



2026 Planning Commissioners' Academy

California Housing Development
and The Planning Commission:
Understanding the Playing Field

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Amber Gregg, CEO



COMMUNITY CATALYST

EDUCATION

- CSU San Marcos, Bachelor of Science in Business/Public Administration, Minor in Communication
- UC Riverside, Land Use Planning and Environmental Science Certificate

EXPERIENCE

- Land Use Planner – Celebrating 25 Years!
- City Planner, Planning Manager
- Planning Firm Business Owner
- Consultant
- Housing Expert
- Avid Volunteer
- Board Member
- Legislative Enthusiast
- Mentor
- Bridge Builder
- Problem Solver



Jacquelyn McCray, Ph.D., AICP

EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Urban Planning, School of Planning, University of Cincinnati
- Master of Public Administration, University of Cincinnati
- Ph.D. in Leadership and Change, Antioch University

EXPERIENCE

- Land Use Planner
- City Planner, Planning Manager
- Budget Analyst
- City Manager's Office
- Planning Commissioner
- Consultant
- Senior Consultant
- Partner
- Director



Purpose

- Review forces that impact housing development in California cities
- Discuss the role of Planning Commissioners in housing development
- Share ideas and insights

Welcome and Our Agenda

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Introductions

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Housing Development Essentials

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An Overview of The General Plan, the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and The Housing Element

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CA Housing Laws

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Process Complexity Inside City Hall

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Planning Commissioners and Educating the Public

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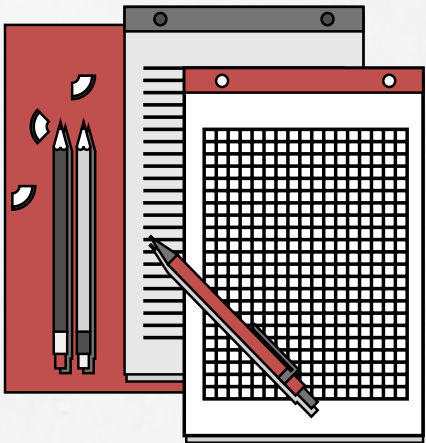
Questions and Your Take Aways

An Interactive Session of Information and Discussion

Who's in the Room – Poll Questions



Go to: Insert Link



Place QR Code Here

There is typically a QR code option now that can be put on the slide so people can navigate using their phone camera.

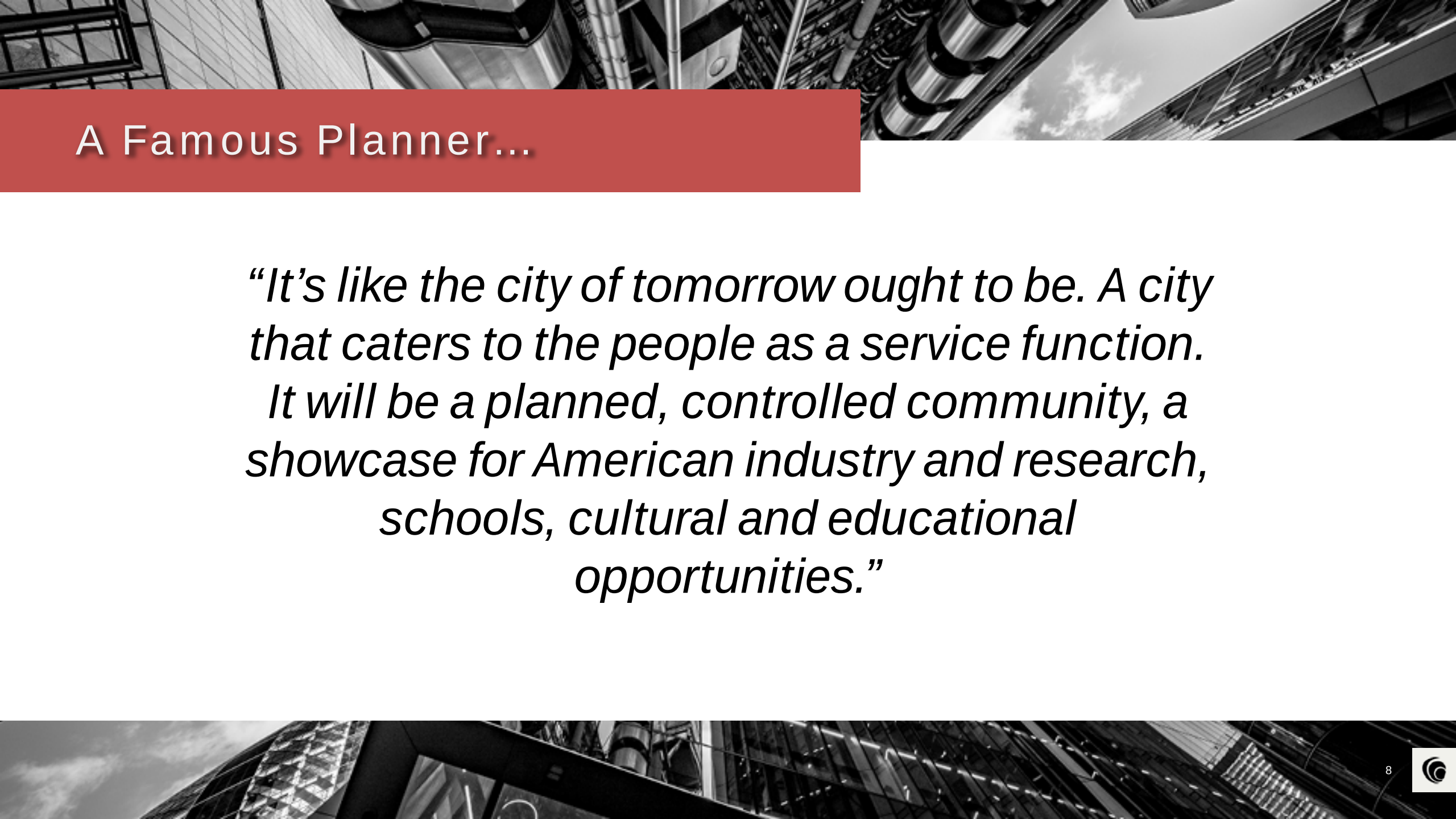
 **SCAN ME** 



Your thoughts ...

Who thinks we have a housing crisis?

*Describe housing needs in your
community.*



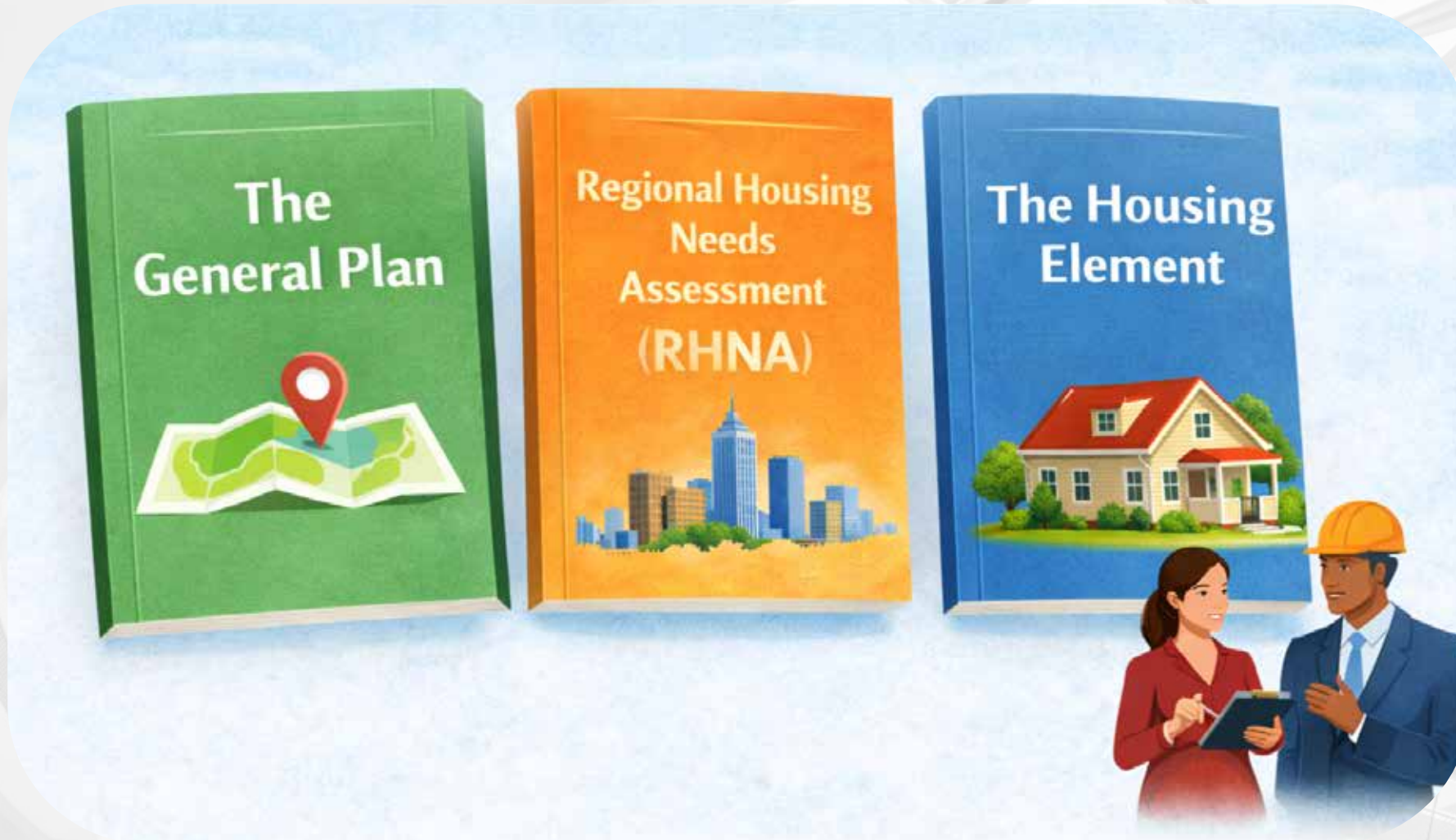
A Famous Planner...

“It’s like the city of tomorrow ought to be. A city that caters to the people as a service function. It will be a planned, controlled community, a showcase for American industry and research, schools, cultural and educational opportunities.”



Overview: The General Plan, Housing Element and Zoning

Housing Development Essentials



The General Plan

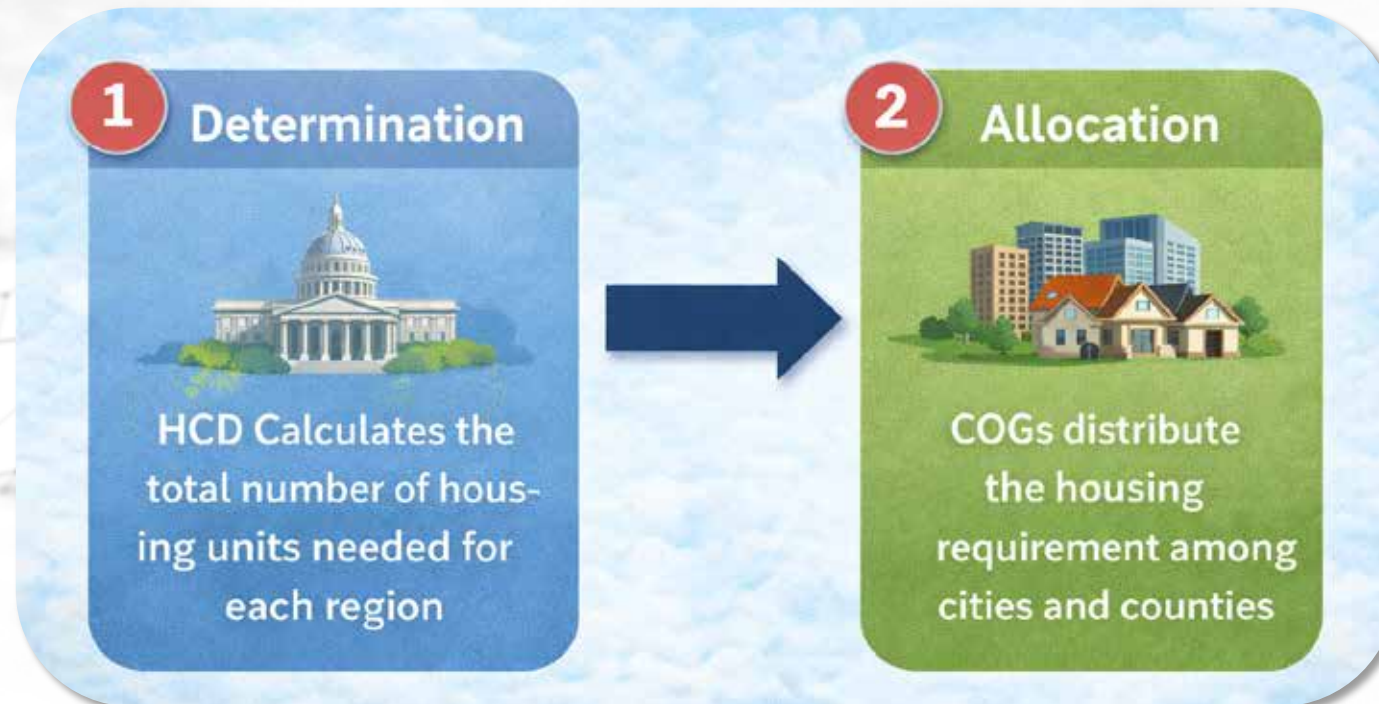
- A comprehensive “Blueprint” of the vision, goals and policies for future growth and development.
- Serves as a guiding document for all future planning and development decisions.
- Updated every 10-20 years
- Approved projects **must** be supported by findings of compliance with the General Plan.

The 8 Elements of the General Plan



Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)

- The first two steps of a multi-step process by California governments to plan for regional housing throughout the statewide.
- Prepared by regional Council of Governments such as SCAG, ABAG and SANDAG, with data to support the development of local Housing Elements.



RHNA Targets: 8-Year Planning Cycle

RHNA

Regional Housing
Needs Assessment



8-Year
Planning Cycle

Previous RHNA

— 2014-2021 —

Current RHNA

— 2021-2029 —

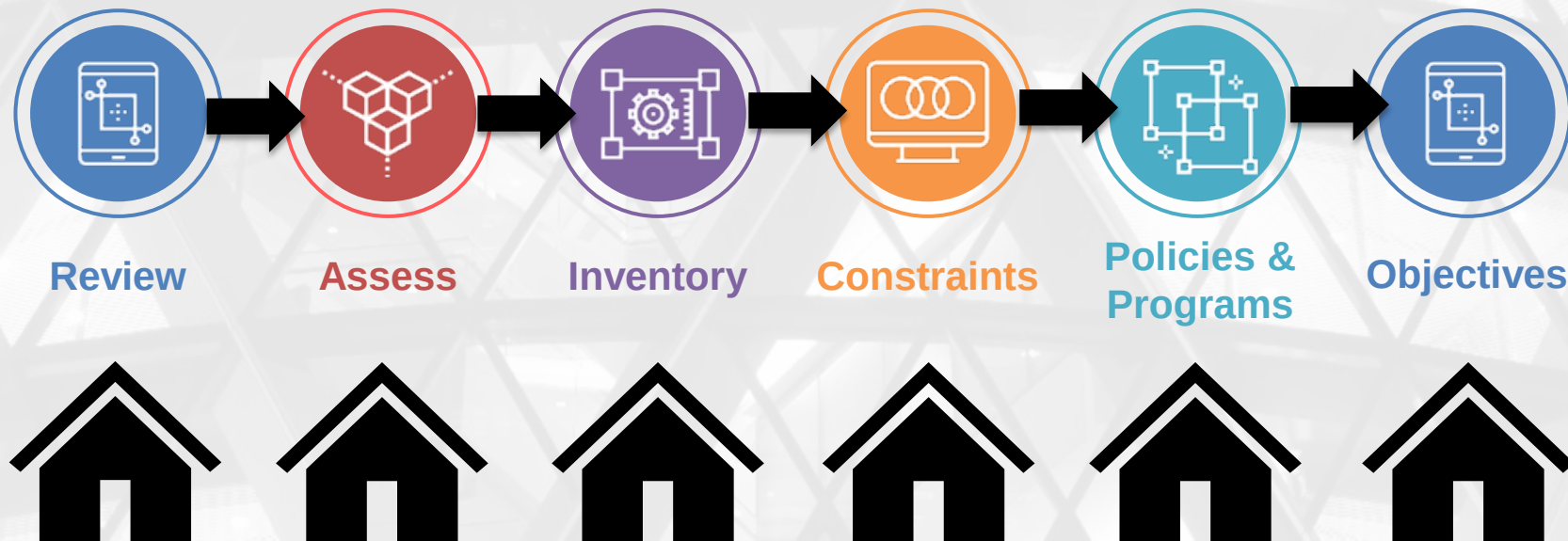
San Jose	35,080	➔	62,200
Santa Rosa	5,083	➔	5,326
Los Gatos	619	➔	1,993
Fresno	23,565	➔	36,866
Modesto	6,361	➔	11,248
Los Baños	2,480	➔	3,132
Los Angeles	82,002	➔	456,643
Anaheim	5,702	➔	17,453
Garden Grove	742	➔	19,168
Laguna Beach	2	➔	394

CA Certified HE's



The Housing Element

- The Housing Element is a key component of the General Plan, addressing housing needs for all income levels within the community.
- It includes policies to increase housing supply, ensure affordable housing, and address special housing needs.
- Updated regularly, it plays a crucial role in meeting state housing goals and promoting sustainable growth.





Facilitated Discussion

*Who really is approving housing
developments today?*

California Housing Law – Key Points

- CA Housing Accountability Act 2017 includes:
 - SB 35, Builders Remedy and Objective Design Standards
 - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- SB 330 – Vesting Develop Rights
- SB 9 - Two Housing Units and Lot Splits
- And many, many, more!



Example: SB 9 and Objective Standards

Allows for:

- ✓ **Pre-defined development standards**
(e.g. front setbacks and heights)
- ✓ **Objective subdivision standards**
(e.g., minimum lot depths)
- ✓ **Objective design standards**
(e.g., roof pitch, eave projections, façade materials, etc.)

As long as they do not physically preclude either of the following:

- ✓ Up to 2 primary units on a parcel, or
- ✓ A unit no less than 800 square feet



- ✓ Ministerial approval
- ⚠ High threshold for denial





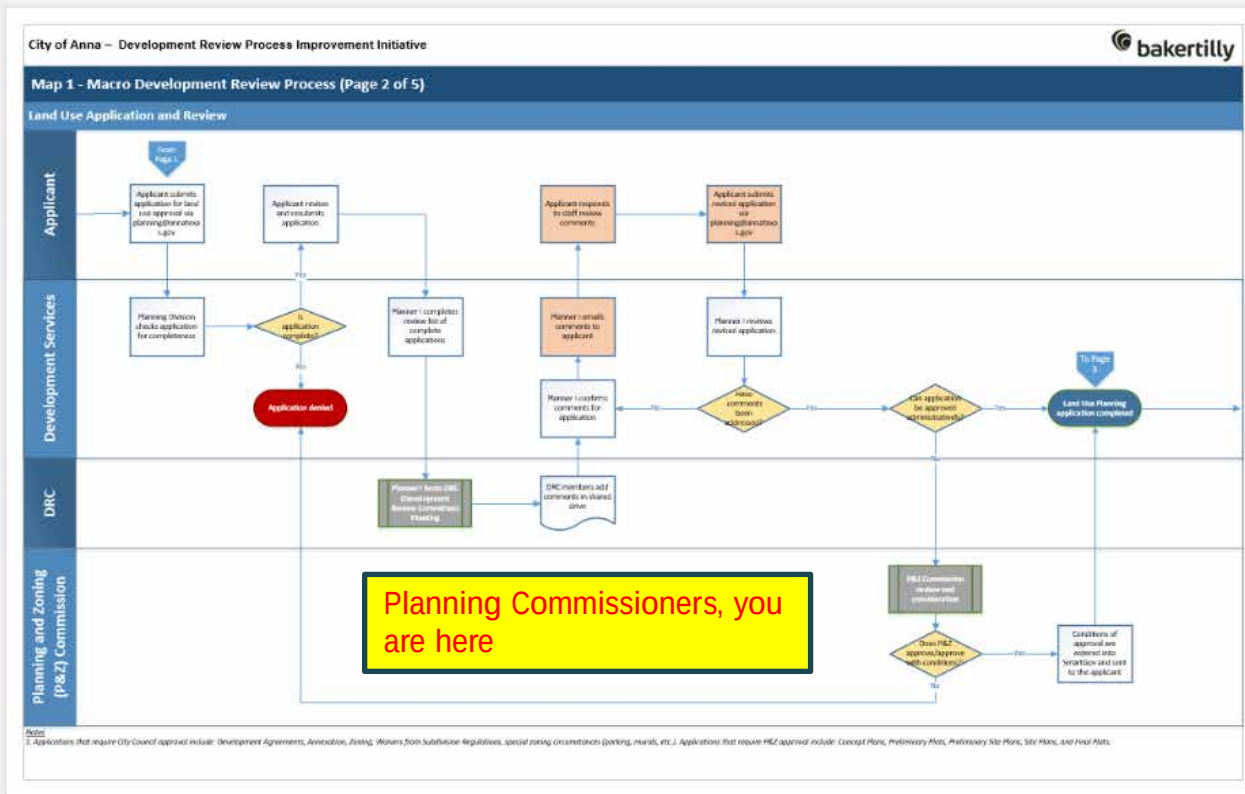
Facilitated Discussion

What sort of streamlining and rightsizing of processes and zoning codes has occurred or is underway in your community?

What tools has your city put in place to facilitate/promote housing development?

Process Complexity Inside City Hall

- Development permitting process are complex and include multiple departments, city functions and oversight groups
- Public hearings and decisions by Planning Commissions, other boards and commissions, and a myriad of other governing bodies



Housing Development is a Partnership



Planning Commissioners and Educating the Public

- Planning Commissions are advisory
- An informal forum for housing education
- Address state laws and local constraints
- Must consider the needs of diverse interest groups (developers, residents, community stakeholders, and decision-makers)
- Uphold the long-term community vision for housing in approved plans





Facilitated Discussion

What roles do Planning Commissioners have as ambassadors and educators?



Facilitated Discussion

*What types of housing projects are you seeing
on your Commission agendas?*





Facilitated Discussion

When and how do planning commissions influence housing development in communities?

Is it when you are crafting your housing element, and adopt your zoning code to implement it?

Are there other opportunities?



Facilitated Discussion

*What else do Planning Commissioners
need to know about housing?*

Questions?

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Thank you for joining us

Let's Stay in Touch!



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