Housing Production & Capacity Portal
Search Feature Instructions
12/2019
Terms and Definitions

**Decision Maker**
A decision-maker is a person or group of people who decide whether to deny, approve with modifications, or approve a permit. For example, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Director are decision-makers.

**Discretionary Permit**
A discretionary permit is a decision on a permit or project that requires judgment by the decision-making body. It’s discretionary because we have choices on what to do with the project. For example, a Tentative Map for a subdivision. A discretionary permit is required when development may have impacts on the surrounding area due to a proposed use, design feature, or project location.

**Dwelling Unit**
A dwelling unit is a living space consisting of one or more rooms, including a kitchen for cooking, living, and sleeping. A dwelling unit could be any form of housing such as detached single-family homes, attached single-family homes like duplexes and triplices, Granny Flats, and multifamily homes.

**Housing Production**
Housing Production describes the number of dwelling units that are in three main stages of the development process since the General Plan was updated in 2011. The stages include 1) “completed” – received approval of the building permit; 2) “Discretionary Permits” – received approval of a land-use permit; and 3) “Application for a Discretionary Permit” – a land use permit that is in process and has not been acted on.

**Land Use Capacity**
Land use capacity is the estimated number of dwelling units accommodated by the General Plan. This includes existing and planned dwelling units.

**Land Use Map and Density**
The General Plan includes the land use map that defines and applies the different categories of land use within the unincorporated area. Each land category sets a maximum number of dwelling units per acre of land. Dividing the number of allowed dwelling units per acre establishes “land density.”

**Ministerial Permit**
A ministerial permit is any permit for which the staff needs to determine only conformity with applicable ordinances before approving the project (rather than a discretionary permit). For example, a building permit.
**Introduction**

The Housing Production and Capacity Portal (Portal) tracks progress towards implementing the General Plan by illustrating housing production and land use capacity since 2011. The Portal answers questions like how much and where development is occurring, where are developments in the permit process located, and where is there dwelling unit capacity remaining in the General Plan?

This instruction manual provides an overview of the General Plan, definition of key terms, explanation of the Portal, and a tutorial on using the Portal’s search feature to explore where and much dwelling unit capacity remains in the General Plan.

**County of San Diego General Plan**

The San Diego County General Plan applies to the unincorporated area of the county and is the County’s long-term blueprint for the community’s vision of the future. It reflects an environmentally sustainable approach to planning that balances the need for adequate infrastructure, housing, and economic vitality while maintaining and preserving existing communities, agricultural areas, and open spaces.

San Diego County is approximately 2.9 million acres, of which 2.2 million acres are unincorporated areas. Within the unincorporated area, the County’s land-use jurisdiction is limited by Tribal lands, and State and Federally owned lands, and military installations including Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. As a result, the County has land use jurisdiction over 772,239 acres or 35% of the unincorporated area.

It is in this area that the County provides residential, commercial, industrial land use designations based on the goals and policies contained within the General Plan Land Use Element.

**County of San Diego Land Use Jurisdiction**

*Is a General Plan Required?*

California state law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan that consist of seven plan elements: land use, circulation (transportation), housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The General Plan is a living document, and the State recognizes that from time to time, it must be amended to update information and policies or comply with State regulations.
Housing Production and Capacity Portal

The Portal collects and aggregates information like the existing number of dwelling units, changes to land use capacity, production of housing units, and remaining dwelling unit capacity of the General Plan in a series of heatmaps. The Portal results are updated quarterly and can be accessed through the Housing Production & Capacity Portal Summary, heatmaps for each unincorporated community, or an online Portal Search Feature to explore the remaining dwelling unit capacity of the General Plan.

The Portal is developed in six steps:

1) The first step is to determine the maximum number of dwelling units planned for in the General Plan. This is determined by identifying the land use and density allowed. Land uses are shown in a range of colors that denote the number of units allowed per acre. For example, Village Residential (VR 2.9) allows 2.9 dwelling units per gross acre of land. For an area that is 20 acres in size, a maximum of 58 dwelling units would be allowed.

2) Next, the Portal Factors in any changes or adjustments that were made to the Land Use Capacity of the General Plan. This includes areas that were removed from the County Land Use Jurisdiction through annexations by surrounding cities, land acquired by State, Federal or Tribal entities, and lands conserved through conservations. Also, it includes changes to the Land Use Element through General Plan Amendments that either increase or decrease the Land Use Capacity.

3) In the third step, the Portal subtracts out built housing units. This includes dwelling units that were existing at the time the General Plan was Updated in 2011 and dwelling units that were constructed since the update.

4) In the Fourth Step, the Portal subtracts out units that have received discretionary permits and will be built in the future.

The Portal collects and aggregates information in a series of heatmaps that depict the location and intensity of units in a 60-acre area. In total, the Portal generates 12 maps.

Portal Maps

The Portal generates 12 different maps that are posted on the County’s website for the unincorporated area and each community planning area.

Map A – Total Capacity of the General Plan
This map is an estimate of the number of existing and future dwelling units allowed for the unincorporated area. Total capacity may not be built and requires permits. Site constraints such as animal habitats, steep slopes, and flood areas may reduce the total capacity.

Map B – Annexations, Acquisitions & Conservation Programs
This map shows the estimated reduction in the General Planning dwelling unit capacity since 2011. These reductions are due to annexations of land by surrounding cities, land acquisitions by State, Federal, or Tribal entities, and conservation programs in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County.

Map C – Changes to the General Plan Capacity
This map is an estimate of the net increase or decrease to the total residential capacity since 2011. Total capacity may not be built and requires permits. Site constraints such as animal habitats, steep slopes, and flood areas may reduce the total capacity.
**Map D – Existing Dwelling Units**
This map shows the estimated number of existing dwelling units in the unincorporated county of San Diego.

**Map E – Dwelling units with Completed Building Permits**
This map shows the total number of dwelling units built in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County since 2011.

**Map F – Dwelling Units with Approved Discretionary Permits**
This map shows the total number of dwelling units approved by the County as part of a residential development requiring a discretionary permit. These developments may require additional permits and infrastructure improvements before construction can begin.

**Map G – Available Capacity of the General Plan**
This map shows the estimated number of dwelling units that could be built based on the total residential capacity of the General Plan. Construction of these units requires site-specific analysis, permits, and possibly infrastructure improvements.

**Map H – Changes to General Plan Capacity in Process**
This map is an estimate of the net increase or decrease in the total residential capacity of the General Plan currently under review by the County. Total capacity may not be built and requires site-specific analysis, permits, and possibly infrastructure improvements.

**Map I – Dwelling Units in Process**
This map shows the total number of dwelling units that are in the process of obtaining discretionary permits. If approved, these developments may require additional permits and infrastructure improvements before construction can begin.

**Map J – Adjusted Available Capacity of the General Plan**
This map shows the estimated number of dwelling units that could be built based on the total residential capacity of the General Plan. The estimate is adjusted to exclude applications for land use changes (Map H) and discretionary permits (Map I).

**Map K – 2011 General Plan Differential**
This map shows the estimated number of dwelling units from developments that exceed or are below the maximum number of dwelling allowed by the General Plan since 2011. The map shows results for both approved and in-process development projects.

**Map L – Dwelling Units in the Grading Stages of the Land Development Process**
This map shows the estimated number of dwelling units from development projects that are currently in the grading stage of construction.

**Portal Search Feature**

The Portal search feature focuses on Map 6: General Plan Dwelling Unit Capacity. Other Portal maps are available on the County’s website and in the Housing Production & Capacity Portal summary. The search feature allows users to explore the location and amount of remaining dwelling unit capacity in the General Plan. It can be used to find specific parcels with available capacity in the unincorporated area.
Searching for Dwelling Unit Capacity

**Step 1:** Go to the Potential Dwelling Units map:

**Step 2:** Type in your address in the search bar.  
http://sdcounty.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=f0a8857539e14c4faeccd158f0b0c7831

**Step 3:** Click Search icon

**Step 4:** Click Add to Map Notes.

**Step 5:** Click on the blue marker.
Step 6: Click on **Next feature** (   ) for additional information about the address:

Parcel information includes:

- **dwelling unit capacity**

- **Parcel Information**

- **Zoning**

For a full description of the zoning regulations, refer to the County of San Diego’s Zoning Ordinance:

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/zoning.html
Showing the Legend

Step 1: Click on the **Legend** icon so that the legend will appear on the left of the page.

Changing the Base Map

Step 1: Click **Basemap** ( ).

Step 2: Select a basemap.

Note: Imagery (**County of San Diego**) is the most up to date basemap. It was last updated in 2017.
Printing

**Step 1:** Click **Print** icon.

**Step 2:** Click **Map** or **Map with Legend**.