

County of Sonoma
LONG-TERM RESTRICTIONS
FOR
AFFORDABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS

PURPOSE

The purpose of long term affordability restrictions is to ensure that projects which receive a density bonus or other public subsidy provide the required affordable units at rents or sales prices that are affordable in accordance with the County approvals. Similar restrictions are also imposed on projects that provide housing for households with special needs, such as seniors or persons with disabilities. New state grant programs and other funding sources for affordable housing projects often require longer terms than is currently required by the County's zoning code. Currently, density bonus programs apply to moderate income units, but long-term restrictions have not been required. The proposed changes would require long-term restrictions on moderate income units that are approved through the County's Affordable Housing Program. The proposed changes would help maintain the affordability of subsidized units for longer periods.

APPLICABILITY

Long-term affordability restrictions apply only to affordable or special needs housing units that received a density bonus, zoning concession or other public subsidy.

REQUIREMENTS

- An Affordable Housing or Special Needs Housing Agreement with the County is required for all affordable or special needs units.
- Rental restrictions on affordable or special needs units will be required for a minimum term of 55 years or longer term of other project financing.
- Resale restrictions for ownership units will be required for moderate income units, as well as, lower income or special needs units.
- Affordable ownership units will continue to be affordable for a minimum period of 30 years.
- Affordable or special needs ownership units are required to record an option agreement granting a first right of refusal to the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to purchase the unit in the event of resale.
- Affordable ownership units also require a deferred payment loan to allow the County to recapture the value of any County subsidies, density bonus or incentives and a share of the appreciation during the ownership period.
- A recorded covenant or other provision will also be required to preserve the Commission's share of appreciation in the resale value of an affordable unit in the event the owner repays the loan prior to resale.