



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: August 12, 2025

Item Number: _____

Resolution Number: _____

☒ 4/5 Vote Required

**Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California,
Amending The Sonoma County General Plan To Repeal The Public Safety Element And Adopt
The Safety Element Update, And Adopting 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, the Safety Element is a mandatory element of the General Plan, and adoption of the Safety Element is a General Plan amendment, as provided in Government Code Section 65350 et. seq.; 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, on September 23, 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 (“General Plan 2020”), including the Public Safety Element, by Resolution No. 08-0808, and certified the Final EIR for General Plan 2020 by Resolution No. 08-0807 on the same date; and

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

Whereas, on August 23, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted an update to the General Plan Housing Element by Resolution No. 23-0429; 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, on June 19, 2024 the County sent invitations to consult under Government Code Section 65352.3 and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to California Native American tribe provided by the Native American Heritage Commission, 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, on December 7, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 21-0494, adopting designated portions of the Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, designating the adopted Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (“Hazard Mitigation Plan”) as the Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan incorporated by reference into the General Plan Public Safety Element, and resolving to integrate the adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan by reference into the Public Safety Element Update, in accordance with Government Code sections 65302, 65302.6, and 8685.9; and

Whereas, the County has prepared a Safety Element Update that substantively addresses all State law requirements for general plan safety elements, including but not limited to the requirements of Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15, and incorporates by reference the County’s current 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, on April 23, 2025, consistent with Government Code Section 65352, the County sent a notice of the pending general plan amendment and availability of the draft Safety Element to listed public entities and all California Native American tribes provided by the Native American Heritage Commission; 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, to which CAL FIRE recommended minor revisions that were subsequently incorporated by staff; 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 as of August 1, 2025 the County has not yet received a response; and

Whereas, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, the County prepared an Addendum to the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Environmental Impact Report ("General Plan 2020 EIR"), attached as Exhibit B and incorporated by reference. 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, on June 5, 2025, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to hear and consider public testimony and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Safety Element Update; and

Whereas, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors repeal the existing Public Safety Element and adopt the Safety

Element, and adopt the addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR; and

Whereas, on July 22, 2025, CAL FIRE staff presented the County's Safety Element Update to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection at its regular monthly meeting as required by Government Code Section 65302.5(b) prior to adoption of the Safety Element; and

Whereas, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection approved the County's Safety Element Update, inclusive of its Appendices B and C regarding evacuation, with positive feedback on the Element's information, policies, and analysis, and made non-substantive, editorial recommendations that were subsequently incorporated into the Safety Element Update presented to the Board of Supervisors; and

Whereas, on August 12, 2025, the Board of Supervisors conducted a duly noticed public hearing to take public testimony and consider adoption of the Safety Element Update and addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR. The Board reviewed and considered the Safety Element, including its appendices and the Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is incorporated into the Safety Element Update by reference; the recommendations of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection; all oral and written public comments; and all other pertinent materials; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of Supervisors makes the following findings, based on substantial evidence in the record:

- A. The Safety Element Update, including its appendices and the incorporated Hazard Mitigation Plan, substantively addresses all requirements provided under Government Code Sections 65302(g) and 65302.15:
 - a. 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.

- b. The Safety Element Update incorporates information about hazards affecting Sonoma County from a variety of federal, state, and local data sources.
 - c. The Safety Element Update provides maps of regulatory hazard areas using the most current available data.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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:
- a. 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.
 - b. 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.

- c. 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 Board of Supervisors has considered the Addendum to the General Plan 2020 EIR, attached as Exhibit B and incorporated herein by reference, together with the General Plan 2020 Final EIR included as Attachments 8a-8c to the item summary and incorporated herein by reference. The Board finds that the Addendum to General Plan 2020 EIR was prepared consistent with CEQA, and 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 previously adopted Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan, as defined herein, is incorporated by reference into the Safety Element Update.

Be It Further Resolved that the Board of Supervisors hereby amends the Sonoma County General Plan as follows:

1. The Public Safety Element is repealed.
2. The Safety Element Update, attached as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference, is adopted.

Be It Further Resolved that the Board of Supervisors designates the Director of Permit Sonoma or designee 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 County of Sonoma Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403.

Supervisors:

Hermosillo: Coursey: Gore: Hopkins: Rabbitt:

Ayes: Noes: Absent: Abstain:

So Ordered.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A. Safety Element Update and Appendices

Exhibit B. Addendum to the General Plan 2020 Environmental Impact Report