DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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July 9, 2021

Danny Castro
Design and Development Director
City of La Quinta
78495 Calle Tampico
La Quinta, CA 92253

Dear Danny Castro:

RE: Review of the City of La Quinta's 6th Cycle (2021 - 2029) Draft Housing Element

Thank you for submitting the City of La Quinta (City) draft housing element received for review on May 10, 2021, along with revisions received on June 24, 2021. Pursuant to Government Code section 65585, subdivision (b), the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is reporting the results of its review. Our review was facilitated by a telephone conversation on June 18, 2021 with you, Cheri Flores, Planning Manager, and Nicole Criste, Contract Planner.

The draft element addresses many statutory requirements; however, revisions will be necessary to comply with State Housing Element Law (Article 10.6 of the Gov. Code). The enclosed Appendix describes the revisions needed to comply with State Housing Element Law.

To remain on an eight-year planning cycle, the City must adopt its housing element within 120 calendar days from the statutory due date of October 15, 2021 for Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) localities. If adopted after this date, Government Code section 65588, subdivision (e)(4), requires the housing element be revised every four years until adopting at least two consecutive revisions by the statutory deadline. For more information on housing element adoption requirements, please visit HCD's website at: http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element-memos/docs/sb375 final100413.pdf

Public participation in the development, adoption and implementation of the housing element is essential to effective housing planning. Throughout the housing element process, the City should continue to engage the community, including organizations that represent lower-income and special needs households, by making information regularly available and considering and incorporating comments where appropriate.

Several federal, state, and regional funding programs consider housing element compliance as an eligibility or ranking criteria. For example, the CalTrans Senate Bill

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(SB) 1 Sustainable Communities grant; the Strategic Growth Council and HCD's Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities programs; and HCD's Permanent Local Housing Allocation consider housing element compliance and/or annual reporting requirements pursuant to Government Code section 65400. With a compliant housing element, the City meets housing element requirements for these and other funding sources.

HCD appreciates the attention to detail and diligent efforts of Nicole Criste and the La Quinta planning team during our review. We are committed to assist the City in addressing all statutory requirements of State Housing Element Law. If you have any questions or need additional technical assistance, please contact Tristan Lanza, of our staff, at tristan.lanza@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Shannan West

Land Use & Planning Unit Chief

Enclosure

APPENDIX CITY OF LA QUINTA

The following changes are necessary to bring the City of La Quinta's housing element into compliance with Article 10.6 of the Government Code. Accompanying each recommended change, we cite the supporting section of the Government Code.

Housing element technical assistance information is available on HCD's website at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element-memos.shtml. Among other resources, the housing element section contains HCD's latest technical assistance tool, *Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements (Building Blocks)*, available at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/index.shtml and includes the Government Code addressing State Housing Element Law and other resources.

A. Review and Revision

Review the previous element to evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness, and progress in implementation, and reflect the results of this review in the revised element. (Gov. Code, § 65588 (a) and (b).)

As part of the evaluation of programs in the past cycle (pages III- 65-76), the element must provide an explanation of the effectiveness of goals, policies, and related actions in meeting the housing needs of special needs populations (e.g., elderly, persons with disabilities, large households, female headed households, farmworkers and persons experiencing homelessness).

B. Housing Needs, Resources, and Constraints

1. Affirmatively further[ing] fair housing in accordance with Chapter 15 (commencing with Section 8899.50) of Division 1 of Title 2...shall include an assessment of fair housing in the jurisdiction (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(10)(A).)

The element has some basic information on poverty levels at a local and regional level, limited analysis on race, makes mention of no concentrated poverty impacts and where fair housing complaints can be filed. However, the element generally does not address this requirement. The element, among other things, must include outreach, an assessment of fair housing, identification and prioritization of contributing factors to fair housing issues and goals and actions sufficient to overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity. For more information, please contact HCD and visit https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos.shtml.

2. An inventory of land suitable and available for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having realistic and demonstrated potential for redevelopment during the planning period to meet the locality's housing need for a designated income level, and an

analysis of the relationship of zoning and public facilities and services to these sites. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (a)(3).)

The City has a Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) of 1530 housing units, of which 420 are for lower-income households. To address this need, the element relies on vacant sites, including sites in The Village commercial district. To demonstrate the adequacy of these sites and strategies to accommodate the City's RHNA, the element must include complete analyses:

Progress in Meeting the RHNA: The element indicates (page 109) that 420 units affordable to very low-income households and 269 units affordable to low-income household have been built or are under construction or approved, but the elements provides no information documenting how affordability of the units was determined. As you know, the City's RHNA may be reduced by the number of new units built since January 30, 2021. However, the element must describe the City's methodology for assigning these units to the various income groups based on actual sales price or rent level of the units and demonstrate their availability in the planning period.

In addition, the element identifies several proposed projects on page 48 (Table II-23) in the pipeline which the City expects to be built within the planning period. If the City plans to credit these projects against its RHNA, the element should specify whether applications have been submitted for these sites, and what approvals remain necessary, expecting timelines for completion of the entitlement process, and describe the City's methodology for assigning these units to the various income groups based on actual or proposed sales price or rent level of the units.

<u>Sites Inventory</u>: Pursuant to Government Code section 65583.3, subdivision (b), the City must utilize standards, forms, and definitions adopted by HCD when preparing the sites inventory (for all income-levels). For example, sites to be consolidated should be listed by individual parcel numbers. Additionally, the inventory (Table 11-51) should identify any City-owned land. Pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2, subdivision (b)(3), if a site included in the inventory is owned by the city or county, the housing element must include a description of whether there are any plans to sell the property during the planning period and how the jurisdiction will comply with the Surplus Land Act Article 8 (commencing with Section 54220) of Chapter 5 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5.

Please see HCD's housing element webpage at https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/index.shtml for a copy of the form and instructions. The City can reach out to HCD at sitesinventory@hcd.ca.gov for technical assistance. Please note, upon adoption of the housing element, the City must submit an electronic version of the sites inventory with its adopted housing element to sitesinventory@hcd.ca.gov

<u>Sites Identified in Prior Planning Periods</u>: Sites identified in prior planning periods shall not be deemed adequate to accommodate the housing needs for lower-income households unless a program, meeting statutory requirements, rezones sites to permit housing development by-right pursuant to statutory requirements. The element must

clarify if sites used to accommodate the housing need for lower-income households were previously identified in prior planning periods and include programs as appropriate. For additional information, see HCD's Housing Element Sites Inventory Guidebook at https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos.shtml.

Realistic Capacity: The element must describe its methodology for estimating the number of units that can be accommodated on each site in the inventory. The estimate of the number of units for each site must be adjusted as necessary, based on the land use controls and site improvements, typical densities of existing or approved residential developments at a similar affordability level in La Quinta, and on the current or planned availability and accessibility of sufficient water, sewer, and dry utilities.

In addition, the element appears to assume residential development on sites zoned for nonresidential uses, but to support this assumption, the element must analyze the likelihood of residential in zoning where 100 percent nonresidential uses are allowed. The analysis should be based on factors such as development trends including nonresidential, performance standards requiring residential uses or other relevant factors such as enhanced policies and programs. For additional information, see the *Building Blocks* at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/site-inventory-analysis/analysis-of-sites-and-zoning.shtml#zoning.

Zoning for Lower-Income Households: The element appears to rely on densities allowing up to 24 units per acre to accommodate the housing need of lower-income households. Pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2, subdivision (c)(3)(A) and (B), the element must identify sites with zoning and densities appropriate to encourage and facilitate the development of housing for lower-income households based on factors such as market demand, financial feasibility and development experience within zones. For communities with densities that meet specific standards (at least 30 units per acre for La Quinta), this analysis is not required. Otherwise, the element must include an analysis based on, including, but not limited to, factors such as market demand, financial feasibility and development experience within identified zones demonstrating how the adopted densities can accommodate housing for lower-income households. For additional information and sample analysis, see the *Building Blocks* at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/site-inventory-analysis/analysis-of-sites-and-zoning.shtml#zoning.

<u>Large Sites</u>: Table II-51 includes three sites larger than 10 acres (Map Key 1, and 9). In order to demonstrate that these sites can accommodate the lower-income need, the element must demonstrate that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period for an equivalent number of lower-income housing units as projected for the site or unless the housing element describes other evidence to HCD that the site is adequate to accommodate lower- income housing (Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (c)(2)(A).). For additional information, see the Building Blocks at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/site-inventory-analysis/analysis-of-sites-and-zoning.shtml#analysis.

Small Sites: The element identifies at least three sites (Map Key 2, 3 and 4) in Table 11-51 at less than a half-acre. Sites smaller than a half-acre in size are deemed inadequate to accommodate housing for lower-income housing unless it is demonstrated that sites of equivalent size were successfully developed during the prior planning period for an equivalent number of lower-income housing units as projected for the site or unless the housing element describes other evidence to HCD that the site is adequate to accommodate lower income housing (Gov. Code, § 65583.2, subd. (c)(2)(A).). As the element appears to rely on consolidated small sites to accommodate the RHNA for lower-income households, it should also provide analysis demonstrating the potential for consolidation. For example, the analysis could describe the City's role or track record in facilitating small-lot consolidation, policies or incentives offered or proposed to encourage and facilitate lot consolidation, conditions rendering parcels suitable and ready for lot consolidation, or information from the owners of each aggregated site.

<u>Sites with Zoning for a Variety of Housing Types:</u> The element must demonstrate zoning for a variety of housing types, as follows:

Emergency Shelters: The element states that emergency shelters are permitted by-right in all nonresidential districts except Village Commercial but would require an approval of a site development permit which would require approval by the director or planning commission. The element must analyze this process for consistency with the Government Code section 65583, subdivision (a)(4), where zoning must allow emergency shelters as a permitted use without a conditional use or other discretionary permit.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): The element indicates the City modified its zoning code to ease barriers to the development of ADU's. However, after a cursory review of the City's ordinance, the department discovered several areas which were not consistent with State ADU law. This includes, but is not limited to, excessive development standards, requiring existing dwellings to correct nonconforming zoning conditions prior to approval of an ADU, maximum and minimum size restrictions, allowing additional conditions to be imposed by the city manager, among others. HCD will provide a complete listing of ADU non-compliance issues under a separate cover. As a result, the element should add a program to update the City's ADU ordinance in order to comply with State Law. For more information, please consult HCD's ADU Guidebook, published in December 2020, which provides detailed information on new state requirements surrounding ADU development.

3. An analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including the types of housing identified in paragraph (1) of subdivision (c), and for persons with disabilities as identified in the analysis pursuant to paragraph (7), including land use controls, building codes and their enforcement, site improvements, fees and other exactions required of developers, and local processing and permit procedures. The analysis shall also demonstrate local efforts to remove governmental constraints that hinder the locality

from meeting its share of the regional housing need in accordance with Government Code section 65584 and from meeting the need for housing for persons with disabilities, supportive housing, transitional housing, and emergency shelters identified pursuant to paragraph (7). Transitional housing and supportive housing shall be considered a residential use of property and shall be subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type in the same zone. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (a)(5).)

<u>Land-Use Controls</u>: The element must identify and analyze all impacts of relevant land use controls for potential constraints. The analysis must evaluate the cumulative impacts of land use controls on the cost and supply of housing, including the ability to achieve maximum densities and ability to develop multifamily housing in the nonresidential zones. In particular, the element should specifically address parking requirements for multifamily units, minimum lot size requirements, and setback requirements and add or modify programs as appropriate.

<u>Fees and Exaction</u>: The element must describe all required fees for single family and multifamily housing development, including impact fees, and analyze their impact as potential constraints on housing supply and affordability. For example, the analysis could identify the total amount of fees and their proportion to the development costs for both single family and multifamily housing. For additional information and a sample analysis and tables, see the *Building Blocks* at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/constraints/fees-and-exactions.shtml.

Permit Processing: The element provides a general overview of the City's processing and permit procedures and states that that all multifamily requires a conditional use permit for multifamily projects in all nonresidential districts. The element must describe and analyze this permitting requirement including approval procedures and decision-making criteria for their impact as potential constraints on housing supply and affordability. For example, the analysis could describe required findings and discuss whether objective standards and guidelines improve development certainty and mitigate cost impacts. It could also provide examples of recent timeframes for recent projects that have been approved by the City. As the element identifies most of the sites to accommodate the Regional Housing Need for lower-income in the Village Commercial and Regional Commercial zones, the analysis is particularly important to demonstrate that residential development is feasible on these sites, that this process is not a constraint, and the element should include a program to address this permitting requirement, as determined by the analysis.

The element also describes an Affordable Housing Overlay which allows affordable housing at higher densities within commercial zones. The element should clarify how the affordable housing overlay impacts allowable densities, any requirements for accessing the overlay, and if the overlay is applied to any of the sites identified to accommodate the City's low-income housing need.

<u>Design Review</u>: The element must describe and analyze the architectural review requirements and process, including approval procedures and decision-making criteria, for their impact as potential constraints on housing supply and affordability. For example, the analysis could describe required findings and discuss whether objective standards and guidelines improve development certainty and mitigate cost impacts. The element must demonstrate this process is not a constraint or it must include a program to address this permitting requirement, as appropriate.

4. An analysis of potential and actual nongovernmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including the availability of financing, the price of land, the cost of construction, the requests to develop housing at densities below those anticipated in the analysis required by subdivision (c) of Government Code section 65583.2, and the length of time between receiving approval for a housing development and submittal of an application for building permits for that housing development that hinder the construction of a locality's share of the regional housing need in accordance with Government Code section 65584. The analysis shall also demonstrate local efforts to remove nongovernmental constraints that create a gap between the locality's planning for the development of housing for all income levels and the construction of that housing. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (a)(6).)

Nongovernmental Constraints: The element contains information on nongovernmental constraints such as land and construction costs; the availability of financing; economic constraints; and requests to develop at densities below the density identified in the sites inventory (pg. 107). However, the element must also include analysis regarding local efforts to address nongovernmental constraints that create a gap in the jurisdiction's ability to meet RHNA by income category.

5. Analyze existing assisted housing developments that are eligible to change to non-low-income housing uses during the next 10 years due to termination of subsidy contracts, mortgage prepayment, or expiration of use restrictions. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (a)(9) through 65583(a)(9)(D).)

The housing element identifies both the Seasons at Miraflores Senior Apartments and the Seasons La Quinta Senior Apartments as at-risk units (Table II-52) within the next 10 years. However, these units may not be at risk within the planning period. The City should contact these housing developments to verify the status of their contract expiration. Should units be identified at-risk within a 10 year period, the analysis of "at-risk" units must also include an estimated total cost for producing, replacing and preserving the units at-risk, an identification of public and private nonprofit corporations known to the City to have the legal and managerial capacity to acquire and manage at-risk units, and an identification and consideration of use of federal, state and local financing and subsidy programs.

For additional information and sample analysis, see the *Building Blocks* at http://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/housing-needs/assisted-housing-developments.shtml and for more information on identifying

units at-risk, see the California Housing Partnership at http://www.chpc.net.

C. <u>Housing Programs</u>

1. Include a program which sets forth a schedule of actions during the planning period, each with a timeline for implementation, which may recognize that certain programs are ongoing, such that there will be beneficial impacts of the programs within the planning period, that the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element through the administration of land use and development controls, the provision of regulatory concessions and incentives, and the utilization of appropriate federal and state financing and subsidy programs when available. The program shall include an identification of the agencies and officials responsible for the implementation of the various actions. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c).)

To address the program requirements of Government Code section 65583, subdivision (c)(1-6), and to facilitate implementation, all programs should be evaluated and revised as appropriate to include: (1) a description of the City's specific role in implementation including meaningful actions the City will take to achieve the identified goals, policies, and program objectives; (2) definitive implementation timelines (e.g., December 31, 2021); (3) objectives, quantified where appropriate; and (4) identification of responsible agencies and officials. In addition, the following programs required additional revisions.

<u>Policy H-3.1:</u> The element should be revised to provide specific actions to remove the unnecessary regulatory constraints to enable the construction or rehabilitation of housing that meets the needs of La Quinta residents, including lower income and special needs residents.

<u>Policy 5.2</u>: The element should be revised to provide specific actions to encourage and support the enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in lending practices and in the sale or rental of housing.

<u>Policy 5.3:</u> The element should be revised to provide specific actions to further and encourage and support the Coachella Valley's senior and homeless populations.

2. The housing element shall contain programs which assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of extremely low-, very low-, low- and moderate-income households. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(2).)

The element must include a program(s) with specific actions and timelines to assist in the development of housing for extremely low-income households and households and individuals with special needs (e.g., farmworkers, persons experiencing homelessness, persons with disabilities, including developmental). The program(s) could commit to adopting priority processing, granting fee waivers or deferrals, modifying development standards, granting concessions and incentives for housing developments that include units affordable to lower and moderate-income households; assisting, supporting or

pursuing funding applications; and working with housing developers coordinate and implement a strategy for developing housing affordable to lower and moderate-income households.

3. Address and, where appropriate and legally possible, remove governmental and nongovernmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing, including housing for all income levels and housing for persons with disabilities. The program shall remove constraints to, and provide reasonable accommodations for housing designed for, intended for occupancy by, or with supportive services for, persons with disabilities. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(3).)

As noted in Findings B4 and B5, the element requires a complete analysis of potential governmental and nongovernmental constraints. Depending upon the results of that analysis, the City may need to revise or add programs and address and remove or mitigate any identified constraints.

- 4. The housing element shall include programs to conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(4).)
 - All rehabilitation programs under Policy 4.4 need to quantify the number of households expected to be served through the implementation of these programs. In addition, the element states that the City will be conducting a new windshield survey in the fiscal year 2021/2022 (page 45). The element should contain a program to complete this windshield survey and update program objectives depending on the results of that survey.
- 5. Promote and affirmatively further fair housing opportunities and promote housing throughout the community or communities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, familial status, or disability, and other characteristics protected by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (Part 2.8 (commencing with Section 12900) of Division 3 of Title 2), Section 65008, and any other state and federal fair housing and planning law. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(5).)
 - As noted in Finding B1, the element must include a complete analysis of affirmatively furthering fair housing. Based on the outcome of that analysis, the element must add or modify programs. Additionally, programs and actions need to be significant, meaningful, and sufficient to overcome identified patterns of segregation and affirmatively further fair housing.
- 6. The housing program shall preserve for low-income household the assisted housing developments identified pursuant to paragraph (9) of subdivision (a). The program for preservation of the assisted housing developments shall utilize, to the extent necessary, all available federal, state, and local financing and subsidy programs identified in paragraph (9) of subdivision (a), except where a community has other urgent needs for which alternative funding sources are not available. The program may include strategies that involve local regulation and technical assistance. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(6).)

The element identifies 205 units affordable to lower-income and senior households that may be at-risk of converting to market rate during the planning period. Depending on the results of the analysis, Program H 4.4.e may need to be updated to include specific and proactive actions to preserve the at-risk units. For example, the program could commit to supporting applications by nonprofits for funding to purchase at-risk units, strengthen relationships with the listed nonprofits and develop a plan or strategy for quickly moving forward in the case units are noticed to convert to market-rate uses in the planning period, and consider pursuing funding on at least an annual basis. The program could also commit the City to contacting non-profits to develop a preservation strategy within one year of adoption of the housing element and be ready to quickly act when notice of conversion is received.

7. Develop a plan that incentivizes and promotes the creation of accessory dwelling units that can be offered at affordable rent, as defined in Section 50053 of the Health and Safety Code, for very low, low-, or moderate-income households. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(7).)

The element is required to include a program that incentivizes or promotes ADU development for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. While the element includes Program H 2.1 to monitor the affordability of ADU, it does not identify strategies to target moderate- and lower-income households. This can take the form of flexible zoning requirements, development standards, or processing and fee incentives that facilitate the creation of ADUs, such as reduced parking requirements, fee waivers and more. Other strategies could include developing information packets to market ADU construction, targeted advertising of ADU development opportunities or establishing an ADU specialist within the planning department.

D. <u>Public Participation</u>

Include a diligent effort by the local government to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element, and the program shall describe this effort. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(9).)

While the element describes a public workshop, some Planning Commission and City Council updates, and direct notices to housing providers, the element should include additional efforts to include a broad spectrum of individuals and representative organizations and consider language access barrier. In addition, HCD understands the City only recently made the element available to the public. By not providing an opportunity for the public to review and comment on a draft of the element in advance of submission, the City has not yet complied with statutory mandates to make a diligent effort to encourage the public participation in the development of the element and it reduces HCD's ability to consider public comments in the course of its review. The availability of the document to the public and opportunity for public comment prior to submittal to HCD is essential to the public process and HCD's review. The City must proactively make future revisions available to the public, including any commenters, prior to submitting any revisions to HCD and diligently consider and address comments,

including making revisions to the document where appropriate. HCD's future review will consider the extent to which the revised element documents how the City solicited, considered, and addressed public comments in the element. The City's consideration of public comments must not be limited by HCD's findings in this review letter.

E. Quantified Objectives

Establish the number of housing units, by income level, that can be constructed, rehabilitated, and conserved over a five-year time frame. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (b)(1 & 2).)

The element must include quantified objectives to establish an estimate of housing units by income category that can be constructed, rehabilitated, and conserved over the planning period. While the element includes objectives for units constructed and conserved, it must also include objectives for rehabilitation activities over the planning period. For example, the element could provide estimates on the number of households expected to be served through the implementation of programs under Policy H 4.4.

F. General Plan

For your information, some general plan element updates are triggered by housing element adoption. For example, a jurisdiction must address environmental justice in its General Plan by the adoption of an environmental justice element, or by the integration of environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives into other general plan elements upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018. (Gov. Code, § 65302, subd. (h).) In addition, the safety and conservation elements of the general plan must include analysis and policies regarding fire and flood hazard management and be revised upon each housing element revision. (Gov. Code, § 65302, subd. (g).) Also, the land-use element must identify and analyze disadvantaged communities (unincorporated island or fringe communities within spheres of influence areas or isolated long-established legacy communities) on, or before, the housing element's adoption due date. (Gov. Code, § 65302.10, subd. (b).) HCD reminds the City of La Quinta to consider timing provisions and welcomes the opportunity to provide assistance. For information, please see the Technical Advisories issued by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research at:

http://opr.ca.gov/docs/OPR Appendix C final.pdf and http://opr.ca.gov/docs/Final 6.26.15.pdf.