and

WHEREAS, the County has prepared a Safety Element Update that substantively addresses all requirements provided under Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15 and incorporates by reference the County’s current local hazard mitigation plan; and

WHEREAS, the County published a draft of the Safety Element Update for a public review period from March 28, 2025 to April 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the County solicited public input on the draft Safety Element Update during the public review period through an online survey, a virtual community workshop held on April 23, 2025, and written public comment; and

WHEREAS, the County considered and incorporated community feedback where appropriate; and

WHEREAS, as provided in Government Code Section 65352, the County sent a notice of the pending general plan amendment and availability of the draft Safety Element Update to listed public entities and all California Native American tribes provided by the Native American Heritage Commission on April 23, 2025; and

WHEREAS, County staff submitted the draft Safety Element Update to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) during the public review period. CAL FIRE recommended minor revisions to the draft, which have been incorporated into the draft Safety Element Update presented to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, with the additions recommended by CAL FIRE, CAL FIRE has determined that the draft Safety Element Update will meet state requirements. CAL FIRE will present the draft to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection for final review prior to the County Board of Supervisors' review for adoption at a public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the County submitted the draft Safety Element Update to the California Geological Survey of the Department of Conservation on April 23, 2025 in accordance with Government Code Section 65302.5, and the County has not yet received a response; and

WHEREAS, the County prepared an addendum to the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Environmental Impact Report ("General Plan 2020 EIR"), certified in September 2008. The addendum documents that the analysis in the General Plan 2020 EIR adequately addresses the potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the update to the Safety Element as part of General Plan 2020; that the Safety Element update project would not trigger any of the conditions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR; and therefore that preparation of an addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR is appropriate, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15164; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered the addendum together with the General Plan 2020 EIR;

WHEREAS, in accordance with applicable provisions of law, on June 5, 2025, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the Safety Element Update to review and forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. In the hearing the Planning Commission heard and received all relevant testimony and evidence presented orally or in writing regarding the Safety Element Update; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has had an opportunity to review this Resolution and finds that it accurately sets forth the intentions of the Commission regarding the Safety Element Update;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Planning Commission resolves as follows:

- A. The Safety Element Update substantively addresses all requirements provided under Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15:
 1. The Safety Element Update establishes goals, policies, and implementation measures to protect the community from unreasonable risks associated with seismically induced hazards, geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland and urban fires, and to address climate vulnerabilities with adaptation and resilience strategies.

2. The Safety Element Update incorporates information about hazards affecting Sonoma County from a variety of federal, state, and local data sources.
 3. The Safety Element Update provides maps of regulatory hazard areas using the most current available data.
 4. The Safety Element Update identifies residential developments in hazard areas that have fewer than two emergency evacuation routes and includes an implementation measure for additional review of residential areas with limited emergency egress.
 5. The Safety Element Update identifies potential evacuation routes and assesses the capacity, safety, and viability and potential evacuation locations under a range of emergency scenarios, and further includes an implementation measure for additional review of evacuation constraints.
- B. The Safety Element Update is consistent with and supportive of the overall goals and objectives of the other elements of the General Plan as follows:
1. The Safety Element Update's goals, policies, and implementation measures regulating development in known hazard areas to reduce risk are consistent with Goal LU-7 in the Land Use Element, and related objectives and policies, to prevent the unnecessary exposure of people and property to environmental risks and hazards and limit development on lands that are vulnerable or sensitive to environmental damage.
 2. Policies and implementation measures in the Safety Element Update that support landscape restoration and conservation to improve resilience to climate hazards are consistent with the goals and policies in the Land Use Element and Open Space and Resource Conservation Element that encourage the protection of the County's natural landscapes and resources, including but not limited to Policy LU-11f, Goal OSRC-7 and OSRC-8, and Policy OSRC-7o.
 3. The goals, policies, and implementation measures of the Safety Element Update complement the Water Resources Element related to drought planning, water supply, and conservation.
- C. The Addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR was prepared consistent with CEQA, and accurately demonstrates that none of the conditions listed in Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 exist that would require preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission finds the Safety Element Update is consistent with the General Plan and recommends that the Board of Supervisors: 1) approve a General Plan amendment repealing the Public Safety Element and adopting the Safety Element Update as provided in Exhibit A, and 2) adopt Exhibit B, the Addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR certified in September 2008 (State Clearinghouse No. 2003012020); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission designates the Secretary of the Planning Commission as the custodian of the documents and other material which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision herein is based. These documents may be found at the office of the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was introduced by Commissioner Striplen, who moved its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Freeman, and adopted on roll call by the following vote:

Commissioner Freeman	Aye
Commissioner Gilardi	Aye
Commissioner Striplen	Aye
Commissioner Koenigshofer	Absent
Commissioner McCaffery	Aye

Ayes: 4 Noes: 0 Absent: 1 Abstain: 0

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the above and foregoing Resolution duly adopted; and

SO ORDERED.