



Press Release

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CHINO HILLS ADOPTS GENERAL PLAN UPDATE BALANCING STATE-MANDATED HOUSING REQUIREMENTS WITH RURAL CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Chino Hills, CA – At the June 10 meeting, the Chino Hills City Council voted to adopt the City's updated General Plan, a comprehensive, state-required document that guides the City's long-term development, land use, and community priorities over the next decade. The adoption of the General Plan Update follows a five-year process involving significant public engagement, including 22 public workshops and community meetings, to ensure the plan reflects the values of the City's commitment to maintaining a high quality of life, preserving natural open spaces, and planning responsibly for future growth while carefully balancing state-mandated housing requirements.

"While the City does not build homes, the State of California requires every City to zone enough land to accommodate potential development by private entities," said Benjamin Montgomery, Chino Hills City Manager. "The update does not authorize construction but instead provides a long-term framework for how and where growth may occur, ensuring that future development is done thoughtfully, responsibly, and with public input."

The General Plan Update includes the recently certified state-mandated Housing Element, which meets requirements set by the State of California through the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycle for 2021-2029. Chino Hills was initially assigned to plan for over 4,000 housing units. After many months of back and forth, where our City Council and staff strongly advocated for a more realistic and balanced allocation, a reduced number of 3,729 units was approved, which the City had to comply with to avoid financial penalties and potential legal consequences. Despite this reduction, the allocation was over four times higher than the 862 units required in the previous RHNA cycle.

"We understand that conversations around future development raise community concerns, and our City Council shares those same concerns and is committed to protecting everything that makes Chino Hills special," said Chino Hills Mayor Art Bennett. "This plan is not about immediate development, it is about maintaining local control, planning responsibly, and ensuring any mandated future growth is consistent with the character and values of our City."

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Although a parcel may currently appear vacant, it does not mean it is designated as open space. All sites included in the General Plan Update that were identified as RHNA sites have long been zoned for residential development since before the City's incorporation in 1991, under the County of San Bernardino's original Specific Plan. In the updated plan, none of the City's 3,000 acres of preserved public open spaces or protected ridgelines are being changed, repurposed, or lost.

"It is important for the community to note that zoning a property for residential development does not guarantee it will be developed immediately, or ever," said Community Development Director Nicholas Liguori. "Many factors determine whether development moves forward including environmental impacts, public safety, infrastructure capacity, and market interest. Any proposed development project in the City undergoes a separate, extensive review process that includes environmental studies, public outreach, and additional opportunities for community feedback and input."

During the meeting, the City also clarified that various privately-owned properties along Woodview Road and Peyton Drive identified as RHNA sites are not approved for development at this time. Significant environmental studies and future public review with adjacent neighborhood outreach would still be required before any action is taken on those properties. The General Plan only provides a framework to guide development, it does not override or replace the public's role in the development review process.

The City's long-standing commitment to responsible and thoughtful growth is also reflected in Measure U, a voter-approved growth control initiative passed nearly 30 years ago to protect the City's rural character and limit residential density. While Measure U remains in effect today and continues to guide local planning decisions, California state law requires all California cities to comply with RHNA obligations regardless of local growth control measures.

For more information and to view the adopted General Plan, visit www.chinohills.org/GeneralPlan. For specific development questions, please contact the Community Development Department by email or phone at communitydevelopment@chinohills.org or (909) 364-2740.