



HOUSING PROGRAMS CHEAT SHEET

If you have questions or need additional information, please visit sfplanning.org or contact the Planning counter at 628.652.7300 or pic@sfgov.org.

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1 PLANNING CODE CONSIDERATIONS

The Planning Code allows for residential uses in most Zoning Districts throughout the City. Project sponsors should consider the following Planning Code controls for any project that proposes the addition of residential uses.

Housing Types

There are two primary types of housing stock: Dwelling Units and Group Housing rooms. Dwelling Units are generally characterized by the existence of a full kitchen including an oven and are occupied by a single-family unit, which is defined as five or fewer unrelated adults. Group Housing rooms may have limited cooking facilities, but do not contain a full kitchen in each room. Group Housing may include (but is not limited to) communes, fraternities and sororities, or Residential Hotels.

Residential Uses

Each of the Housing Types described above may also be defined by a residential use type, such as student housing, senior housing, or restricted affordable units (e.g. below market rate inclusionary units).

Density

Density describes the number of units that are allowed on a development site within a specific Zoning District. Density can be controlled as a maximum ratio of units to lot area, or can be controlled by the allowable building envelope that is in turn regulated by other provisions of the Planning Code such as setbacks, height, and bulk.

Removal of Existing Dwelling Units

The removal of any existing residential uses, including Unauthorized Dwelling Units, requires a Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission. The Department's current policy strongly favors the retention of sound housing stock. Removal of a single-family home in a RH-1 or RH-1(D) Zoning District may be approved administratively if the value of the land and structure exceeds 80% of the combined land and [structure values of single-family homes in San Francisco](#). Unauthorized Dwelling Units may be removed administratively if there is no path to legalize under the Planning Code.

2 HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR MARKET-RATE AND MIXED-INCOME PROJECTS

Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program

The Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program requires residential projects of 10 or more units to pay an Affordable Housing Fee, or to provide a percentage of units as affordable "on-site" within the project or "off-site" at another location in the City. (Planning Code § 415, 419).

HOME-SF

[HOME-SF](#) is San Francisco's local density bonus program for mixed-income projects in specific geographic areas and zoning districts. Eligible projects are exempted from density limits, may seek zoning modifications from a pre-determined list, and may be eligible for additional height. HOME-SF projects must provide at least (1) between 20 and 30 percent of the units as affordable units for low, middle, and moderate-income households, and (2) 40% of the units in the building with at least two-bedrooms. The Planning Commission will evaluate HOME-SF projects against the criteria listed in Planning Code Section 328. (Planning Code § 203.6, 328).

Analyzed State Density Bonus Program

The [Analyzed State Density Bonus Program](#) is a local density bonus program that serves as an alternative to the Individually Requested Density Bonus in specific geographic areas and zoning districts. Projects are eligible for a density bonus of up to 35% depending on the amount of affordable housing provided and the level of affordability, and may choose from a pre-determined list of waivers, incentives and concessions. Analyzed Density Bonus Programs require Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission. (Planning Code § 206.5, 303).

Individually Requested State Density Bonus Program

Projects under the [Individually Requested State Density Bonus Program](#) are eligible for a density bonus of up to 35% above the maximum allowable residential density depending on the amount of affordable housing provided and the level of affordability. Projects may seek up to three incentives and concessions and unlimited waivers from site development standards. The Individually Requested State Density Bonus does not waive any required local processes, so Planning Commission approval is often required for associated required entitlements. (Planning Code §206.6, California Government Code § 65915).

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

ADUs are also known as secondary units, in-law units or cottages. ADUs may be added to existing residential buildings Citywide, and are eligible for up to six waivers from specific Planning Code requirements including density, rear yard, open space, parking, bicycle parking, and exposure. ADUs may be subject to components of the Rent Ordinance, such as eviction controls, and ADUs which require waivers will likely be subject to Rent Control. There are two ADU programs: the [Waiver Program](#) (Planning Code § 207(c)(4)) or the [No-Waiver Program](#) (Planning Code § 207(c)(6)).

Legalization of Unauthorized Dwelling Units (UDUs)

The [Legalization Program](#) provides amnesty to units which have been constructed without the benefit of permit prior to January 1, 2013. It provides waivers for certain Planning Code requirements including density, rear yard, open space, parking, and exposure. The Legalization Program allows for the legalization of one unit per lot. (Planning Code § 207.3).

“Density Bonus for Projects with 20-25% Affordability”

This program addresses projects that provide at least 20% on-site affordability, and provides that those units in excess of 20% are exempt from density limits. Referred to as the “baby bonus,” this program cannot be used in conjunction with the Individually Requested State Density Bonus Program, nor can it be applied to projects in the RH-1 and RH-2 Zoning Districts. (Planning Code § 207(c)(1)).

3

HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR PROJECTS WITH SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED AFFORDABILITY

Administrative Approval

100% Affordable Projects that are not seeking a density bonus are eligible for administrative approval in lieu of the Planning Commission hearing that would otherwise be required for a Conditional Use Authorization, Large Project Authorization in Downtown, Large Project Authorization or other entitlement. These projects are eligible for the same exceptions as those listed in Planning Code Sections 304, 309, and 329. (Planning Code § [315](#)).

100% Affordable Housing Bonus Program

[Affordable Housing Density Bonus Program](#), or AHBP, is a local density bonus program specifically for 100% affordable projects. Eligible projects may be granted additional height and exempted from density limits, and may seek zoning modifications from a pre-determined list. Projects proceeding under the AHBP will be reviewed against the Affordable Housing Bonus Program Design Guidelines, and may also be reviewed and approved administratively. (Planning Code § [206.4](#), 315.1).

State Bill (SB)-35

[SB-35](#) is a state law which requires that local jurisdictions approve certain housing projects on a ministerial basis. Housing projects are eligible for SB-35 if they include at least 50% of units at 80% AMI, are consistent with the objective standards of the Planning Code, and meet specified eligibility criteria as outlined in the [Informational Packet](#). Any waivers, incentives and concessions conferred under the Individually Requested State Density Bonus Program are considered code-compliant under SB-35. Therefore, 100% Affordable Projects may also seek a density bonus of up to 35% under SB-35. (California Government Code § [65913.4](#)).