



Folsom City Council Staff Report

MEETING DATE:	8/11/2026
AGENDA SECTION:	Consent Calendar
SUBJECT:	Resolution No. 11676 – A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update and Appropriation of Funds
FROM:	Community Development Department

RECOMMENDATION / CITY COUNCIL ACTION

Staff recommends that the City Council pass and adopt Resolution No. 11676 - A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update and Appropriation of Funds.

BACKGROUND / ISSUE

The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory elements of the City of Folsom General Plan and plays a critical role in planning for a variety of housing opportunities including those for households with lower incomes. State requirements for Housing Elements are set forth in Government Code Sections 65580–65589 and include mandatory review and certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Unlike other General Plan elements, the Housing Element must be updated every eight years.

The City’s current Housing Element was adopted in August 2021 and covers the 2021–2029 planning period, which concludes on May 15, 2029. The upcoming Seventh Cycle Housing Element will cover the 2029–2037 time period and will require a reassessment of the City’s housing goals, policies, and programs.

Even though the Seventh Cycle does not start until 2029, the process handled by the HCD and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) to determine the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) has begun and SACOG has scheduled the first RHNA Cycle 7

Technical Advisory Council (TAC) meeting for August 18, 2026, marking the start of the regional coordination and methodology development process. SACOG's RHNA implementation timeline for Cycle 7 is illustrated in the Figure 1 below.

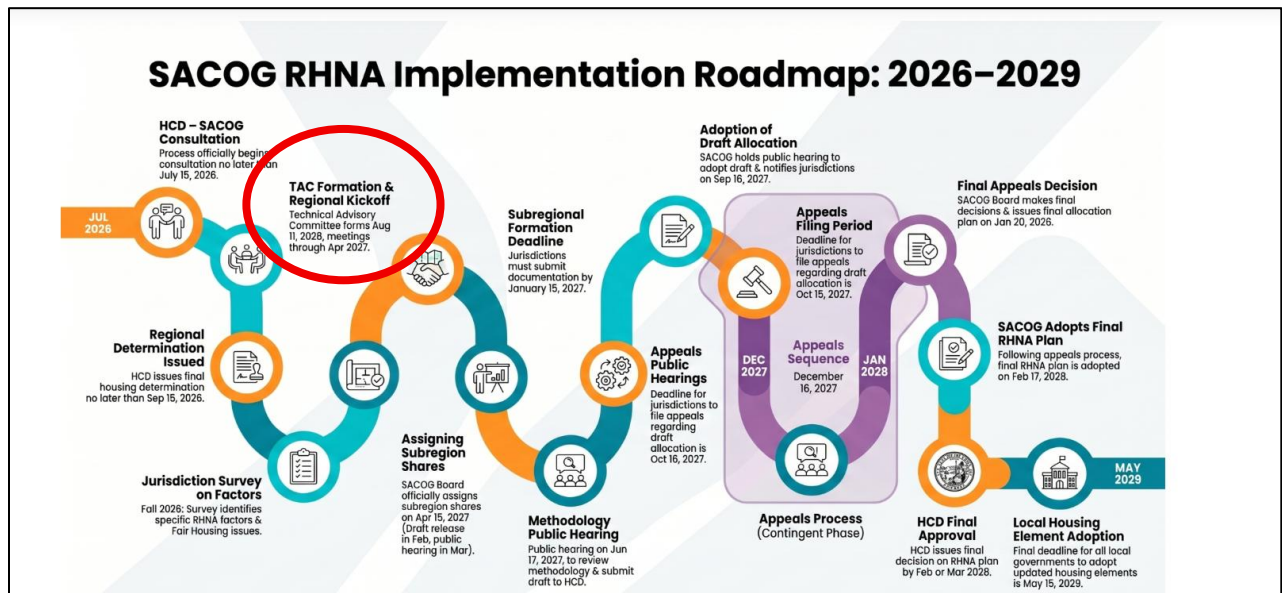


Figure 1: SACOG RHNA Implementation Roadmap

The Seventh Cycle is expected to include a potentially higher RHNA allocation, increased HCD scrutiny of sites inventory methodology, expanded fair housing analysis requirements, and new standards for acutely and extremely low-income households. The City must also implement Senate Bill 79 (SB 79), which went into effect on July 1, 2026, and requires allowance of higher-density transit-oriented development near light rail stations.

To prepare a compliant Housing Element, the City must update demographic and housing needs data, revise the sites inventory, evaluate governmental and non-governmental constraints, and develop programs supporting housing opportunities for all income levels. The update must also include a comprehensive Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) analysis, addressing access to opportunity, segregation patterns, contributing factors, and barriers to housing choice.

This update will build upon the City's 2024 General Plan Update and its Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR), which fulfilled Program H2 of the current Housing Element by increasing residential densities and overall housing capacity. Robust community engagement will also be required to involve residents, stakeholders, and decision-makers in shaping the Housing Element's goals and policies.

Consultant expertise and support is needed to complete the required technical analyses, drafting, outreach, policy development, and CEQA documentation tiered from the General Plan SEIR, as well as coordination with HCD throughout the review and certification process. With assistance from City staff, the consultant will prepare the Seventh Cycle Housing

Element in compliance with Government Code Section 65583. The work will include at a minimum the following tasks:

- Reviewing and updating goals, policies, and programs for consistency with the General Plan, the Zoning Code, and State Law
- Analyzing recent state housing legislation
- Updating housing needs and demographic projections
- Preparing a sites inventory
- Assessing housing conditions and special needs
- Updating the fair housing assessment to reflect current conditions
- Evaluating governmental and non-governmental constraints
- Recommending policy initiatives and programs to expand affordable housing opportunities
- Preparing CEQA documentation to demonstrate consistency with the General Plan SEIR

This resolution authorizes the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for preparation of the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update in the amount not to exceed \$297,245 funded by the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238).

POLICY / RULE

In accordance with Chapter 2.36 of the Folsom Municipal Code, professional services contracts of \$77,426 or greater shall be approved by the City Council.

ANALYSIS

As previously indicated, the Seventh Cycle Housing Element update presents several challenges for the City. The City of Folsom enters this cycle with a strong foundation: a certified Sixth Cycle Housing Element and a series of strategic amendments to the General Plan and the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan that increased residential capacity near light rail stations, along the East Bidwell corridor, and within the Town Center of the Folsom Plan Area. The City also secured several deed restricted multifamily sites in the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan and purchased a few properties for future housing development using Housing Funds.

The Seventh Cycle will introduce several new challenges, including a likely increase in the City's RHNA allocation compared to the Sixth Cycle, intensified HCD scrutiny of sites-inventory methodologies, a more stringent AFFH standard, and new requirements addressing acutely and extremely low-income households. These additions reflect the State's growing recognition that the housing needs of the lowest-income residents (including individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness) differ significantly from those of other income groups and require targeted analysis and policy solutions. The City must also comply with SB 79, which requires higher-density, transit-oriented development near Folsom's light rail stations. Given these factors, it is essential for the City to partner with a consultant team

that has statewide housing expertise and a strong understanding of both the challenges and opportunities anticipated during this planning cycle.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update was issued on May 20, 2026, and was published on the City’s website, posted on a third-party bid platform, and emailed to five local consulting firms experienced in housing element updates. Four complete proposals, plus one subconsultant proposal, were received by the June 22, 2026 deadline. The subconsultant proposal was reviewed; however, it was not considered because it did not meet the requirements outlined in the RFP.

A review panel of Community Development Department staff independently evaluated and scored the four complete proposals submitted by Ascent, 4Leaf, Mintier Harnish, and Precision Civil Engineering. Evaluations were based on criteria such as relevant experience, qualifications of the proposed team, understanding of the issues, proposed project scope, and public outreach approach. Proposal evaluation scores were assigned on a 100-point scale and are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Consultant Proposal Evaluation

Consultant	CD1	CD2	CD3	Average
Ascent	98	98	93	96.3
4Leaf	50	58	34	47.3
Mintier Harnish	83	85	85	84.3
Precision Civil Engineering	65	54	65	61.3

After reviewing each of the four complete proposals for project understanding, qualifications, deliverables, and project team staffing, the proposals were reviewed for project costs. The fee schedules for the scope of work outlined in the request for proposals from each consultant are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Consultant Project Costs

Consultant	Contract amount	Contingency	Total
Ascent	\$267, 245	\$30,000	\$297,245
4Leaf	\$301,160	\$21,830	\$322,990
Minitier Harnish	\$242,165*	\$24,217	\$266,382
Precision Civil Engineering	\$136,710	\$19,550	\$156,260

**Proposal did not include CEQA compliance cost in total estimated contract cost and identified as additional cost (\$10,000 to \$100,000) based on level of review.*

Staff determined that Ascent offers the best overall value to the City based on the strength of their proposal, the qualifications of their project team, their extensive experience with similar projects, and the competitiveness of their fee. Their proposal demonstrated a deep understanding of the Housing Element Update and reflected substantial past work completed for the City.

A major factor that distinguished Ascent from the other firms was their identification of three key tasks that no other proposal addressed:

- Specialized analysis of SB 79 impacts on the Housing Element Update.
- Recognition that tribal consultation will be required as part of the update process.
- Commitment to ensuring all final documents are ADA compliant.

By proactively addressing these items, Ascent demonstrated a more complete and forward-looking understanding of the project requirements. This led to Ascent receiving higher evaluation scores than the other proposals.

The proposed consultant agreement totals \$297,245. Ascent's project manager brings exceptional experience, having prepared more than 70 housing elements throughout California, including the City's 2009, 2013, and 2021 Housing Elements. Ascent also played a key role in preparing the City's 2035 General Plan and in implementing Housing Element Program H-2, which increased densities in targeted areas. Their strong familiarity with the City's long-range planning framework, such as mixed-use corridors, transit priority areas, and infrastructure and service capacity considerations, positions them well to guide the upcoming Housing Element Update.

Considering the complexity of this update, Ascent's depth of experience, and the thoroughness of their fee proposal, Ascent is recommended as the most qualified and cost-effective firm for the project.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

If approved, the consultant agreement with Ascent for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update would be in the amount of \$267,245, including a contingency of \$30,000, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$297,245. An appropriation in the amount of \$297,245 in the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238) is required for the agreement. Sufficient funds are available in the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238) to cover the cost of the agreement. The project does not impact the City's General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Execution of the consultant contract for the Housing Element Update is not considered a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it constitutes an administrative action that has no potential to result in a physical impact on the environment. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), there is no possibility that approving this contract will cause a direct or reasonably foreseeable physical change in the environment. Therefore, the contract is exempt from environmental review.

The Housing Element Update itself will undergo the required CEQA analysis, and the appropriate environmental document will be prepared prior to its adoption. This environmental

review will be presented to the City Council when the updated Housing Element is brought forward for consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution No. 11676 – A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update and Appropriation of Funds
2. Ascent Environmental Scope of Work and Cost Proposal

Submitted,



Pam Johns, Community Development Director

ATTACHMENT 1

A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update and Appropriation of Funds

RESOLUTION NO. 11676

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ASCENT FOR THE SEVENTH CYCLE HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Housing Element is a mandatory component of the City of Folsom General Plan, must be updated every eight years, and is subject to review and certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD); and

WHEREAS, the City's current Housing Element covers 2021–2029, and the Seventh Cycle Housing Element (2029–2037) requires updated data, a revised sites inventory, analysis of constraints, an Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment, and incorporation of new State requirements including Senate Bill 79 regarding higher-density transit-oriented development; and

WHEREAS, preparation of the update requires extensive technical work, community engagement, policy development, and CEQA documentation tiered from the City's 2024 General Plan Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR); and

WHEREAS, the City issued a Request for Proposals on May 20, 2026, received four complete responses, and conducted a competitive evaluation based on experience, qualifications, project understanding, and cost; and

WHEREAS, Ascent submitted a competitive fee proposal in the amount of \$267,245 plus a contingency of \$30,000, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$297,245; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Chapter 2.36 of the Folsom Municipal Code, contracts of \$77,426 or greater shall be approved by the City Council.

WHEREAS, funding will be provided through the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238) and will not impact the City's General Fund; and

WHEREAS, approval of the consultant agreement is exempt from CEQA under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) as an administrative action with no potential environmental impact.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Folsom authorizes the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ascent for preparation of the Seventh Cycle Housing Element Update in the amount of \$267,245, including a contingency of \$30,000 for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$297,245 funded in the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Finance Director is authorized to appropriate \$297,245 for this agreement in the Folsom Housing Fund (Fund 238).

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 11th day of August 2026, by the following roll-call vote:

AYES: Councilmember(s):

NOES: Councilmember(s):

ABSENT: Councilmember(s):

ABSTAIN: Councilmember(s):

Justin Raithel, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Christa Freemantle, CITY CLERK

ATTACHMENT 2

Ascent Environmental Scope of Work and Cost Proposal

C / SCOPE OF WORK + SCHEDULE

Project Understanding and Key Challenges

The City of Folsom is approaching its Seventh Cycle Housing Element update with a strong foundation to build from: a certified Sixth Cycle Housing Element and a series of strategic amendments to the General Plan and Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan that increased residential capacity near light rail stations, along the East Bidwell corridor, and in the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan Town Center. At the same time, the seventh cycle will bring new pressures: a RHNA that is likely to be higher than the sixth cycle, heightened HCD scrutiny of sites inventory methodology, a more demanding AFFH standard, and new requirements for acutely and extremely low-income households. The City will also need to navigate the requirements of SB 79, which mandates allowance of higher-density transit-oriented development near Folsom's light rail stations.

Accommodating the Seventh Cycle RHNA

SACOG's seventh cycle RHNA process will be kicking off in mid-2026, with anticipated release of the Regional Housing Needs Determination by HCD in September 2026 and adoption of the Final RHNA Plan by SACOG in November 2027. Based on determinations in other regions, it is highly likely that the SACOG region will be assigned a higher RHNA than in the sixth cycle. Given Folsom's demographics relative to the region, the City can anticipate another substantial lower-income allocation. The Ascent team is acutely aware of the City's challenges with the sites inventory.

Accommodating the lower-income RHNA and ensuring "no net loss" of capacity was a challenge for Folsom in the sixth cycle—one Ascent helped the City navigate through a General Plan Amendment, Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (FPASP) amendment, and Subsequent EIR to increase densities near light rail stations, along the East Bidwell corridor, and in the FPASP Town Center. Whether that additional capacity will be sufficient for the seventh cycle is unknown, but the sites inventory will again require a thoughtful methodology, strong documentation, and a defensible approach to buildout assumptions that will withstand HCD scrutiny. Having led this work in the sixth cycle, Ascent understands both the analytical complexity and the stakes involved, and we know what it takes to get HCD approval.

A Higher Bar on AFFH Requirements

While the City's Sixth Cycle Housing Element included a fair housing assessment and programs to affirmatively further fair housing in compliance with AB 686, it was prepared early in the sixth cycle before HCD had published its AFFH guidance document. HCD's expectations increased significantly as the sixth cycle progressed, and what passed HCD approval early in the cycle was no longer sufficient by the end. HCD now expects a more rigorous analysis, stronger contributing factors identification, and more targeted, measurable program commitments directly tied to the findings of the assessment. For Folsom, this means the seventh cycle fair housing assessment will need to go meaningfully beyond the sixth cycle document in both analytical depth and programmatic commitments.

Ascent prepared AFFH analyses throughout the sixth cycle and is actively working on seventh cycle assessments for other jurisdictions, giving our team a current understanding of what HCD is requiring

now. We also assisted HCD in preparing its AFFH Guidance Memo in 2021 and provided direct technical assistance to SACOG member jurisdictions on AB 686 compliance. This experience gives us a clear view of how HCD interprets its own guidance. SACOG will provide a regional AFFH analysis as part of its data package. Ascent will build the City's local assessment on that foundation while ensuring it reflects Folsom-specific conditions and community-identified concerns.

New Requirements for Acutely Low-Income

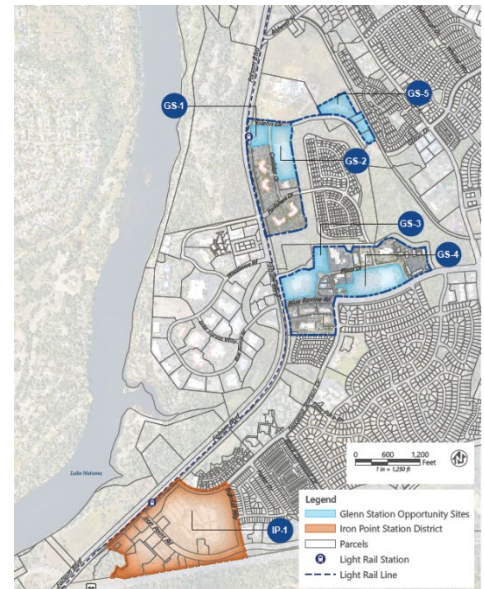
The seventh cycle RHNA will include new categories for extremely low- and acutely low-income housing. In the Sacramento region, acutely low income equates to \$18,600 annually for a family of four in 2026. These new RHNA categories reflect a growing recognition at the state level that the housing needs of the lowest-income residents, including people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, are different from those of other income groups and require dedicated analysis and policy responses.

For Folsom, this means the Seventh Cycle Housing Element will need to quantify the existing and projected housing needs of acutely and extremely low-income households, analyze the availability of appropriate housing types and supportive services, and develop programs specifically designed to address this population's needs. Ascent is actively tracking HCD's emerging guidance on acutely low-income requirements and incorporating this analysis into our current seventh cycle work. We will work closely with City staff and local service providers to ground the analysis in Folsom-specific data and identify programs that are both responsive to HCD's expectations and achievable within the City's policy and resource environment.

SB 79 Transit-Oriented Development Alternative Plan

For the seventh cycle, SB 79 has direct implications for how the City approaches the Housing Element update. SB 79 establishes new development standards for higher-density housing near qualifying transit stops that override local density limits. The law applies to light rail stations at Iron Point, Glenn, Hazel (outside city limits), and Historic Folsom. To allow flexibility in implementation, SB 79 allows local jurisdictions to adopt a "transit-oriented development alternative plan" (TOD Alternative Plan).

AB 2415, authored by Assemblymember Josh Hoover and passed by the Assembly on May 26, 2026, is currently working its way through the Legislature. If AB 2415 is signed into law, the City would have the ability to reduce SB 79 capacity requirements in the Folsom Historic District beyond the 50 percent cap otherwise allowed, provided it adopts a compliant TOD Alternative Plan and compensates for that reduced capacity in its other TOD zones.



Ascent's recent work with the City to create a TOD Overlay zone and calculate development capacity near light rail stations gives the City a head start on addressing SB 79. Ascent will ensure the sites inventory accurately reflects HCD guidance related to capacity for the Housing Element sites that are eligible for SB 79 and advise City staff on options for how to structure the TOD Alternative Plan as part of the Housing Element.

SCOPE OF WORK

TASK 1 PROJECT INITIATION AND MANAGEMENT

Task 1.1 Review of Applicable State Housing Laws

Prior to the kickoff meeting, Ascent will document all applicable housing laws enacted since the sixth cycle in a memo to the City. Ascent will review each new law at the project kickoff meeting.

Task 1.1 will not require many hours, as Ascent is already actively tracking housing legislation. Through our contract with SANDAG's Housing Acceleration Program Technical Assistance Program, Ascent maintains a living legislative tracking matrix that is updated in real time as bills progress through the Legislature. We regularly host webinars for planners throughout the San Diego region to provide updates on emerging legislation. Chelsey Norton brings an additional layer of legislative awareness to this project in her role as Legislative Director on the Sacramento Valley Section American Planning Association Board, where she tracks and provides feedback on emerging legislation.

Task 1.2 Document Review and Data Collection

As an initial step in the process, Ascent will review and annotate the City's Sixth Cycle Housing Element, delineating sections requiring updates and where more information from City staff will be needed. This annotated document will serve as a general roadmap for the update process, highlighting areas requiring revisions due to new state requirements, areas needing general updates, and sections that can be carried forward with minimal changes. This task also includes developing a data needs list to share with City staff ahead of beginning work on the components of the Housing Element and collaboratively working with City staff to gather necessary information from local sources. We will also establish a collaborative folder structure in SharePoint that will facilitate information exchange between City staff and Ascent throughout the update process.

Task 1.3 Project Kickoff Meeting/Working Session

Ascent will prepare for and conduct an in-person kickoff meeting/working session with City staff to initiate work on the Housing Element update. This approach will allow the team to set a strong foundation for the update process. At the meeting, we will provide a project overview and review of the scope of work to confirm roles and responsibilities, with a focus on new requirements and how to approach this update to meet HCD expectations. Ascent and City staff will conduct an initial review of the current sites inventory in relation to the seventh cycle RHNA and discuss the overall strategy for accommodating the RHNA. City staff will provide an overview of current housing initiatives and programs, outlining what has been accomplished and what is planned. Other tasks that will be covered during the meeting include reviewing the project schedule, reviewing new housing legislation, discussing objectives for community engagement and HCD's expectation for inclusive community engagement, reviewing data needs, and establishing project management protocols.

Task 1.4 Project Management and Coordination

Ascent will provide project management throughout the course of the two-and-a-half-year project schedule. This task includes scheduling and facilitating up to 32 coordination calls and six in-person meetings with City staff. Meeting frequency will be adjusted based on project needs (e.g., occurring monthly to start and when less coordination is needed, once every two weeks during active periods, and transitioning to email-only communication when appropriate and during HCD review periods). For each coordination meeting, Ascent will prepare an agenda in advance and document action items in a high-level summary following each

meeting. This task includes other aspects of project administration, including contract processing, project setup, and the preparation of monthly invoices and progress reports. The scope also includes budget for ongoing email communications and informal coordination with project team members, up to the allotted budget in this task.

Deliverables

- ✓ Thirty-eight (38) project coordination meeting agendas and high-level summaries with action items
 - ✓ Monthly invoices and progress reports
-

TASK 2 HOUSING ELEMENT COMPONENTS

Task 2.1 Introduction and Summary of Outreach Activities

Ascent will prepare the introduction to the Housing Element, which will provide an overview of the purpose and requirements of housing elements under state law, describe the relationship between the Housing Element, General Plan, and other relevant plans and programs, and outline the organization of the document. Ascent will also prepare a summary of outreach activities to include in the introduction of the Folsom Housing Element. This summary will describe the outreach methods employed, summarize feedback received, and explain how that feedback was used to inform the Housing Element.

Task 2.2 Evaluation of Current Housing Element

Government Code Section 6588 requires that each local government assess the achievements of adopted housing programs and review the effectiveness of housing element goals, policies, and related actions in meeting its community's needs.

Once the 2026 annual progress report (APR) is available, Ascent will review current and past APRs to determine the progress toward meeting the Sixth Cycle RHNA and the initial status, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the programs in the current Housing Element, providing direction on compliance with state housing laws, and helping to identify any omissions or deficiencies that will need to be addressed in the update. City staff will review Ascent's draft evaluation, provide feedback and revisions, and document the effectiveness of each program, providing quantitative results where appropriate. Ascent will also prepare a summary of program effectiveness for special needs populations using information and input from the City.

Task 2.3 Housing Needs Assessment

Ascent will prepare a comprehensive demographic and housing needs assessment pursuant to Government Code Section 65583 using data provided by SACOG. The updated housing needs assessment will include information on the following topics:

- ▶ Population and demographics
- ▶ Household characteristics
- ▶ Income and employment
- ▶ Housing stock characteristics and condition, including age, tenure, and rehabilitation needs
- ▶ Housing costs and affordability
- ▶ Special housing needs (i.e., seniors; persons with disabilities, including a development disability; acutely low- and extremely low-income households; large families; farmworkers; students; female-headed households; and individuals experiencing homelessness)
- ▶ At-risk housing (i.e., an analysis of existing assisted affordable housing at risk of converting to market-rate housing during the next 10 years)

Ascent will supplement the SACOG-provided data with local data and insights from City staff and service providers, particularly related to housing conditions, homelessness, and special needs populations. We will summarize key trends and their implications for policy development.

Task 2.4 Sites Inventory Analysis

Ascent will prepare an updated sites inventory demonstrating the City's capacity to accommodate the seventh cycle RHNA. We will review and update the existing sites inventory to remove sites that have been developed and add in new sites that have been rezoned or otherwise made available since the Sixth Cycle Housing Element. This task will include inventorying sites that were redesignated/rezoned with the recent General Plan and FPASP amendments that can be realistically developed within the Housing Element planning period, and reflecting HCD guidance related to capacity for sites eligible for SB 79. Ascent will adjust buildout assumptions on vacant and underutilized sites based on updated realistic densities that can be demonstrated through analysis of recently built housing developments. We will also prepare a detailed analysis of non-vacant sites to justify inclusion in the sites inventory.

Pursuant to AB 1397, Ascent will identify whether or not the vacant lower-income sites have been included in the past two Housing Elements and if underutilized sites have been included in one previous Housing Element and, if needed, develop a program to amend the zoning on these sites to allow affordable housing by right in order to continue to count the parcels in the inventory of lower-income sites. City staff will confirm remaining capacity on parcels within specific plan areas and will provide an up-to-date list of entitled residential developments that are expected to be constructed during the Seventh Cycle Housing Element planning period, including unit counts by income level, status, remaining steps, and expected completion. Ascent will prepare GIS shapefiles and a series of GIS maps showing all available sites and pipeline projects included in the inventory. The sites inventory will be prepared using the required HCD Sites Inventory Form, although for efficiency's sake, the final HCD form will not be completed until the inventory has been finalized in Task 7.

In addition to vacant and underutilized sites and pipeline projects, the sites inventory will include projections of ADUs and SB 9 duplex units, if applicable. Based on building permit data provided by City staff, Ascent will determine the appropriate assumptions for this next RHNA cycle and update the projections for ADUs and SB 9 units. This scope assumes SACOG will provide data on ADU affordability for the region.

Ascent will analyze the capacity of available sites in comparison to the City's seventh cycle RHNA to determine whether the City has adequate capacity to meet the RHNA. If it is determined that the City does not have adequate capacity, we will work with the City to develop a rezoning strategy to address the identified shortfall. Because the seventh cycle RHNA is unknown, our proposal includes the rezoning strategy as an optional task that could be authorized by City staff if a shortfall is identified.

Task 2.5 Housing Constraints Analysis

Ascent will review and update the housing constraints analysis, which identifies and analyzes potential and actual governmental and nongovernmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels. This effort includes incorporating any recent changes in the analysis (e.g., new ordinances, fees, permit processes, infrastructure capacity) and complying with newer requirements related to governmental constraints for special needs housing (e.g., group homes, supportive housing, low barrier navigation centers, emergency shelters, ADUs). Ascent will also update information in the nongovernmental constraints analysis related to land costs, construction costs, and availability of financing. City staff will provide updated information on the length of time between project approval and request for a building permit and any requests the City has received for reduced density.

While Ascent will take the lead in preparing this analysis, this task assumes that City staff will provide the necessary inputs and interpretations of code to complete this update. We will give the City a detailed data needs list and instructions to provide additional direction. After completing the constraints analysis, Ascent will identify potential programs to remove or mitigate any identified constraints.

Task 2.6 Fair Housing Assessment

Ascent will update the existing fair housing assessment with new data and analysis. This task assumes that SACOG will provide a regional fair housing assessment covering the requirements of state law. Ascent will build off the regional assessment with a local assessment tailored to the City of Folsom.

The updated fair housing assessment will include:

- ▶ a summary of fair housing issues and an analysis of fair housing enforcement and outreach;
- ▶ an analysis of local and regional patterns and trends related to integration and segregation;
- ▶ identification and analysis of Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty (R/ECAPs) and Areas of Affluence;
- ▶ an assessment of disparities in access to opportunity, including for persons with disabilities, and consideration of how these disparities affect special needs populations; and
- ▶ an analysis of disproportionate housing needs that affect protected classes (e.g., overpayment, overcrowding, housing conditions), including displacement risk.

Ascent will lead the technical update of the assessment, utilizing available data sources, including HCD's AFFH mapping tool and other relevant state and federal datasets, as well as local knowledge from City staff and local service providers to ensure the updated assessment accurately reflects on-the-ground conditions and community-identified concerns.

AB 686 also requires that a jurisdiction identify sites throughout its community in a manner consistent with AFFH and the findings of the fair housing assessment. Once the draft sites inventory outlined in Task 2.4 is complete, Ascent will examine the spatial relationship between the sites inventory and various AFFH factors (e.g., race and income, areas of opportunity, disproportionate housing needs, displacement risk) to analyze whether proposed housing sites improve or potentially exacerbate fair housing conditions.

Based on the updated fair housing assessment and analysis of sites, Ascent will identify and review with City staff the contributing factors to fair housing issues and propose changes to policies and implementation programs to help address these factors.

Task 2.7 Opportunities for Energy Conservation

Ascent will review and update the discussion of opportunities for energy conservation to reflect new City and regional programs and initiatives as well as changes to the state building code related to energy efficiency.

Task 2.8 Funding Resources

Ascent will review and update the discussion of financial and other resources available to support affordable housing development, including descriptions of federal, county, and state funding programs and any other local programs and resources that may be available (e.g., housing trust fund).

Task 2.9 Housing Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs

Ascent will prepare the updated housing goals, policies, and implementation programs based on the evaluation of the Sixth Cycle Housing Element, new requirements of state law, analysis of housing needs and constraints, updates to the fair housing assessment, input from the community outreach and engagement program, discussions with City staff, and best practices. Goals, policies, and programs will

address, at a minimum, housing supply and affordability for all income levels (including acutely low and extremely low income), preservation of existing neighborhoods and community character, removal of governmental constraints, support for infill and mixed-use development, promotion of accessory dwelling units, and promotion of equitable access to housing opportunities. Ascent will work with City staff to ensure that each implementation program has a specific time frame, quantified objective, responsible department(s), and geographic target. We will also review each program through the lens of AFFH requirements to satisfy this state mandate.

Deliverables

- ✓ Deliverables related to this task are listed in Task 3
-

Optional Task 1: Rezone Strategy

If the City has a shortfall in meeting the RHNA, Ascent will work with City staff to develop a rezone strategy. This includes working with the City to develop a list of candidate rezone sites that will be considered for rezoning in a subsequent rezone program. Ascent will provide guidance and criteria for appropriate rezone sites, and the City will develop the list of potential sites with Ascent's support that will be addressed as part of the environmental review under Task 6. If the Housing Element is adopted and certified within 120 days of the seventh cycle deadline, the City will have three years to complete the rezone program. Subsequent rezone actions would be exempt under CEQA as provided under Public Resources Code Section 21080.085.

TASK 3 DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT PREPARATION

Task 3.1 Administrative Draft Housing Element

Ascent will compile the components developed in Task 2 into a cohesive, formatted administrative draft Housing Element. Prior to submitting the administrative draft, Ascent will review the complete draft Housing Element and confirm full consistency with the 2024 General Plan Update, the ongoing Zoning Code Update, and the Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan. We will prepare a memo describing any inconsistencies and providing suggestions to City staff for rectifying the inconsistencies. The administrative draft will be submitted to City staff for review. This task assumes City staff will provide one set of consolidated comments on the administrative draft.

Task 3.2 Public Review Draft Housing Element

Ascent will review and revise the administrative draft Housing Element to address one round of consolidated City staff comments and will prepare the public review draft Housing Element for City staff to review/confirm. Alongside the delivery of a clean public review draft, Ascent will share a tracked-changes version of the document for City staff to more easily follow revisions and changes made to address comments.

Beginning in April 2027, local governments with populations greater than 50,000 must ensure that web content, including planning documents like the Housing Element, meet federal accessibility standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II rule. Specifically, documents must comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards to ensure they are accessible to individuals using assistive technologies such as screen readers. Ascent will ensure the public review draft Housing Element is provided as an ADA-compliant, WCAG 2.1 Level AA format. This includes structuring the document with appropriate tags and reading order, providing alternative text for images, maps, and graphics, and ensuring sufficient color contrast and metadata.

This task assumes that only minimal changes would be needed after City staff's review/confirmation of the Housing Element. If additional discussion or substantive changes are needed after City review, additional budget will be needed. Ascent will advise City staff on noticing procedures to comply with 30-day public review and other requirements of state law.

Optional Task 2: Revised Public Review Draft Housing Element

Depending on the number of public comments, City staff may decide to revise the draft Housing Element prior to study sessions with the Planning Commission and the City Council. Ascent could assist with preparing this revised public review draft. Alternatively, if the number of public comments is not substantial, City staff may be able to address this as part of the recommendations in their staff reports to decision-makers and based on City Council direction, those revisions would be made during Task 5.1.

Deliverables

- ✓ Administrative draft Housing Element (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Memo summarizing review for consistency with General Plan, Zoning Code, and Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Public review draft Housing Element (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Revised public review draft Housing Element (electronic copies [Word and PDF]) – optional
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TASK 4 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Task 4.1 Project Website and Publicity Materials

Ascent will coordinate with City staff to develop a dedicated webpage for the Housing Element update, hosted on the City's website and maintained by City staff throughout the planning process. We will prepare initial website content and graphic materials, such as a project schedule, frequently asked questions, and information on community engagement opportunities. Ascent will provide City staff with updated content as the project progresses. In addition to website content, we will prepare branded outreach materials to advertise engagement opportunities and activities to the broader community, including flyers for each community workshop and content for five social media posts.

Task 4.2 Community Workshops

Ascent will prepare for and facilitate two community workshops, which can be conducted in person or virtually. Both workshops will be designed to reach a broad cross-section of the community, including renters, lower-income residents, and other populations whose voices are not always heard in traditional planning processes, consistent with HCD's expectations for inclusive engagement. The first workshop will be held early in the process to educate the community on the purpose of the housing element and the City's obligation to accommodate the seventh cycle RHNA and to collect input on key housing issues facing residents. The second workshop will be held later in the process to gather feedback on the draft Housing Element, with a focus on the sites inventory and implementation programs. Ascent will prepare a summary of feedback received at each workshop for inclusion in the Housing Element.

As an option, in place of one of the community workshops, Ascent could conduct targeted outreach to engage hard-to-reach and historically underrepresented community members. Options might include coordinating directly with community-based organizations to attend an existing community event or hosting a pop-up event or tabling at locations where residents already gather.

Task 4.3 Focus Group Meetings and/or Stakeholder Interviews

Ascent will prepare for and attend two focus group meetings, which can be conducted in person or virtually, on specific topics of interest, such as affordable housing, approaches to meeting the RHNA, fair housing, or housing for people experiencing homelessness. We will work with City staff to identify topic areas and develop a list of interested parties to invite, and Ascent will provide meeting summaries. As an option, these meetings could occur as a series of stakeholder interviews, such as with developers or housing advocacy groups, rather than group meetings, within the allotted budget.

Task 4.4 Online Survey

Ascent will prepare and help distribute a web-based survey to gather information from the community on housing needs and housing policy priorities. We will compile and summarize the survey results for inclusion in the Housing Element.

Task 4.5 Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions

Ascent will prepare for and attend a total of two study sessions with the Planning Commission and the City Council. These sessions can either occur early in the process to provide an overview of the process and get input into key policy considerations or occur later in the process to present and collect feedback on the public review draft Housing Element prior to submitting it to HCD. Ascent will prepare a PowerPoint presentation and review the draft staff report prepared by City staff, providing assistance in targeted areas as needed.

Note: Task 7.2 includes two additional public hearings on the final Housing Element.

Task 4.6 Tribal Consultation

ECORP Consulting, Inc., in coordination with Ascent, will assist the City in conducting tribal consultation consistent with the requirements of SB 18, which requires such consultation with a proposed amendment or adoption of a general plan. The results of this consultation process will be incorporated into the Housing Element Update.

Deliverables

- ✓ Engagement materials for varying events (e.g., website content, publicity materials, PowerPoint presentations, online survey)
 - ✓ PowerPoint presentations for Planning Commission and City Council meetings
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TASK 5 HCD REVIEW OF HOUSING ELEMENT

Task 5.1 HCD Review Draft Housing Element Submittal

Based on direction from the Planning Commission and the City Council, Ascent will prepare the HCD review draft Housing Element, prepare a cover letter, and deliver the HCD review draft Housing Element (electronically and physically with one black-and-white copy) to HCD.

Task 5.2 Revisions to Address Preliminary HCD Comments

Ascent will serve as the City's liaison throughout the HCD review process, managing all communications with HCD reviewers during the review process. Following submission of the HCD review draft Housing Element and halfway through the 90-day HCD review period, we will facilitate one meeting/phone call with HCD and City staff to seek preliminary HCD comments to reduce the length of HCD's formal comment letter. Time permitting, Ascent will prepare a memo outlining responses to HCD comments along with an errata of the extracted changes made to the Housing Element to address preliminary comments from HCD. City staff will

then post the memo and errata on the project webpage and notify interested parties, with Ascent submitting the memo and errata to HCD after the seven-day noticing period, assuming minimal public comment received during the noticing period. (Note: If HCD is not able to provide comments in a timely manner, this task will take place after receiving the formal comment letter.)

Task 5.3 Revisions to Address HCD Comment Letter

After receiving HCD's formal comment letter, Ascent will assist with preparing a second round of revisions to the Housing Element. This task includes participating in one meeting/phone call with HCD and City staff to discuss remaining compliance issues and comments at some point during the 60-day HCD review period. Ascent will then prepare a memo outlining responses to HCD comments along with an errata of the extracted changes made to the Housing Element to address preliminary comments from HCD. City staff will then post the memo and errata on the project webpage and notify interested parties, with Ascent submitting the document to HCD. This task assumes that revisions will result in a conditional approval letter for certification after the 60-day review period and before the Planning Commission and City Council adoption hearings.

Deliverables

- ✓ HCD review draft Housing Element (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Cover letter to HCD (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Revisions to address HCD comments (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Two memos outlining responses to HCD comments and accompanying errata of changes (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
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Optional Task 3: Third Round of HCD Review

If additional revisions are necessary and the City receives another comment letter from HCD, triggering a new 60-day review period, Ascent will conduct a final round of revisions during the 60-day review period and facilitate one meeting/phone call with HCD and City staff to resolve any outstanding issues. Ascent will implement final revisions in a memo and accompanying errata. City staff will then post the memo and errata on the project webpage and notify interested parties, with Ascent submitting the document for review. Ascent will work diligently with HCD staff during this time to secure a timely conditional approval letter before the Planning Commission and City Council adoption hearings.

TASK 6 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Task 6.1 Environmental Review/CEQA Documentation

Ascent will review the City of Folsom 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increasing Residential Capacity Project Subsequent EIR (to the General Plan EIR) as well as the Addendum for the City's 2021–2029 Housing Element and will prepare an addendum or technical memorandum that will document all environmental topic areas, any changes in circumstances or project-related changes, and whether such changes were adequately covered in the previous environmental documents. We will utilize State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), focusing on whether the project would have any effects not examined in the previous environmental documents. The analysis will include substantial evidence and will assess the following for each environmental topic:

- ▶ Does the Seventh Cycle Housing Element involve new significant impacts or substantially more severe impacts?
- ▶ Are there new circumstances involving new significant impacts or substantially more severe impacts?
- ▶ Is there any significant new information requiring new analysis or verification?

- ▶ Are only technical changes or additions needed to make the prior environmental documents sufficient for the proposed project?
- ▶ Do mitigation measures from the prior environmental documents resolve significant impacts?

Ascent will provide a draft document for City review and comment. The final document will incorporate requested edits. This scope of work assumes that an addendum or technical memorandum (should the proposed Seventh Cycle Housing Element result in no substantial changes to the current Housing Element and City of Folsom 2035 General Plan Amendments for Increasing Residential Capacity Project involving environmental issues) will be prepared. If a different document is determined necessary for CEQA compliance, Ascent will coordinate with the City regarding changes to the scope and budget.

Deliverables

- ✓ Draft addendum or technical memorandum
 - ✓ Final addendum or technical memorandum
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TASK 7 FINAL DOCUMENTS AND ADOPTION

Task 7.1 Public Hearing Draft Housing Element

Ascent will prepare a public hearing draft Housing Element to be presented at adoption hearings that incorporates all the responses to HCD comments.

Task 7.2 Adoption Hearings

Ascent will attend two public hearings, one before the Planning Commission and one before the City Council, to help present the public hearing draft Housing Element and respond to questions. We will prepare a meeting presentation and assist City staff with the staff reports and the adoption resolution by providing examples and conducting a peer review.

Task 7.3 Final Housing Element and Submittal to HCD

Ascent will prepare the final Housing Element, incorporating any changes made by the City Council in adopting the Housing Element and preparing an ADA-compliant, WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliant version of the document. We will prepare a cover letter and will print and deliver one black-and-white copy of the Housing Element to HCD for the final 60-day review period. Following HCD certification, Ascent will provide all final digital files to the City, including the Housing Element in Microsoft Word and the sites inventory in GIS and Excel.

Task 7.4 HCD Electronic Housing Element Sites Inventory Form

Ascent will prepare an electronic copy of the final sites inventory using HCD's approved Excel spreadsheet, to be submitted to HCD with the final Housing Element. Time in this task also allows for one round of minimal revisions/questions with HCD's sites inventory team.

Deliverables

- ✓ Public hearing draft Housing Element (electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Final Housing Element (one hard copy mailed to HCD, and electronic copies [Word and PDF])
 - ✓ Electronic Sites Inventory Form (electronic copy [Excel])
 - ✓ Original electronic files of final Housing Element, including sites inventory (Word, PDF, Excel, and ArcGIS)
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