

Housing Overview

Policy Framework. When discussing policies and programs, it is important to understand the City’s policy framework, starting with the General Plan which includes “elements” (or chapters), including housing, land use, community vitality, mobility, natural environment, climate action, public safety/hazards, and noise. Each element contains goals and objectives aimed at addressing the City’s two overarching General Plan Goals to: 1) protect and enhance the natural beauty and small town character of Mill Valley and 2) encourage continued diversity of housing, income levels, and lifestyles in the community.

The City works to implement local actions, as well as those regulations established by the State and/or Federal government. Housing, particularly providing a range of housing options in terms of affordability levels, is of particular interest and of concern to the City Council and many community members.

Housing Element. Mill Valley’s Housing Element includes Chapter 2 “Housing Plan”, outlining programs for implementation to address the City’s General Plan Goals identified above. The City is on an 8-year Housing Element cycle, with the last adopted Housing Element for the 2015-2023 Housing Element cycle. In addition to identifying programs for implementation, the City is required to identify opportunities and constraints to housing; housing characteristics; housing needs for vulnerable populations; and an

assessment of the construction of new housing units in meeting its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). RHNA runs on a slightly different cycle from the housing element cycle. Currently the City is in its 5th RHNA cycle, from 2014-2022. The City reports annually on the number of new housing units built, and has successfully met new targets established as part of SB35. Mill Valley’s success in meeting the state’s housing allocations is tied closely to building new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs); approximately of the 45 new units built are ADUs.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA): 2014-2022			
Affordability level (based on Annual Income)	% median income	RHNA	New Units Built 4-year Benchmark
Very Low Income	31-50%	41	26
Low Income	51-80%	24	7
Moderate	81-120%	26	16
Above Moderate	Above 120%	38	23
Total		129	72

Source: Mill Valley Annual Housing Progress Reports.

Housing Strategies. Staff has categorized the types of housing strategies (programs and policies) into four groups:

- **Protecting** existing housing stock, such as demolition restrictions, anti-neglect regulations, deed restrictions to maintain affordability, home improvement or rehabilitation loans, etc.
- **Enhancing** the affordability of existing housing stock, such as acquisitions, incentives to deed restrict housing below market rates, etc.
- **Expanding** housing stock by producing more units, such as inclusionary requirements, ADU regulations, modification to other zoning regulations, identification of development opportunities, etc.
- **Targeting the Community** such as regulations to protect renters, down payment assistance, etc.



Implementation. The Housing Element includes 38 housing programs for implementation during the 2015-2023. Recent accomplishments include:

- Affordable Housing Ordinance adopted in 2017. All residential building permits valued over \$100,000 must contribute towards the City's goal to diversify its housing stock by paying an affordable housing impact fee (1% of construction valuation). Rental and ownership projects with 4 or more units must build 25% units as affordable (half moderate/half low income).
- Housing Advisory Committee assembled to discuss housing related policies and assist with the reviewing the use of Affordable Housing Trust Fund money (see above).
- Housing Summit hosted by the City with over 125 community members in attendance and 4 expert panelists on housing (development and policy-related).
- Junior ADU regulations (in progress)
- Additional ADU regulations to strengthening affordability/rental requirements for those ADUs created with Floor Area bonus (in progress)
- On-going coordination to pool resources (staff and financial resources)

Affordable Housing Trust Fund. An Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been established as part of the adoption of the Affordable Housing Ordinance for the purpose of creating, developing and/or maintaining existing housing targeted for Affordable Households within the City.

Overview of Community Feedback and Interest in Housing

Public comment received at the Housing Summit held on November 30, 2017 is consistent with that expressed during the development and adoption of the Housing Element in 2015. Residents are interested in affordable housing, particularly so that long-time residents can remain and young families can establish themselves in the community. Other members of the public are interested in living in Mill Valley to be in close proximity of work but cannot afford to do so. There is also a large interest and concern to balance development with traffic, parking and other environmental impacts. There was also clear interest in expanding the opportunity to establish accessory dwelling units and junior ADUs within the Single-Family Residential areas, and maintaining the existing affordable housing stock.

Protect Existing Units

- Community Survey: 1/3 participants interested in exploring disincentives for demolishing existing affordable housing stock
- *Create disincentive for reducing existing affordable housing stock*

Preserve Housing

- Community Survey: 1/3 participants interested in regulations to allow for duplexes in Single Family Residential Zones and 40% interested in acquiring older apartments to maintain affordability
- *Adopt progressive ADU/JADU regulations to encourage additional units*

New Units

- Community Survey: Support for building new units, but not the first priority
- *Identify land opportunities to foster in-fill development*
- *Eliminate parking minimums and density measurements – think in terms of building envelope to allow for smaller scale units*
- *Relaxed/ reduced parking standards to create affordable units*

Local Community & Workforce

- Community Survey: 1/3 of participants interested in financial incentives to convert Single Family homes to include ADU/JADUs
- *Address NIMBYism through education*
- *Work collaboratively and don't limit ideas to City Limits*
- *Opportunities for non-profits to use trust funds*

Housing Data & Statistics. The tables below may be helpful in as part of policy discussions based on the housing characteristics of Mill Valley.

Levels of Affordable Housing

Marin County Affordable Income Limits by Household Size				
Affordability level (based on Annual Income)	% of median income	Two-person household	Three-person household	Four-person household
<i>Median Income (50%)</i>		<i>\$94,700</i>	<i>\$106,550</i>	<i>\$118,400</i>
Extremely Low	30%	\$35,200 or less	\$39,600 or less	\$44,000 or less
Very Low	31-50%	Up to \$58,650	Up to \$66,000	Up to \$73,300
Low	51-80%	Up to \$93,950	Up to \$105,700	Up to \$117,400
Moderate	81-120%	Up to \$113,650	Up to \$116,350	Up to \$142,100

Source: Marin Housing Authority.

The Range of Affordable Housing Assistance (from extremely low income to moderate income)

- Homeless Shelters
- Transitional & Supportive Housing
- Public Housing
- Assisted Housing (Section 8 Vouchers)
- Rental Housing (Low Income Housing Tax Credits, inclusionary)
- First-Time Homebuyer (Inclusionary housing as part of development projects)

Deed Restricted Affordable Housing In Mill Valley

Inclusionary Housing (as part of development projects)	
Rental and ownership units (since 1988)	37+ units
Public Assisted Housing	
Shelter Hill (1977): family housing	75 units
Redwoods (1972): senior housing	60 units
Kruger Pines (1971): senior disabled housing	56 units
Pickleweed (1986): family housing	32 units
Camino Alto Apts (1983): disabled housing	24 units
Homestead Terrace (1969): senior disabled housing	28 units
Alto Station (1995): family housing	17 units
Mill Creek Apartments (2004): disabled housing	9 units
Total Units	338 units

Household Characteristics (2010)

Household Type	2010		
	Households	Mill Valley	Marin County
Families	3,627	59.6%	60.7%
With children under 18	1,835	30.2%	27.5%
Without children	1,792	29.4%	33.2%
Singles	2,016	33.1%	30.8%
Other non-families	441	7.3%	8.5%
Total Households	6,084	100%	100%
Average Household Size	2.27		2.36
Average Family Size	2.94		2.94

Source: 2010 US Census

Owner/Renter Tenure (2010 US Census)

Occupied Housing Units	2010		
	Households	Mill Valley	Marin County
Renter	2,110	34.7%	36.0%
Owner	3,974	65.3%	64.0%
Total	6,084	100%	100%

Source: 2010 US Census

Housing Type (2010)

Unit Type	2010	
	Units	Percent
Single-Family (SF) Detached	4,353	66.7%
SF Attached	594	9.1%
Total Single-Family	4,953	75.8%
2 to 4 Units	332	5.0%
5 or more units	1,241	19.0%
Total Multi-Family	1,568	24.0%
Mobile Homes & Other	14	0.2%
Total Housing Units	6,534	100%
Vacancy Rate	6.9%	

Source: State Department of Finance, E5 Population and Housing estimates with 2010 Census benchmark