

58,000 Homes: The Roadmap

PART I



Executive Summary

To address Sonoma County’s housing crisis, we need **at least 58,000 new homes by 2030**. To meet that goal, Generation Housing believes we must change where and how new housing gets built. Our prevailing pattern over the past fifty years—single-family homes at the edges of existing cities—is not sustainable in the face of climate change, wildfires, and public demand for more walkable neighborhoods. Instead, we need more multifamily housing in already built-up areas.

What to Build?

75% of existing housing in Sonoma County consists of single-family homes. Generation Housing recommends that new housing construction invert that ratio, and then some, as shown in Figure 1.

50% of new development should be “missing middle” or “plex” housing—two-to-six-unit buildings that can fit comfortably into existing

residential neighborhoods. Most of the rest should be denser mid-rise and high-rise apartments in commercial corridors and downtowns.

Where to Build?

In keeping with County residents’ desire to curb urban sprawl and accommodate growth in already built-up areas, Generation Housing recommends three priority areas for new housing:

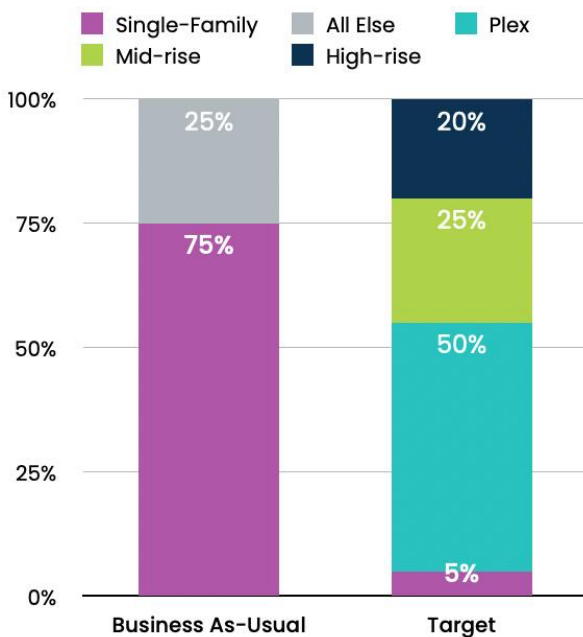
- **Transit corridors** near SMART train stations and/or frequent bus service.
- **Commercial corridors** near jobs and services. These often have significant amounts of available vacant land.
- **High-resource areas**, generally wealthier neighborhoods with access to amenities. These are good candidates for “missing middle” housing development.

Policy Recommendations

In many respects, this pattern of development isn’t new: it’s how our cities developed before the rise of the automobile and modern zoning restrictions. Making it possible again, however, will require policy changes by Sonoma County cities. To meet the 58K goal, we’ll need to:

- **End exclusionary zoning and allow more “missing middle” housing.** California’s Senate Bill 9 has already legalized duplexes, but cities can and should go further.
- **Locate affordable housing in high-resource areas**, to provide access to opportunity for residents.
- **Build homes for all income levels near transit and jobs**, maximizing the value of public transit.
- **Make it faster and cheaper to build new housing** by reducing impact fees and streamlining the approval process for new housing development.

Figure 1: Comparison of Homes by Type



Source: American Community 5-Year Sample for 2019 via Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)