

B7 Housing Plan

This eight-year Housing Plan (2024-2032) sets forth a strategy, including goals, policies, and programs, to address housing issues identified in the City of Atwater. The City plans to establish a Housing Division to assist in the implementation of this plan.

B7.1 Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Regional Collaboration	Work collaboratively with jurisdictions in the county to efficiently address housing issues and find regional solutions.
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Policy 1.1 Proactively coordinate with cities, Merced County, and other agencies and organizations to create effective policies and programs and respond to opportunities for achieving common housing goals.

Policy 1.2 Participate in, as appropriate, pursuit of state and federal housing funds to address regional housing issues.

Goal 2: Housing Development	Provide an adequate supply and range of housing types to meet the diverse needs of residents.
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Policy 2.1 Provide adequate sites for new housing development to accommodate the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) throughout the planning period.

Policy 2.2 Facilitate a range of housing development that will meet the needs of all income levels including extremely low, very-low, low-, moderate- and above moderate households.

Policy 2.3 Encourage a range of housing types and sizes in large-scale development and annexations.

Policy 2.4 Promote infill development on vacant and underutilized sites within developed areas.

Policy 2.5 Encourage higher density and mixed-use residential development along major transportation and transit corridors and/or near existing or planned community facilities and services.

Policy 2.6 Enact programs that facilitate well-designed, energy efficient development and flexible standards to encourage high quality projects.

Policy 2.7 Expedite residential development opportunities on annexed lands, ensure desired mix and arrangement of land uses, and ensure provision and financing of adequate infrastructure and public services.

Goal 3: Affordable Housing Options

Facilitate the development of affordable housing and protect the existing supply of affordable housing to extremely low-, very low-, low- and moderate-income households.

- Policy 3.1** Provide a range of incentives and tools to encourage affordable housing for all lower-income households, including extremely low income.
- Policy 3.2** Support the Housing Authority of the County of Merced (HACM) by promoting Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) opportunities.
- Policy 3.3** Ensure permit processing procedures to ensure SB 35 streamlining is available for affordable housing development projects.
- Policy 3.4** Support the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as an affordable housing option.
- Policy 3.5** Promote home ownership for lower- and moderate-income households by pursuing grant funding for downpayment assistance and other homeownership loan programs.
- Policy 3.6** Monitor existing affordable housing developments and pursue preservation strategies to maintain their affordability.

Goal 4: Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

Maintain and improve the city's existing housing stock.

- Policy 4.1** Preserve existing residential neighborhoods by promoting balanced design and architecture.
- Policy 4.2** Support code enforcement efforts to work with property owners with repairs and rehabilitation of housing to preserve existing housing stock.
- Policy 4.3** Utilize Capital Improvement Programs for repairs and improvements of public infrastructure and facilities in existing neighborhoods.

Goal 5: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

Support and provide housing and services for people with special needs in the community. People with special needs include, but are not limited to, seniors, families with children, people with disabilities, single-parent families, farmworkers, and people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

- Policy 5.1** Assist in local and regional efforts that address the housing needs of special needs residents.
- Policy 5.2** Provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities to access housing opportunities.
- Policy 5.3** Support the development of affordable housing units for farmworkers and farmworker families by encouraging the use of federal, state, and local resources.
- Policy 5.4** Coordinate with regional agencies and local developers on housing options and services for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

Policy 5.5 Proactively apply for and utilize available resources to provide and maintain housing for special needs groups.

Goal 6: Resource Conservation and Sustainable Development

Utilize energy conservation and sustainable measures for new and rehabilitated housing.

Policy 6.1 Support and, as appropriate, incentivize the use of green building techniques for new housing and rehabilitation.

Policy 6.2 Promote energy conservation and efficiency in residential developments.

Goal 7: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Promote housing opportunities and access for residents regardless of age, race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, disability, or economic level in compliance with local, state, and federal fair housing laws.

Policy 7.1 Promote meaningful and informed participation of residents, community groups, and governmental agencies in all local housing and community development activities.

Policy 7.2 Comply with federal, state, and local fair housing anti-discrimination laws ensuring equal access to housing regardless of circumstances as protected by fair housing laws.

Policy 7.3 Provide fair housing services to city residents and ensure that residents are aware of their fair housing rights.

Policy 7.4 Provide residents with housing mobility options by facilitating the development of a variety of housing types and expanding access to housing services.

Policy 7.5 Protect tenants from discriminatory housing practices and displacement.

Policy 7.6 Promote the integration of affordable and special needs housing in existing and planned neighborhoods.

B7.2 Implementing Programs

Program 1: Regional Collaboration

Collaborate with other jurisdictions in the region on housing efforts, including funding opportunities, best practices, and other efforts to address housing, transit, economic development, and homeless issues in Merced County.

Regional collaboration efforts can include, but are not limited to:

- Affordable housing development opportunities
- Regional housing programs and outreach efforts
- Economic development opportunities
- Creation of a regional Housing Trust Fund
- Coordination on funding applications and administration
- Identification of transit opportunities and access near new and established residential areas
- Development of environmental mitigation that can improve the quality of life for residents

- Efforts for the development of emergency shelters, low-barrier navigation centers, transitional and supportive housing as well as support services for persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless in the county.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in regional meetings related to housing and homeless issues to pursue funding and coordination opportunities. Annually pursue funding opportunities for regional housing issues. ▪ Partner with the Merced County Human Services Agency and/or the Merced County Community Action Agency to proactively address shelter, housing and support services for people experiencing homelessness. ▪ Participate in the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) to manage and implement regional transit and services, while providing a public forum for cross-jurisdictional issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Participate in all Transit Joint Powers Meetings with MCAG and address all needs and concerns. ▫ Annually hold at least one community workshop in Atwater to identify transportation needs and apply for funding to implement projects using Measure V funds. Conduct targeted outreach to Downtown Atwater residents. ▪ Work with the Merced Continuum of Care to update and implement the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness during the planning period.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund; federal, state, and local grant funds
Relevant Policies	1.1, 1.2
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outreach and Education ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources ▪ Anti-Displacement and Tenant Protection
AFFH Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	N/A

Program 2: Adequate Sites for RHNA and Monitoring of No Net Loss

For the 6th cycle Housing Element, Atwater has been assigned a RHNA of 3,017 units, including:

- Very Low-Income: 768 units
- Low-Income: 526 units
- Moderate-Income: 508 units
- Above Moderate-Income: 1,215 units

The City is committed to ensuring that adequate sites at appropriate densities remain available during the planning period, as required by law. As of April 2024, the City has identified capacity for 197 units through projects under construction, approved, or permitted, that will be available during the RHNA projection period. Accounting for these units, the City has a remaining RHNA of 2,820 units (768 very low income, 526 low income, 431 moderate income, and 1,095 above moderate income) for which the City must identify adequate sites for potential development.

The City has identified vacant and nonvacant sites with potential for development/redevelopment, or adaptive reuse of existing uses over the next eight years. The City identified adequately zoned sites (i.e. Opportunity sites) with a capacity for 1,204 units (194 low, 97 moderate, and 913 above moderate). This leaves the City with a shortfall of 1,616 units (1,100 lower income, 334 moderate income, and 182 above moderate income). Based on an average density of 30 units per acre, at least 54 acres of properties will need to be rezoned to high-density residential to accommodate the 1,616-unit shortfall.

The Site Inventory includes 36 sites that will be rezoned to facilitate additional residential development. The sites will be rezoned from low-density residential, planned development, general commercial and business park zones to high-density residential with a maximum density of 43.56 dwelling units per acre (and a minimum density of 20 units per acre). These sites encompass 85 acres and can accommodate a total of 1,440 low-income units, 545 moderate-income units, and 596 above moderate-income units. These rezoned sites have enough capacity to meet the shortfall of 1,616 units.

The City has also identified six sites located within one annexation area to the North that are anticipated to be made available for development during the 6th cycle. Zoning across the annexed parcels will accommodate low-density residential, medium-density residential, and high-density residential development that has capacity for 924 units (188 lower-income, 280 moderate-income, and 409 above moderate-income units). North Atwater Annexation area anticipated to be annexed into the City by December 2025. Planned Development for the annexation area at this time has not been identified. The project will be using a specific plan which is currently in development.

This program describes the actions the City will take to ensure that adequate sites are designated consistent with Government Code Section 65583c)(1)(A) and 65583.2. The rezoned sites shall include the following components pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2(i):

- Permit owner-occupied and rental multi-family uses by-right for developments in which 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower-income households. By-right means approval without discretionary review.
- Permit the development of at least 16 units per site.
- Establish a minimum density of 20 units per acre and a maximum density of at least 20 units per acre for all rezone sites to accommodate lower income RHNA.
- Ensure that either: a) at least 50 percent of the shortfall of low- and very-low-income regional housing need can be accommodated on sites designated for exclusively residential uses; or b) if accommodating more than 50 percent of the low- and very-low-income regional housing need on sites designated for mixed uses, all sites designated for mixed uses must allow 100 percent residential use and require that residential uses occupy at least 50 percent of the floor area in a mixed-use project.

To ensure that the City complies with SB 166 (No Net Loss), the City will monitor the consumption of residential and mixed-use acreage to ensure an adequate inventory is available to meet the City's RHNA obligations. To ensure sufficient residential capacity is maintained to accommodate the RHNA, the City will develop and implement a formal ongoing (project-by-project) evaluation procedure pursuant to Government Code Section 65863. Should an approval of development result in a reduction in capacity below the residential capacity needed to accommodate the remaining need for lower and moderate-income households, the City will identify and if necessary, rezone sufficient sites to accommodate the shortfall and ensure "no net loss" in capacity to accommodate the RHNA.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate the development of 3,017 units over 8 years (768 very low-income, 526 low-income, 508 moderate-income, and 1,215 above moderate-income units). ▪ By January 31, 2025, rezone properties as outlined above and detailed in the Housing Resources section of this Housing Element to provide additional opportunities up to 2,581 units (1,440 lower income, 545 moderate, and 596 above moderate-income units). Specifically, at least 54 acres of properties will need to be rezoned to high-density residential to accommodate the 1,616-unit shortfall. As part of the rezoning, establish appropriate development standards (including parking, height, setback, lot coverage, etc.) to ensure maximum allowable densities at the respective zones can be achieved. ▪ Maintain an inventory of available vacant and prospective sites that can accommodate new housing and update annually. Make this inventory available to the public and interested developers on the City website. ▪ Annually meet with property owners and interested developers to pursue housing development in the city. ▪ By January 31, 2025, develop a formal procedure to monitor no net loss in capacity pursuant to SB 166.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources
Geographic Targeting	N/A
AFFH Outcomes	N/A

Program 3: By-Right Approval

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2, development on the following types of sites in the City’s site inventory to fulfill the City’s share of the lower-income RHNA is subject to by-right approval, exempt from CEQA and subject only to design review based on objective standards, when a project includes 20 percent of the units affordable to lower-income households and no subdivision is proposed:

Reuse Sites (No Rezoning Required):

- Vacant sites that were identified in the City’s 4th and 5th Cycle Housing Elements as sites for lower-income RHNA; and
- Nonvacant sites that were identified in the City’s 5th cycle Housing Element as sites for lower-income RHNA.

The by-right approval requirement of reuse sites is effective January 31, 2024.

Rezoning of sites past the statutory deadline of the Housing Element to meet the lower-income RHNA are subject to the by-right approval requirement. The by-right approval requirement of rezone sites is triggered by the rezoning.

By-right shall mean the local government’s review shall not require:

- A conditional-use permit
- A planned unit development permit

- Other discretionary, local-government review or approval that would constitute a “project” as defined in Section 21100 of the Public Resources Code.

This provision does not preclude local planning agencies from imposing design review standards. However, the review and approval process must remain ministerial, and the design review must not constitute a “project” as defined in Section 21100 of the Public Resources Code.

The Site Inventory does not include any sites that meet these criteria.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By January 31, 2025, concurrent with the Development Code update to provide adequate sites for the RHNA (see Program 2), update the Development Code to address the by-right approval requirements.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	2.1, 2.2, 3.1
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources
Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	N/A

Program 4: Replacement Housing

Development on non-vacant sites with existing residential units is subject to replacement requirements, pursuant to AB 1397. Specifically, AB 1397 requires sites with a residential use within the last five years the replacement of units affordable to the same or lower income level as a condition of any development on a non-vacant site consistent with those requirements set forth in state Density Bonus Law.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By January 31, 2025, amend the Zoning Code to address the replacement housing requirements.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	2.2, 3.6
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources ▪ Anti-Displacement and Tenant Protection
Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	N/A

Program 5: Accessory Dwelling Units

ADUs provide an important affordable housing option in the city. The City of Atwater's ADU Ordinance was last updated in 2023 and is in compliance with state ADU Law. Atwater will periodically review the Zoning Code to ensure compliance with state laws.

The City will encourage the production of ADUs and work to provide affordable units for lower income households. The City has Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) program funds for loans up to \$40,000 for qualified applicants for ADUs. The City has requested REAP funding for

technical assistance to develop ADU Guidebook, handouts, and to review and revise its ADU Ordinance.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By January 31, 2025, facilitate the production of ADUs through efforts including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Create an ADU Guidebook and Handout. ▫ Update ADU webpage to include available resources for ADU development, such as grants for pre-development costs available to lower-income homeowners through California Finance Agency (CalHFA) and PLHA loans. ▫ Offer expedited reviews for ADU applications. ▫ Develop a Fair Housing factsheet to be included with the ADU application packet to inform property owners of their responsibility with state and federal fair housing laws. Publish fair housing guide with ADU applications on or before January 2025. ▫ Develop an ADU application checklist and publish the checklist on the City’s website. ▫ Add information on the ADU permitting process, as well as available resources and incentives, on the City’s website. ▫ Adopt pre-approved ADU plans and publish on the City’s website. ▪ During the planning period, conduct two educational workshops, campaigns, or outreach events to promote ADU development in the city to residents, with at least two events targeted to residents and developers in High-Resource census tracts. ▪ Participate in regional collaboration efforts to create pre-approved ADU plans.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.4
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outreach and Education ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources
Geographic Targeting	Citywide with emphasis on High Resource Tracts
AFFH Outcomes	Support the development of at least 10 ADUs during the planning period.

Program 6: Zoning Code Amendments

In order to facilitate a variety of housing types, especially housing for lower-income households and those with special needs, the City will remove constraints to housing development by amending the Zoning Code.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	
	<p>Include the following Zoning Code Amendments by January 31, 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SB 35: Establish procedure for implementing SB 35. ▪ Development Standards Amend the Zoning Code to allow minor modifications to height restrictions developments with an affordability component. ▪ Parking: Revise the Zoning Code to require no more than one space per unit for mobile homes, senior citizen housing, studios, and one-bedroom units. ▪ Mobile/Manufactured Housing: Revise the Zoning Code to allow for manufactured homes in all zones where single-family housing is permitted, subject only to the same requirements of conventional single-family housing. ▪ Group Homes/Residential Care Facilities: Amend the Zoning Code to allow community care facilities serving six or fewer residents as a single-family use in all residential zones and allow care facilities of seven or more residents in all zones that permit residential uses, with objectivity and certainty, and subject only to the requirements of residential uses of similar type and form. ▪ Emergency Shelters: Amend the Zoning Code to explicitly allow emergency shelters by-right, in residential and/or residential mixed-use zone(s). Amend the Zoning Code to define Low-Barrier Navigation Centers, consistent with state law and to explicitly allow by-right, in mixed-use and nonresidential districts permitting multifamily uses. The City will also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Ensure the definition of emergency shelters complies with AB 2339 to include interim housing options such as bridge housing, navigation centers, and respite and recuperative care; ▫ Remove maximum stay requirements; ▫ Ensure parking standards to only require parking for staff, and in no cases require more than similar uses in that district; and ▫ Remove the requirement to have a minimum 300 separation from residential zones, parks, and schools. ▪ Transitional and Supportive Housing: Amend the Zoning Code to comply with AB 2162, such that supportive housing located within half-mile from transit may not be subjected to any minimum parking standard. ▪ Employee Housing: Revise the Zoning Code to allow employee housing for six or fewer as a single-family residential use to ensure compliance with the Employee Housing Act (Health & Safety Code Section 17021.5). ▪ Farmworker Housing: Revise the Zoning Code to allow farmworker housing with up to 36 beds in group quarters or up to 12 units or spaces designed for use by a single-family or household as an agricultural use to ensure compliance with the Employee Housing Act (Health & Safety Code Section 17021.6). ▪ Single-Room Occupancy (SROs): Revise the Zoning Code to allow the development of SRO in zones allowing hotel or motel uses. ▪ Definition of Family: Revise the City’s definition of “family” to comply with fair housing laws.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site Plan Review and Permit Approvals: Site plan and permit approvals include subjective standards that require personal interpretation to determine compliance with standards. The City will revise the Zoning Code to remove subjective language.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	2.2, 3.1, 3.4, 5.2, 5.3, 7.4
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing Mobility ▪ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources ▪ Anti-Displacement and Tenant Protection
Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	Facilitate the development of five units for special needs populations during the planning period.

Program 7: Facilitating Affordable Housing Development

The City is committed to expanding affordable housing options for households of all income levels using development tools such as density bonus provisions, waiving development fees and streamlining the application process. The City will contact local non-profit and private developers to facilitate the production of this housing as well as pursue funding opportunities available at the local, regional, state and federal levels.

On a case-by-case basis, the City will provide opportunities for public, private and non-profit groups to develop affordable housing by constructing off-site improvements and physical infrastructure as Capital Improvement Projects. Assistance provided by the City may include traffic, street, and sewer upgrades as well as other pedestrian and mobility improvements.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annually pursue funding at the local, regional, state, and federal levels such as CDBG, HOME, CalHome, PLHA, and Project Homekey funds to assist affordable housing production. ▪ Work with other jurisdictions in Merced County to create a regional list of affordable housing developers. Annually conduct outreach to these developers with information on potential sites, available regulatory concessions and incentives, and potential funding opportunities. ▪ By January 31, 2025, amend the Zoning Code establish density bonuses for housing developments that include housing units affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households or housing units for seniors and the donation of land for housing, consistent with current state laws and requirements. ▪ Facilitate the development of affordable housing by holding design review workshops, providing site location assistance, and assisting in the procurement of funding. ▪ Facilitate the development of affordable housing for extremely low, very low- and low-income households and special needs households (e.g., elderly, homeless, farmworkers, persons with disabilities, female-headed households) through the provision of the following regulatory concessions and incentives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Density increases under the City’s Density Bonus Ordinance. ▫ Expedited and streamlined project application review involving any of the following housing categories; very low-income
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	households; large families; persons with disabilities or developmental disabilities; and farmworkers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Potential fee waivers/reductions/deferrals.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	Local, state, and federal resources; General Fund, CDBG
Relevant Policies	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.3, 7.4
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Housing Mobility ▫ New Housing Opportunities in Areas of Higher Resources
Geographic Targeting	Citywide with emphasis on High Resource Tracts
AFFH Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Increase the percent of the city’s housing stock that is multi-family from 23.6 percent to 27 percent by December 2030, using 2017-2021 ACS data as a baseline. ▫ Decrease disparity between census tracts in Downtown Atwater/Sierra Vista and adjacent census tracts based on median income level.

Program 8: Preservation of At-Risk Housing

The City has 35 housing units that are deed restricted as affordable housing for lower-income households. No units are considered at risk of conversion during this Housing Element planning period. Nevertheless, the City will work to preserve these units and will proactively monitor all other units to encourage continued affordability beyond existing covenants and work proactively with owners of affordable units to assist in rehabilitation needs.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Monitor affordable units during the planning period. ▫ Maintain annual contact with property owners of affordable housing regarding any change in status/intent or need for assistance, such as rehabilitation assistance. ▫ Maintain the AB 987 database to include detailed information on all subsidized units, including those that have affordability covenants. Update annually.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	3.6, 5.5
AFFH Themes	Anti-Displacement and Tenant Protection
Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	Preserve all 35 affordable housing units.

Program 9: Housing Preservation and Rehabilitation

The City will work to maintain the affordable housing supply, particularly for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households and special needs households (e.g., elderly, homeless, farmworkers, persons with disabilities, female-headed households). About 69 percent of the housing stock in Atwater is more than 40 years old. The City actively seeks and encourages the rehabilitation of housing units, utilizing various programs and community partnerships.

The City, in partnership with Self Help Enterprises, currently offers a Housing Rehabilitation Program to provide financial assistance to income-eligible homeowners. The Housing Rehabilitation Program provides financing to repair income-eligible and owner-occupied homes in need of essential health and/or safety repairs. The Housing Rehabilitation program is funded by the State Department of

Housing and Community Development grant programs. Common home repairs include roofing, plumbing, electrical, heating, cooling, insulation, foundation, windows, and handicap assessable modifications. SHE currently has funding available to assist Atwater residents.

In addition, Atwater provides the Home Energy Renovation Opportunity (HERO) program, a state-sponsored energy efficiency financing program that partners with local governments to provide affordable financing for energy-efficient, water-efficient, and renewable energy products to homeowners.

Residents of Atwater are served by PG&E for electricity and natural gas. PG&E’s Energy Savings Assistance Program provides free weatherization services to qualifying low-income households. The City utilizes the various residential programs PG&E offers, including:

- Rebates on energy-efficient appliances
- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program, which provides assistance for lower income households
- Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program for larger households

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate with Self-Help Enterprises and/or Habitat for Humanity in rehabilitation efforts in the City. Annually research funding opportunities. Assist with five rehabilitation projects over eight years. ▪ Advertise available rehabilitation grant programs on the City’s website. Ensure that Code Enforcement has the information when addressing enforcement cases. ▪ Publish resources on rehabilitation and weatherization assistance on the City’s website by January 2025. ▪ Consider rent stabilization policy for new developments of mobile home parks.
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department, Code Enforcement
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.5
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outreach and Education ▪ Place-Based Strategy for Neighborhood Improvements
Geographic Targeting	Downtown Atwater
AFFH Outcomes	Assist with five rehabilitation projects over 8 years.

Program 10: Lower-Income and Special Needs Housing

To assist in the development of housing to meet the needs of extremely low, very low- and low-income households and special needs households (e.g., elderly, homeless, farmworkers, persons with disabilities, female-headed households), the Housing Authority of the County of Merced (HACM) offers the following programs:

- **Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs):** Offers affordable, decent, and safe housing in open market rentals selected by voucher holders. The HCV program provides rent subsidies to families in existing privately owned rental units in Merced County.
- **Public Housing:** Provides rental assistance to low -income families and individuals. The Housing Authority of the County of Merced (Housing Authority) owns and manages 421 public housing units that consist of a variety of apartments, duplexes, and single-family homes, located in communities throughout Merced County.

- **Project-Based Voucher Program (PBVs):** The Housing Authority released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the PBV Program in November 2023, seeking proposals from owners/developers who will commit up to 150 units of their rental housing to receive assistance through project-based vouchers.
- **Migrant Housing Centers:** The Housing Authority manages four migrant centers throughout the County. The migrant housing centers provide temporary housing to migrant farmworkers available to them during the peak growing and harvest season, which is typically April through November. Migrant centers managed by the Housing Authority are located in Atwater, Merced, Los Banos, and Planada.

The City will continue to work with HACM to obtain HCVs and provide the community with information about HACM’s other available programs.

In addition, Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) funds provide assistance for qualifying applicants includes help to cover costs of mortgage, rent, rental deposit, and/or utility expenses. This program can assist with up to six consecutive months of mortgage, rent and/or utilities but is limited to \$5,000 per household.

Other resources aimed at increasing housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents include the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA). The LIHTC program offers tax incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing while CalHFA partners with jurisdictions, developers, and other organizations to provide a variety of resources including loan assistance programs for homebuyers and renters.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist two Atwater households through HCVs. ▪ Over the 8-year planning period, subsequent to each Point-in-Time Count, conduct workshops for the Planning Commission and City Council to share the data from the count. ▪ Identify potential programs to aid homeownership opportunities and develop a list of resources by December 2024. Apply for feasible funding opportunities by December 2025. ▪ Develop an inventory of affordable housing, with contact information and the number of affordable units, and publish the inventory on the City’s website by January 2025. ▪ Connect low-income residents with housing assistance resources, including the HCV program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Add information on the HCV Program and other financial assistance programs to the City’s website by January 2025. ▫ Promote the availability of assistance programs through all City’s social media pages. ▫ Attend at least one community events to spread awareness and distribute fact sheets on available financial assistance programs. ▪ In collaboration with the Housing Authority, provide education to property owners and managers to expand awareness of the HCV program to increase acceptance of tenant-based HCVs and to facilitate mobility and provide choices for lower-income households throughout the city. Identify and address challenges that property owners/managers have with existing or prospective HCV holders. ▪ Starting in 2025, annually conduct one workshop for landlords on the HCV program, for a total of seven workshops during the planning period, targeting property owners/managers in High Resource Tracts.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the availability of PHLA funds by posting information to City website by January 31, 2025, and include in informational flyer/newsletter/etc., to be distributed at meetings and shared with non-profit organizations (See Program 13).
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	HUD, Self-Help Enterprise funding sources
Relevant Policies	3.2, 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 7.4
AFFH Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach and Education Housing Mobility New Housing Opportunities in Areas of High Resources Anti-Displacement and Tenant Protection
Geographic Targeting	Citywide, targeting mobility to High Resource Tracts
AFFH Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote with the goal of expanding the use of HCVs in the city by 10 percent by December 2030, using 2023 data as baseline. Assist eight households through the PHLA program.

Program 11: Water and Sewer Service

The City’s Public Works Department is the provider of water, sewer, and sanitation services within city limits. The City confirms that adequate water and sewer services are available to fully accommodate the RHNA.

Pursuant to SB 1087, as the City’s water/sewer service provider, the City has not adopted a policy to prioritize the allocation of water/sewer services to affordable housing projects.

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of 2026, complete update to water and sewer master plans. Annually, conduct outreach and education on water conservation measures through a social media campaign. Pursue/provide rehabilitation assistance that includes energy conservation and weatherization improvements as eligible activities. By January 31, 2025, adopt a policy to prioritize the allocation of water and sewer services to affordable housing projects (SB 1087).
Primary Responsible Departments	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	3.1, 4.4
AFFH Themes	N/A
Geographic Targeting	Citywide
AFFH Outcomes	N/A
AFFH Outcomes	N/A

Program 12: Community and Economic Development

Well-maintained infrastructure creates a safe and accessible urban environment, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Moreover, investing in such improvements attracts businesses and investments, contributing to economic growth and ensuring equal access to essential services. The City will implement the following actions to expand community and economic development citywide.

<p>Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with Merced County Transit (the Bus) to determine location of bus stops to serve new developments in annexed neighborhoods. ▪ Coordinate with the Public Works Department to review the City’s Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) to ensure public facilities and infrastructure are supportive of the needs of underserved communities, especially in Downtown Atwater. ▪ Seek funding and complete projects to improve the conditions in Downtown Atwater, a neighborhood with disproportionate needs and a concentration of minorities and poverty, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Pedestrian Improvements to Connect to Downtown Phase 2 - construction funded - to be completed 2024. ▫ Pedestrian Improvements to Connect to Downtown Phase 3 - only design funded - in progress. ▫ Pedestrian Improvements to Connect to Downtown Phase 4 - only design funded - in progress. ▫ Citywide Traffic Signals Synchronization - construction funded - design and construction target completion 2024. ▫ New Traffic Signal at Atwater Blvd & First St (ACE Train Station Support Project) - construction in progress to be completed 2024. ▫ Bloss Parking Lot (ACE Train Station Support Project) - design funded and in progress, construction not funded. ▫ Parking Lot at Atwater Blvd & First St (ACE Train Station Support Project) - environmental clean closure in progress - design target completion 2024, construction not funded. ▫ ACE Train Station - design partially funded. ▪ Advance environmental justice through community engagement, TOD, and affordable housing in the General Plan Update currently underway (expected to be adopted May 2025). ▪ Apply for and utilize cap and trade program funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for efforts such as tree planting and restoration, home energy efficiency, zero emission and plug-in hybrid vehicles, and affordable housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Ensure engagement strategies consider linguistic isolation and target lower income and special needs households. ▪ Host an Economic Development Summit in October 2025 and implement the policy to increase the number of locations where economic incentives are available within the Atwater Planning area. ▪ Partner with the Merced County Economic Development Division to host at least one event annually in Atwater to inform local business owners of available business assistance programs. ▪ Partner with the local employment organizations to connect Atwater residents with job opportunities and workforce training program opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Partner with the Worknet Merced County to host an annual job fair and workforce training event in Atwater. ▫ Work with The Bus (Merced Transit Authority) to provide free bus passes to residents attending job fairs and interviews. ▪ Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, local business owners, and potential businesses to identify planning and infrastructure needs to support business development in Atwater.
<p>Primary Responsible Departments</p>	<p>Planning Department</p>
<p>Funding Sources</p>	<p>General Funds</p>
<p>Relevant Policies</p>	<p>3.1, 4.4</p>

AFFH Themes	Place-based Strategies for Neighborhood Improvement
Geographic Targeting	Downtown Atwater, North Annexation Area
AFFH Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete 5 CIP projects during the planning period. ▪ Hold discussions with at least five potential business owners during the planning period.

Program 13: Fair Housing Outreach and Enforcement

The City of Atwater works with the Merced County Housing Authority to provide fair housing information and resources to residents and housing providers. The Housing Authority contracts with Central California Legal Services (CCLS) to provide a local Fair Housing Information Program which includes distribution of educational materials to property owners, apartment managers, and tenants, and responding to complaints of discrimination (i.e., in-taking, investigation of complaints, and resolution) by referring the affected party to the appropriate agencies.

The City refers fair housing issues and complaints to Fair Housing Council of Central California (FHCCC) and the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing. The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) maintains a record of housing discrimination complaints filed in local jurisdictions.

HATC refers fair housing issues and complaints to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

Specific Actions, Objectives and Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a Housing Resources and Fair Housing Information Flyer in English and Spanish that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ State and federal fair housing laws, specifically highlighting protected classes, including source of income protections ▫ County and local rehabilitation and other housing resources (e.g., weatherization) ▫ Tenant/landlord/lender rights and responsibilities ▫ Fair Housing Complaint information and resources ▫ List of affordable housing units available ▫ State rent stabilization and state just cause eviction regulations ▪ Implement an information dissemination plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ In collaboration with Merced County Housing Authority and/or CCLS or other fair housing organization, hold at least one annual fair housing workshops or pop-up events during the planning period for residents about housing rights and resources, materials in English and Spanish, starting in 2025. ▫ Starting in 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Biannually publish Fair Housing Flyer on housing rights and resources in the City Newsletter. – At least once annually, publish fair housing information flyer in the City’s utility letter. – At least once annually, publish fair housing information flyer on City’s social media. ▫ Update the City’s website to include information on fair housing flyer. Complete updates by January 2025. ▫ Coordinate with non-profit organizations, local community groups, and service organizations to increase awareness of and access to
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	<p>housing resources and fair housing assistance by distributing fair housing flyers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Develop a Fair Housing factsheet to be included with the ADU application packet to inform property owners of their responsibility with state and federal fair housing laws. Publish fair housing guide with ADU applications on or before January 2025. ▫ Provide annual trainings for City staff on how to refer residents for fair housing complaints. Beginning in 2025, provide annual training to City staff on how to refer residents for fair housing complaints. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in annual meetings with directors from other jurisdictions to discuss regional fair housing and housing resources for potential inclusion on the webpage or in the flyer.
t	Planning Department
Funding Sources	General Fund
Relevant Policies	3.1, 4.4
AFFH Themes	Enforcement and Outreach
Geographic Targeting	Downtown Atwater
AFFH Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist at least five residents and landlords with fair housing services annually, throughout planning period.

B7.3 Quantified Objectives

Atwater has established quantified objectives for housing production and rehabilitation for the Housing Element. These objectives are based upon expected availability of resources to address the City’s housing needs, expectations regarding future housing development, as well as prior objectives established in earlier housing plans. Table B7-1 below summarizes the City’s quantified objectives for implementing its various programs and actions outlined above.

Table B7-1 Quantified Objectives 2024-2032

Target Income and Affordability Level	New Construction	Rehabilitation	Conservation
Extremely Low	384	2	
Very Low	384	2	
Low	526	1	
Moderate	508		
Above Moderate	1,215		
Total	3,017	5	35 (none at risk)

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