

CITY OF BLYTHE GENERAL PLAN 2025

CHAPTER 9 HOUSING ELEMENT

ADOPTED – FEBRUARY 11, 2014

Acknowledgements

Blythe City Council

Mike Evans, Mayor
Tim Wade, Vice Mayor
Joey DeConinck
Oscar Galvan
Wayne Cusick

City Staff

Frank Luckino, City Manager
Barbara Burrow, City Planner

Prepared by:



**City of Blythe
General Plan 2025
Chapter 9 – Housing Element
Adopted February 11, 2014**

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
A. Purpose.....	1
B. Income Categories	2
C. Regional Housing Needs Determination	3
D. Citizen and Local Participation	3
Chapter 2: Status and Evaluation of Existing Programs.....	5
A. Evaluation of Housing Programs and Policies for 2006–2014	5
B. Summary of Accomplishment for RHNA Period 2006–2014	15
Chapter 3: Demographics and Housing Characteristics.....	16
A. Overview of Blythe	16
B. Population Trends.....	17
C. Age and Ethnicity	19
D. Income and Employment Trends	20
Chapter 4: Housing Trends and Affordability	23
A. Housing Trends	23
B. Age and Condition of Housing Units	26
C. Housing Affordability.....	26
D. Housing Affordability Analysis.....	28
E. Existing Affordable Housing Projects	29
F. Preservation of Assisted Units at Risk of Conversion	30
G. Housing Affordability Programs and Resources.....	33
Chapter 5: Special Needs Groups	35
A. Homeless	35
B. Seniors.....	36
C. Persons with Disabilities	37
D. Persons with Developmental Disabilities (Senate Bill 812)	37
E. Farmworkers.....	38
F. Large Households.....	39
G. Female Head of Household	39
Chapter 6: Constraints on Housing Development.....	40
A. Non-Governmental Constraints	40
B. Environmental Constraints	42
C. Infrastructure Constraints	43
D. Governmental Constraints	44
Chapter 7: Strategies for Housing Development.....	54
A. Regional Housing Need.....	54
B. Inventory of Land Available for Housing.....	54
C. Comparison of Regional Housing Need and Residential Sites Capacity	57
D. Opportunities for Energy Conservation	58
Chapter 8: Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs for the Planning Period 2013–2021.....	61

List of Tables

Table 1-1 Riverside County Income Limits by Household Size, 2013.....	2
Table 1-2 City of Blythe Regional Housing Needs Allocation 2014–2021 Planning Period	3
Table 2-1 2006–2014 RHNA Accomplishments	15
Table 3-1 Blythe Population Growth from 1995 to 2013	17
Table 3-2 Population Growth 2000–2013	18
Table 3-3 Population Projections 2020 and 2035.....	18
Table 3-4 Racial Composition Distribution of Blythe, 2010	19
Table 3-5 Age Distribution of Blythe, 2010.....	19
Table 3-6 Median Income in Blythe.....	20
Table 3-7 Occupations by Industry, 2011.....	21
Table 3-8 Top 10 Employers in Blythe, 2010	21
Table 3-9 Blythe Workers’ Commute Characteristics, 2011 Commute Distance for Blythe Workers	22
Table 4-1 New Housing Units Constructed, 2006–2013.....	23
Table 4-2 Housing Units in Blythe, 2010.....	24
Table 4-3 Mobile Home/RV Parks.....	24
Table 4-4 Vacancy Status in Blythe 2010	25
Table 4-5 Age of Blythe Housing Units in 2010.....	26
Table 4-6 Housing Problems for Households by Tenure, 2010.....	27
Table 4-7 Rental Rates In Blythe, 2013	27
Table 4-8 Affordable Rent and Purchase Price by Income Category, 2013	28
Table 4-9 Inventory of Subsidized Housing.....	30
Table 5-1 Developmentally Disabled Residents, By Age.....	38
Table 5-2 Female-Headed Households in Blythe, 2010	39
Table 5-3 Energy Conservation Programs.....	58
Table 6-1 City of Blythe Development Fee Table.....	44
Table 6-2 Sewer Connection Fees	45
Table 6-3 Typical Processing Procedures by Project Type.....	46
Table 6-4 Residential General Plan Designations	47
Table 6-5 Residential Standards.....	48
Table 6-6 Allowable Uses in the Residential Zoning Category*.....	49
Table 6-7 City of Blythe Fee Table	50
Table 6-8 Total Processing and Impact Fees for Single- and Multi- Family Units in Blythe	50
Table 7-1 City of Blythe Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2013-2021 Planning Period	54
Table 7-2 Land Inventory.....	55
Table 7-3 Comparison of Regional Housing Need and Residential Sites Capacity.....	57

List of Figures

Figure 1 Sites Inventory Map	54
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The Housing Element addresses the city's housing characteristics and the housing needs of its current and future population. It includes a description of existing housing types, condition of existing units, overcrowding, overpayment, homelessness, and the demand for affordable housing in the area. This element provides an evaluation of the City's success in meeting its previous Housing Element's goals, policies, and programs, and also offers revised and new goals, policies, and programs to address the housing needs in the city for the period from 2013 through 2021.

California Government Code requires that every city and county prepare a Housing Element as part of its General Plan. In addition, state law contains specific requirements for the preparation and content of Housing Elements. According to Article 10.6, Section 65580, the legislature has found that:

- (1) The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family is a priority of the highest order.
- (2) The early attainment of this goal requires the cooperative participation of government and the private sector in an effort to expand housing opportunities and accommodate the housing needs of Californians of all economic levels.
- (3) The provision of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households requires the cooperation of all levels of government.
- (4) Local and state governments have a responsibility to use the powers vested in them to facilitate the improvement and development of housing to make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.
- (5) The legislature recognizes that in carrying out this responsibility, each local government also has the responsibility to consider economic, environmental, and fiscal factors and community goals set forth in the General Plan and to cooperate with other local governments, and the state, in addressing regional housing needs. Section 65581 of the Government Code states that the intent of the legislature in enacting these requirements is:
 - (a) To assure that local governments recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the state housing goal.
 - (b) To assure that cities and counties prepare and implement housing elements which, along with federal and state programs, will move toward attainment of the state housing goal.
 - (c) To recognize that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required by it to contribute to the attainment of the state housing goal as well as regional housing needs.
 - (d) To ensure that each local government cooperates with other local governments to address regional housing needs.

Government Code Section 65583 outlines the required content of all Housing Elements, including identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Specific requirements include the following:

- (1) An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. The analysis should include population and employment trends; documentation of household characteristics; inventory of land suitable for residential development; governmental and other constraints to new housing development; analysis of any special housing needs; and an assessment of existing affordable housing developments.
- (2) A program which sets forth an eight-year schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the objectives of the Housing Element in order to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

B. INCOME CATEGORIES

The basis for affordability is established through annual income limits for very low-, low-, moderate-, and above moderate-income households. These limits are based on the median income levels within Riverside County, adjusted as a percentage of median for each income level. **Table 1-1** provides the 2013 income levels disseminated by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). These income limits are based on an estimated overall Riverside County median income of \$65,000 for a four-person household.

It should be noted that the 2010 US Census reported Riverside County’s median household income at \$58,365 and the City of Blythe’s median household income at \$46,235. Blythe’s household median income was 79.0 percent of the county’s median household income at that time. Although household income has increased since the 2010 Census, it is still expected that the city’s income levels are lower than those of the county as a whole.

Table 1-1								
Riverside County Income Limits by Household Size, 2013								
Income Category	Number of Persons in Family							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low	14,100	16,100	18,100	20,100	21,750	23,350	24,950	26,550
Very low	23,450	26,800	30,150	33,500	36,200	38,900	41,550	44,250
Low	37,550	42,900	48,250	53,600	57,900	62,200	66,500	70,800
Median	45,500	52,000	58,500	65,000	70,200	75,400	80,600	85,800
Moderate	54,600	62,400	70,200	78,000	84,250	90,500	96,700	102,950

Source: HCD 2013

C. REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS DETERMINATION

HCD predicts housing needs based on a statistical analysis of growth in California, and the state’s need for additional housing for the time period encompassed in each Housing Element update. For this planning period, 2014–2021, HCD developed growth estimates and allocated them to Council of Governments, including the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which is responsible for Riverside County. This allocation is termed the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). State law requires local jurisdictions to plan for the number of units for each income type contained in the RHNA through goals, policies, and programs in the Housing Element. **Table 1-2** provides the RHNA for the City of Blythe from 2013 to 2021.

Table 1-2					
City of Blythe Regional Housing Needs Allocation					
2014–2021 Planning Period					
Extremely Low	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
45	46	64	75	172	402

Source: SCAG, 2013

D. CITIZEN AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION

State law requires cities and counties to make a diligent effort to achieve participation by all segments of the community in preparing a Housing Element. Section 65583[c] [6] of the California Government Code specifically requires that:

- The local government shall make a diligent effort 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.

Community Workshop

The City held a publicly noticed workshop on December 4, 2013 to solicit public input and encourage public participation in the Housing Element update. E-mail notification and flyers of the meeting were sent to a number of organizations (see list below), including affordable housing advocates and developers, public and private social service agencies, and interested parties who had expressed an interest in the Housing Element and affordable housing. Written comments were encouraged for those that could not attend the meeting and attendees at the meeting were also told they could submit written comments to supplement verbal comments.

Only one member of the public was in attendance, Wayne Meyer, the local construction superintendent for San Ramon based developer The True Life Companies (12647 Alcosta Boulevard, Suite 470, San Ramon, CA 94583). Mr. Meyer was primarily at the workshop because of some problems he is encountering with a single-family tract development in Blythe that he is managing. The housing needs that Mr. Meyer and City staff identified included:

- The need for a homeless shelter based on the noticeable presence of homeless persons in the community, many of which are transients on the I-10 corridor;
- The need for decent market rate rental housing for persons who are employed and live in Blythe during the work week but who return to their permanent homes elsewhere on the weekends (e.g., Riverside County firefighters, Riverside County Sheriff deputies, California Department of Corrections staff, solar industry workers, etc.);

- The need for new, market rate for sale housing to attract these commuters, who generally have higher incomes than most city residents, to become permanent city residents; and
- The need for housing rehabilitation (and possibly proactive code enforcement) to address the deferred maintenance and increasing deterioration of the city’s older single-family and multi-family housing stock.

In an effort to address the housing issues identified, the City has modified and added new housing programs to the element. In addition, please refer to the section of the element that discusses the needs of homeless persons for information regarding homeless resources within the City of Blythe.

- Ageless Reflections Senior Center
- Blythe Emergency Food Pantry
- Clarum Corporation
- Coachella Valley Housing Coalition
- Coronel Construction
- DACE/Rancho Housing Alliance
- Esquela De La Raza Unida, Inc.
- Geoffery Vanden Hueval
- Global Premier Development
- Harmony Soup Kitchen
- Highland Property Development LLC
- Jack Calabrese
- Jean Poutous
- Lou Zember
- Mesa Bluffs Development Co.
- Monterey of Blythe LTD Partnership
- PVUSD Superintendent
- PVV Hopeful Start Foundation
- Ranchette Estates, LLC
- Regional Access Project Foundation
- River Heights.
- St. Joseph’s Investments, Inc.
- The True Life Companies
- West Bayfield 450 & KGM Development

Public Comment

The City appreciates the efforts of citizens, agencies and organizations that have taken the time to participate in the Housing Element update. To date, the City has not received any public comments.

The City will continue to engage the public throughout the adoption of the Housing Element and has posted the Housing Element on the City’s website with a request for public comment.

CHAPTER 2: STATUS AND EVALUATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

A. EVALUATION OF HOUSING PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FOR 2006–2014

In order to determine the effectiveness of the policies and programs during the previous period, and to determine which policies and programs will be continued in the current planning period (2013–2021), the following discussion evaluates the effectiveness of policies and programs contained in the 2006–2014 Housing Element.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
Program 1.B.1	Expand both the City’s potable water generating capacity and its potable water distribution system in order to increase the water generating capacity to meet Blythe’s long term housing expansion needs, and to provide an adequate supply of potable water to residences citywide.	Responsible Department: Public Works Schedule: Pipeline extension to begin in mid-2008	This program has resulted in the expansion of Blythe's water-generating ability, increased Blythe's water storage capacity to two million gallons, and has led to the successful installation of pipeline extensions for the Blue Ridge Road complex, as well as an 8-inch diameter water line extension that serves over 100 residences in the community of Balzberg.	Continue. This program is ongoing and will ensure that an adequate potable water supply is available to meet the growing demand, and to provide line extensions as needed.
Program 1.B.2	Expand the City’s sewer system and treatment capacity in order to increase the sewer system network to meet Blythe’s long term housing expansion needs, through grants and loans from State and federal programs.	Responsible Department: Public Works Schedule: 2008 and ongoing	The extension of the sewer system to the Palo Verde Community College campus was completed in 1999–2000, and the golf course extension is expected to be completed in 2009. In addition, the City constructed a 12-inch force main that serves over 100 existing residences in the community of Balzberg, which was completed in 2007.	Modify. This program successfully brought sewer services to Blythe residents, and will be modified to reflect planned line extensions during the 2013–2021 planning period
Program 1.C.1	Enforce State laws requiring that all new (non-mobile home) housing units are built in compliance with the new requirement of Title 24 which assure much greater energy efficiency, and explore various methods of creating incentives	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Continuous	The City of Blythe has enforced Title 24 requirements and will continue to work toward increasing energy efficiency within the home.	Continue. This program is ongoing and will continue in the 2013–2021 planning period.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
<p>and/ requirements to build energy efficient low income housing. Such methods could include adopting building codes and landscape ordinances that promote energy and water efficiency, and offering reduced or no development costs for those programs that have been designed to maximize energy efficiency in all new residential development. This will assure that utility bills, particularly those for cooling of new units, will be affordable to lower income persons. The City shall make information available from utility purveyors on energy conservation programs available at City Hall and the Library.</p>				
Program 1.C.2	The City shall encourage affordable housing providers, such as DACE, to include energy efficient conversion of appliances in their rehabilitation programs funded by the City.	Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency Schedule: Continuous	The City has not required anything above the Title 24 requirements but in August 2012 the City started working with Southern California Edison (SCE) and CVAG to promote the “Green for Life” program. The Green for Life provides new tools, training, policies and guidance offered to show interested persons how to become more energy efficient, save money and reduce your carbon footprint. The City informs the community by providing brochures and information about upcoming workshops.	Modify. This program will be modified to reflect what the City is currently doing.
Program 1.D.1	The City shall support private and public efforts to ensure non-discrimination in the sale or rental of housing through dissemination of brochures and information on the Riverside County EDA fair housing programs.	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Continuous	A Fair Housing Committee was not established, nor were brochures created. This program was unsuccessful due to staffing and funding constraints. The City refers discrimination complaints to the County EDA, which maintains the area's clearinghouse for such	Modify. The program will be modified to address the current practice.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
Program 1.D.2	Support and enforce fair housing laws and policies by providing information, counseling, and investigation services concerning discrimination complaints. Identify non-profit or public organizations to carry out this role locally. Distribute brochures at locations easily accessed by the general public and in particular by minority groups and seniors. Refer complaints to appropriate State and federal agencies, and provide lists of tenant advocacy organizations in Spanish and English on the community cable channel and in the local newspaper.	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Continuous	complaints. Data and information on the EDA's programs is maintained at City Hall, and distributed to residents on request.	Modify. The program will be combined with program 1.D.1.
Program 2.A.1	Address the issue of farmworker households that are living in either sub-standard or overcrowded households including farmworker families who make their permanent residence in the area, and migrant farmworkers who are not permanent residents of the area through coordination and cooperation with DACE and other organizations, including the funding of matching funds from the Redevelopment Agency, support for funding applications, and fast-tracking of development applications.	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Quarterly, 2008 and ongoing	The City does not have any farmworker specific housing. Any farmworkers living in the City live in single family homes or multifamily units.	Delete.
Program 2.A.2	Facilitate the expansion of the self help homeownership opportunities and of various other types of financing for farmworker households. Strive to make 5 farmworker households homeowners annually through coordination and cooperation with DACE and other organizations, including the funding of matching funds from the Redevelopment Agency,	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Quarterly, 2008-2014	The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition constructed the Briarbrook project in 2002, which consists of 34 single family homes on eight acres. The project consisted of sweat equity participation for homeowners, although farmworkers were not specifically targeted.	Delete. The City no longer has funding available to continue this program.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
support for funding applications, and fast-tracking of development applications.				
Program 2.A.3	Amend the Zoning Ordinance to define and allow farmworker housing pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6.	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: Quarterly, 2010–2011	In September 2013 the City amended its Zoning Code to comply with state law.	Delete.
Program 2.B.1	Facilitate the expansion of self-help programs for lower income households and strive to construction 5 self help homes within the City annually through coordination and cooperation with Habitat for Humanity, DACE and other organizations, including the funding of matching funds from the Redevelopment Agency, , and provide information on these programs at City Hall and the Library.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency Schedule: To be completed annually from 2008–2014	<p>2009. This program was unsuccessful since the City was unable to allocate funding for the construction of 15 self-help houses per year. The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) was able to build 27 single-family homes at Gateway and 14th and was able to build out Phase III of Briarbrook Homes which consisted of 34 self-help single family homes. Due to funding constraints, this program will be modified to a more appropriate target number for the construction of self-help housing.</p> <p>2011. Although the City of Blythe/Blythe Redevelopment Agency are not in themselves developing a self-help home program nor constructing self-help homes, the City/RDA has in the past supported such projects both monetarily and with assistance through the entitlement process. The City of Blythe/RDA recognizes the importance of such programs/development and will continue to encourage and support them.</p>	Delete. The City no longer has funding available to continue this program.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete
Program 2.B.2	Analyze and update various existing programs for lower income home buyers that include Mortgage Credit Certificate Programs, First Time Home Buyer, and various other existing assistance programs, and provide information on these programs at City Hall and the Library. Assure that programs are receiving the maximum utilization by lower income residents of Blythe.	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: 2009, Continuous	The City provides information at City Hall and the library regarding the Riverside County program and refers interested persons to the County. Continue.
Program 2.C.1	Provide additional senior housing for lower income seniors in a location close to urban amenities. Specifically, cooperate in the construction of an average of 5 units of senior multi-family housing per year, through Agency participation, cooperation and fee reductions for private development efforts, support for funding applications, fast-tracking of development applications and similar methods.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2009–2014	2009. The City of Blythe has approved two Tentative Tract Maps in order to provide additional senior housing within the city. A Tentative Tract Map for an 81-unit senior-restricted complex, Agate Senior Housing, was approved, but is currently listed as inactive by the City. The second Tract Map, Cottonwood Meadows, includes 103 small individual homes and an associated 24-bed assisted living facility. This project is not income-restricted and although the Tract Map has been approved, as of 2008 the project had not been built. Delete. The objective of this program will be fulfilled once the projects are developed. Therefore, this program will not be continued.
Program 2.C.2	Coordinate with the Desert Roadrunner to assure that public transportation needs of seniors are adequately met. Assure that seniors have adequate access to needed medical services, shopping and other amenities from their residences.	Responsible Department: Development Services and Desert Roadrunner Schedule: 2008 and ongoing	Although the City's public transportation provider, Desert Roadrunner, provides fixed bus route services, it was unable to maintain the veterans/seniors transport program due to lack of funding and little demand. Desert Roadrunner does, however, maintain the dial-a-ride services for the community and participates in the Desert RoadTRIP (Desert Road Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project) which reimburses Continue. The City continues to coordinate with Desert Roadrunner and will encourage services which meet the needs of the community.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
		non-family members for transportation costs associated with transporting senior citizens out of the valley to medical appointments.		
Program 2.C.3	Increase participation in the Senior Home Program run by the Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA). (This program provides emergency and minor repairs to address health and safety concerns that include improvements for handicapped accessibility, repairs to plumbing, electricity, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and roof repairs.) This program will strive to rehabilitate approximately 5 homes annually with support of the EDA. The Redevelopment Agency will distribute EDA brochures to senior centers, medical offices and churches to heighten awareness of the program.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency, Riverside EDA Schedule: 2008–2014	<p>2009. For the last several years, the City has contributed matching funds to the Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (DACE) for senior home repair programs. In 2003 and 2004, City contributions of \$28,696 provided household repairs to three senior citizens. In 2006, a total of \$33,310 in grants from the City of Blythe and Housing Preservation Grant funds were contributed for repair and remodel of four senior citizens' homes. In addition, the County of Riverside Assistance provided \$89,741 toward this program.</p> <p>2011. For the last several years, the City of Blythe has made a monetary matching grant contribution toward DACE's application for USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds. DACE has been successful in obtaining and administering the grant funds on behalf of the City of Blythe. Additionally, the City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance senior home repair programs within the community.</p>	Continue.
Program 2.D.1	Establish a supervised emergency shelter. The facility should have a minimum of 24 beds and include a separate area dedicated exclusively for	Responsible Department: Development Services,	<p>2009. Although the Richard Allen Foundation is no longer operational, the City of Blythe is currently working to</p>	Modify. This program will be revised to address homelessness

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
women, funded through the Redevelopment Agency.	Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2009-2011	locate an appropriately sized and zoned site for the construction of an all-inclusive homeless services facility. At completion the facility will provide shower, laundry, and food services to homeless persons in addition to housing and shelter. 2011. Although there has been an identified need for this type of facility, a funding source has not been identified. The City will continue to seek developer involvement to accomplish progress.	by working with the county and surrounding jurisdictions.	
Program 2.D.2	Identify and/or establish local non-profit agencies to administer homeless, transitional, and emergency housing. Consider the utilization of the City owned parcel on South Main Street as the site for a transitional shelter.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2012–2014	2009. As mentioned above, the City of Blythe intends to facilitate acquisition of a suitable site for construction of a homeless shelter and service facility. 2011. The City of Blythe encourages acquisition of a suitable site for construction of a homeless shelter and service facility.	Delete. The City is anticipating losing the parcel on South Main Street to the Redevelopment Successor agency.
Program 2.D.3	Expand rehabilitation services for men and women by working with service providers to facilitate the establishment of transitional housing for men, and a recovery center and transitional housing for women, with Redevelopment Agency funding assistance.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2010–2012	Since 2006, the City has contributed \$17,000 in CDBG funds to Hopeful Start for parking lot improvements, meeting supplies, and upgrades to the facility. Although a meeting place for teens and adults with alcohol and drug dependency issues has been established, the City has not established a recovery center or transitional housing specifically for women, due primarily to funding constraints.	Delete.

	Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete
Program 2.D.4	Modify the Zoning Code to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow homeless shelters by right in the General and Service Industrial zones with development standards that encourage and facilitate the use and only subject shelters to the same development and management standards that apply to other allowed uses within the identified zone. • Define Single Room Occupancy, and allow them by right in the General and Service Industrial zones. • Transitional and supportive housing shall be subject to only those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone. • Clarify that handicapped ramps are permitted in the front, side or rear yard setback of any residential structure. A reasonable accommodation procedure shall be established to provide exception in zoning and land use for persons with disabilities. 	Responsible Department: Development Services Schedule: 2010	<p>2009 There were no changes made in regard to the number of unrelated persons living in the same house since it was determined that there are no limitations in the City's existing Municipal Code. Restrictions on group homes were evaluated and it was determined that neither the General Plan nor the Zoning Ordinance is restrictive in allowances and regulations for the siting of group homes. General Plan 2025 provides for sufficient medium- and high-density residential land use designations to meet the projected housing needs of the community. Therefore, this program was accomplished and will be discontinued.</p> <p>2011 General Plan 2025 provides for sufficient medium- and high-density residential land use designations to meet the projected housing needs of the community. Therefore, this program was accomplished and will be discontinued.</p>	Modify. Although the City completed all required amendments in September 2013, in an effort to fully comply with SB 2, the City will amend its code to clarify that transitional and supportive housing is allowed in all zones where residential uses are permitted..
Program 3.A.1	Identify funding mechanisms to use for the purchase and rehabilitation of fixer-up homes by lower income families. Strive to conserve or rehabilitate 5 homes annually for lower income households.	Responsible Department: Development Services, Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2008–2014	<p>2009. DACE has successfully administered grant funding on behalf of the City of Blythe. In 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007 the City of Blythe RDA contributed \$20,000 each year to DACE for USDA Housing Preservation Grant matching funds. In 2008, the RDA contributed \$40,000.</p> <p>2011. For the last several years, the City</p>	Continue. This program was successful and will be continued.

Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete	
Program 3.A.2	Identify funding mechanisms to use for the purchase of new or code compliant mobile homes to replace older mobile homes that are in substandard or dilapidated condition. Strive to replace 5 substandard lower income mobile homes annually with modern mobile homes that meet all code requirements.	Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2008–2014	of Blythe has made a monetary matching grant contribution toward DACE’s application for USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds. DACE has been successful in obtaining and administering the grant funds on behalf of the City of Blythe. Additionally, the City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance home repair programs within the community.	Delete. In September 2013 the City canceled its enforcement responsibilities under the mobilehome park act, and this will now be the responsibility of the California Department of Housing and Community Development.
Program 3.A.3	Continue to provide funds to leverage the rehabilitation of lower income owner occupied homes through the Riverside County EDA’s Home Improvement Program (HIP) and Housing Preservation Grant (HPG). Strive to rehabilitate an average of 8 lower income, owner occupied homes annually.	Responsible Dept: Redevelopment Agency Schedule: Continuous	Blythe contributed funds to DACE in the amount of \$20,000 each year during 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2007, thereby matching funding for DACE from the federal government. For 2008, the RDA contributed \$40,000 to DACE.	Continue. This program is ongoing as funds permit, and will be extended to the current planning period.

	Action	Responsibility/Funding/ Timing	Result	Continue/ Modify/Delete
Program 3.A.4	Identify and create an action plan to renovate or replace substandard apartments that are used in part for seasonal occupancy and long term residence. The City will work with property owners to bring a minimum of 12 units annually up to code.	Responsible Department: Code Enforcement Schedule: Continuous	The City does not plan to create an action plan at this time.	Delete.
Program 3.A.5	Initiate aggressive code enforcement action on sub-standard motels and apartments as complaints occur, or inspection demonstrates through General Fund budget allocations.	Responsible Department: Code Enforcement Schedule: Ongoing	Due to limited staff the City has not been able to provide aggressive code enforcement but in December 2013 the City hired a second one code enforcement officer to assist with this effort. The City received 13 code enforcement complaints for sub-standard motel and apartment units.	Continue.
Program 3.A.6	Monitor units at risk (Table 4-10) to assure that their affordability is preserved. Funding for their preservation could include: HUD financing through LIHPRHA, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Section 202/811 Capital Grants, California Housing Finance Agency Mortgage Loans, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Annually contact property owners, gauge interest and identify non-profit partners and pursue funding and preservation strategy on a project basis. The City will work with tenants of at-risk units and provide them with education regarding tenant rights and conversion procedures. The City will also provide tenants in at-risk projects information regarding Section 8 rent subsidies through the Housing Authority, and other affordable housing opportunities in the City.	Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency Schedule: 2013	The City of Blythe is participating with the Riverside County Economic Development Agency to enhance mortgage assistance programs within the community.	Continue.

B. SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR RHNA PERIOD 2006–2014

During the previous planning period, 207 housing units were constructed toward the City’s RHNA allocation. These included single-family homes, mobile homes, and second units. The new construction resulted in the creating of 7 low-income deed-restricted housing units, 69 moderate-income housing units, and 131 above moderate-income housing units, as depicted in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1		
2006–2014 RHNA Accomplishments		
Income Group	RHNA	Progress
Extremely Low	89	0
Very Low	88	0
Low	128	7
Moderate	144	69
Above Moderate	329	131
Total	778	207

Source: SCAG 2007

CHAPTER 3: DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

A. OVERVIEW OF BLYTHE

Blythe's economy has traditionally been dominated by agriculture, services, and tourism. Agricultural production was made possible by the first priority water rights to the Colorado River granted to the Palo Verde Valley. The service industry became established due to the city's location along Highway 60/70, which meant that all through traffic was funneled through its extended main street (Hobsonway) and its downtown. This translated into a healthy service sector to meet the needs of passing motorists. Tourism in the Blythe area has grown considerably in recent decades and is associated with recreational activities along the Colorado River during the warmer months. Tourism is a component of the economy that is expected to grow.

Change began to happen in the 1970s with the opening of the Interstate 10 highway that bypassed both the main street and the downtown. This resulted in the closure of many service businesses along Hobsonway and other streets in the downtown area that derived a substantial amount of their revenue from travelers that were obliged to travel through the core of the community. Freeway service industry business is now confined mainly to areas adjacent to the freeway exits at Lovekin Boulevard, Seventh Street, and Intake Boulevard.

A second factor was the opening of two state prisons in the early 1990s in an area 20 miles west of downtown Blythe. For tax revenue-generating purposes, these institutions were annexed into the City of Blythe, thereby providing a much needed increase in its annual revenues. Furthermore, prison staff salaries have provided a sizable market for homes in the \$100,000-plus range that existed on only a very limited basis prior to the advent of the prisons.

While the prisons have had a dramatic effect on the community's economy, it is also true that their impact has been substantially less than anticipated. Partly, this is because only two of an originally anticipated six-prison complex have been built, and there are no concrete plans for others to be added at this time. A second reason is that a high percentage of correctional officers at the two prisons do not live in the Blythe area. (See Section B below.)

Two developing components of the region's economy are seasonal residents and the retirement market. These are driven by the city's mild winter weather and its proximity to the world's largest annual rock and mineral festival in Quartzsite, Arizona, an easy 20-minute drive from Blythe.

B. POPULATION TRENDS

Overview

The 2010 US Census estimated that the population of the City of Blythe was 20,817. In 2013, the California Department of Finance (DOF) estimated the city's population, including group quarters, at 19,606, a decrease of 6.0 percent over three years. The number of persons living in group quarters in 2013, based on DOF estimates, was estimated at 6,381, which is approximately 32.5 percent of Blythe's total population. As shown in **Table 3-1**, the 2013 DOF estimates the number of persons in Blythe at 19,606, a decrease of 859 from the 2000 population figure of 20,465.

Although the two prisons located within the City of Blythe employ almost 2,100 workers, as of 2010, the Blythe area is not experiencing the population gains that would be expected if most of the employees lived in the area.¹ A 2010 study indicated that about 44.0 percent of the staff from the two prisons live outside the Blythe area.²

Year	Population	% Change
1995	15,893	N/A
1996	17,646	9.93
1997	20,062	12.04
1998	20,067	0.02
1999	19,918	-0.75
2000	20,465	2.67
2001	20,835	1.78
2002	21,279	2.09
2003	21,373	0.44
2004	22,181	3.64
2005	22,068	-0.51
2006	22,269	0.90
2007	22,625	1.57
2008	21,695	-0.41
2009	21,329	-1.7
2010	20,817	-4.6
2011	20,063	-3.6
2012	20,400	1.8
2013	19,606	-4.1

Source: Department of Finance (DOF) 2013. Table E-4, and SCAG 2013 City Profile

1 Community Economic Profile for Blythe, Riverside County. 2010. Prepared by the City of Blythe and the Blythe Chamber of Commerce.

2 Marty Bachman. "A Prison Study: Blythe: Not one, but two state prisons." (March 26, 201) A study conducted by the Daily Courier.
<http://www.dcourier.com/>

As **Table 3-1** illustrates, the resident population of Blythe has decreased over the last five years, after nearly a decade of continued growth. In 2013 Blythe has a lower population than in 2000. Comparatively, the population of Riverside County has increased by over 40.0 percent, as shown in **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-2 Population Growth 2000–2013					
Jurisdiction	Total Population			Growth	
	2000	2010	2013	Total	Percentage
Blythe	20,465	20,817	19,606	-859	-4.2%
Riverside County	1,545,387	2,189,641	2,227,577	682,190	44.1%

Source: 2000, 2010 Census and SCAG 2013 City Profile

Population forecasts for the City of Blythe provided by SCAG in its Regional Transportation Plan published in 2012 indicate the city will see moderate growth over the next two decades, reaching a total population of 25,392 by 2035. **Table 3-3** shows forecasted growth in population, households, and employment through 2035.

Table 3-3 Population Projections 2020 and 2035				
Jurisdiction	Growth			
	2020	2035	Change 2010–2035	Percentage
Population				
Blythe	22,700	24,300	3,900	19.12%
Riverside County	2,592,000	3,324,000	1,170,814	54.38%
Households				
Blythe	4,500	5,200	685	15.17%
Riverside County	834,000	1,092,000	399,480	57.68%
Employment				
Blythe	7,800	10,400	5,116	96.82%
Riverside County	939,000	1,243,000	628,590	102.31%

Source: SCAG Regional Transportation Plan, Growth Forecast Appendix, 2012

C. AGE AND ETHNICITY

Ethnic Composition

Estimates provided by the 2010 US Census figures indicate that the population of Blythe is predominantly (60 percent) white. Riverside County as a whole had a significantly lower percentage, 39.7 percent. Ethnicity, which is counted separately from race, indicates that the majority of residents (53 percent) identify themselves as Hispanic, in addition to being white or some other racial category. The city's racial composition from 2010 is illustrated in **Table 3-4**. Please note that the prison population is not accounted for in the Census data.

Table 3-4 Racial Composition Distribution of Blythe, 2010		
Race/Ethnicity	Population	Percentage
White	12,396	59.5%
Black	3,126	15.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	243	1.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	32	0.2%
Asian	319	1.5%
Other	4,045	19.4%
More Than One Race	656	3.2%
Total	20,817	100.0%
Hispanic*	11,068	53.2%

Source: 2010 US Census

**Hispanic persons can be identified under either white or other category, and are therefore considered separately.*

Age Distribution

Table 3-5 depicts Blythe's age distribution in 2010. The median age in 2010 was 38 years.

Table 3-5 Age Distribution of Blythe, 2010		
Age	Population	% of Total
0-19	4,569	21.9
20-24	1,358	6.5
25-34	3,403	16.3
35-44	3,929	18.9
45-54	3,848	19
55-59	1,075	5.2
60-64	841	4
65+	1,794	8.6
Total	20,817	100%

Source: 2010 US Census

D. INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Income Trends

The City of Blythe’s median income ranked 39 out of 51 Inland Empire cities according to the 2012 San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) Inland Empire 4th Quarterly Economic Report. Blythe’s median income shrank for the first time in over 30 years in 2008, reflecting a drop in median incomes throughout the county, which is likely related to the economic recession beginning in that year. The median income has since risen, but remains lower than its highest level in 2006.

The city’s median income is 23.0 percent less than the 2012 median income level of \$54,296 for Riverside County, which is roughly consistent with that ratio before the recession.

Year	Median Income	Average Annual Increase
1979	\$13,594	N/A
1989	\$22,847	6.0% (1979–1989)
1999	\$35,324	6.5% (1989–1999)
2006	\$45,302	11.1% (1999–2006)
2008	\$37,937	(-19.4%) (2006–2008)
2009	\$41,440	8.5% (2008–2009)
2010	\$44,273	6.4% (2009–2010)
2011	\$41,440	(-6.8%) (2010–2011)
2012	\$41,856	1.0% (2011–2012)

Source: US Census; Inland Empire Quarterly Economic Report, October 2012

Extremely Low-Income Households

In 2012, approximately 35.0 percent of households in Blythe had an income of less than \$30,000, which was just above the 2013 HCD income limit for a very low-income four-person household of \$33,500, and 55.0 percent made less than \$50,000, which was near the established income limit of \$53,600 for a low-income four-person household. A majority of Blythe households make less than the low-income limits set by the state (see **Table 1-1**). The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), which was developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist jurisdictions in writing their consolidated plans, has special tabulation data based on the 2010 Census for income and housing affordability factors. The CHAS Data Book identified 675 households (475 renter-occupied households and 200 owner-occupied households) in Blythe with incomes less than 30.0 percent of the county median in 2010. These households are classified as extremely low-income households.

Employment Trends

The economy has an important impact on housing needs. Employment growth typically results in increased housing demand in areas that serve as regional employment centers. Moreover, the type of occupation and income levels for new employment also affect housing demand. This section describes the economic and employment patterns in Blythe and how these patterns influence housing needs. Table 3-7 shows the types of industries for residents working in the City of Blythe in 2011. As discussed in a later section, nearly half of the employed population living in Blythe actually work outside of the city or the immediate surrounding area.

Industry	Number	Percentage
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	384	7.4%
Construction	139	2.7%
Manufacturing	46	0.9%
Wholesale trade	189	3.6%
Retail trade	629	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	296	5.7%
Information	0	0.0%
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	208	4.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	149	2.9%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,198	23.1%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	593	11.4%
Other services, except public administration	48	0.9%
Public administration	1,317	25.3%
Total civilian employed population 16 years and over	5,196*	100.0%

Source: 2007–2011 American Community Survey, DP03

*Census employment totals may differ from local employment data due to survey statistical estimates used for the ACS.

Table 3-8 lists the city’s largest employers. The public sector, particularly the California Department of Corrections, through the two state prisons at Ironwood and Chuckawalla, employs the largest single group in the Palo Verde Valley. Other governmental and quasi-governmental organizations also have a large number of positions. In the private sector, where the employers are smaller, agriculture is the largest sector of the economy, with retail services and manufacturing companies also providing significant employment in the area, according to the 2012 Inland Empire Quarterly Report prepared by SANBAG. It is important to note that the table reflects the number of employees in total, including both Blythe and surrounding unincorporated Ripley, resulting in a much higher total employment number.

Employer	# of Employees
Ironwood State Prison	1,302
Chuckawalla Valley State Prison	794
Palo Verde Unified School District	300
Morgan Corporation	231
Palo Verde Community College District	209
Palo Verde Hospital	150
Hi-Value Processors	120
City of Blythe	111
Albertsons	100
County of Riverside	91
Total Area Employment	5,500

Source: Community Economic Profile, 2010. Prepared by City of Blythe and Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce.

Worker Commutes

The 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Survey, an arm of the US Census, shows that approximately 4,039 individuals are employed within Blythe but live outside the city and that only approximately 41.0 percent of Blythe residents live and work within city limits. As a result, a large number of workers (50.8 percent) travel more than 50 miles for their work commute; another 17.5 percent of workers travel at least 10 miles in their daily work commute, as shown in Table 3-9.

Historically, a large percentage of Department of Corrections employees at the two prisons, the largest employers in the area, have not resided in the city, which likely contributes to the long commute times and job-housing imbalance in the area.

The distance between where most residents live and work suggests there is a work/housing imbalance in Blythe. To help promote lower commute times for Blythe workers, housing of the type that meets the needs of current and potential law enforcement employees should be facilitated within Blythe. Further, the imbalance would be reduced by providing additional economic development and additional employers within the city.

Table 3-9 Blythe Workers' Commute Characteristics, 2011 Commute Distance for Blythe Workers		
<i>Distance</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than 10 miles	2,173	31.8%
10 to 24 miles	1,098	16.1%
25 to 50 miles	93	1.4%
Greater than 50 miles	3,468	50.8%
Total Primary Jobs	6,832	100.0%
<i>Inflow/Outflow of Commuters</i>		
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	4,039	59.1%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	2,793	40.9%
Living in the Selection Area	6,314	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	3,521	55.8%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	2,793	44.2%

Source: 2010 US Census, 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING TRENDS AND AFFORDABILITY

A. HOUSING TRENDS

Housing Unit Increases

The 2012 SCAG profile data estimated that there were 5,475 housing units in the city, which was a 12.0 percent increase in housing units compared to the 2000 US Census. From 2006 to 2013 an additional 207 homes/units were constructed in Blythe, of which the majority were single-family homes following by mobile homes.

The substantial increase (59.0 percent) in housing units between 1990 and 2000 was primarily due to annexations, which accounted for 1,443 housing units or about 75.0 percent of the total increase. The 551 housing unit increases that have occurred since 2000 are attributed to new construction. **Table 4-1** shows the number of units that were constructed for each housing type.

Table 4-1 New Housing Units Constructed, 2006–2013		
Unit Type	Number of Units (including replacements)	Units That Are Replacements
Single-Family Residential	131 (41 custom homes, 7 deed-restricted track homes)	6
Mobile Home	69 (50 in MH parks, 19 on other residential parcels)	7
Multi-Family Residential	0	0
Second Units	7	1
Total	207	14

Source: City of Blythe 2013

Households

The 2012 SCAG profile estimated that the average household size in Blythe was 2.9 persons, which is lower than the average household size for Riverside County (3.2 persons) and the SCAG region (3.1). There were 4,515 households in the city in 2012.

Tenure

Of the 5,678 total occupied housing units identified in the 2010 US Census, 57.0 percent were owner-occupied. Owner-occupied households have an average size of 2.93, which is slightly larger than renter-occupied units with an average size of 2.50. Owner-occupied households are also more likely to have senior occupants, with 53.3 percent having householders that are 65 years or older, as opposed to 27 percent for renter-occupied units.

Types of Housing Units

The DOF estimated that there were 3,391 single-family detached and attached units (59.7 percent of the city's housing stock), 712 mobile home/RV/other units (12.5 percent of the housing stock), and 1,575 multi-family units (27.7 percent of housing stock), as illustrated in **Table 4-2**.

**Table 4-2
Housing Units in Blythe, 2010**

Type of Structure	No. of Units	% of Total
Single-Family Detached	3,210	56.5%
Single-Family Attached	181	3.2%
2-4 unit structure	883	15.6%
5 units or more	692	12.1%
Mobile Homes	712	12.5 %
Total	5,678	100%

Source: 2010 US Census

Mobile Home Parks

Approximately 12.5 percent of dwelling units within the city were mobile homes according to the 2010 US Census. Several of these parks were brought into compliance with codes in the past few years. **Table 4-3** shows the total number of mobile home and recreational vehicle (RV) spaces in the city, based on a review of mobile home parks listed in 2013. These mobile home parks are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

In addition to the city’s existing parks, mobile homes and manufactured housing can be installed on any residential lot in the city. The only restrictions or constraint to their installation is that they have been constructed after July 1, 1976, meet certain fixed exterior materials requirements, and provide adequate parking as required by the zone. Mobile homes and manufactured housing have been installed on single-family lots at many locations throughout the city.

**Table 4-3
Mobile Home/RV Parks**

Mobile Home/RV Park Name	Trailer or RV Spaces
Blue Line Motel/Trailer Park	20
Blythe Marina Mobile Estates	49
Colorado River/Blythe KOA	300
Burtons Mobile Home & Park	60
Desert Gem	17
El Rancho Estates	109
Mesa Bluff Village	95
Valley Palms Mobile Home Park	37
Red Rooster Mobile Home Park	32
Hidden Beaches	55
River Country Market	20
Aha Quin Trailer Park	215
Total	1,009

Source: mhbay.com, 2013

Vacancy Rate

Within the field of urban economics, a residential vacancy rate of approximately 5 percent is considered an indicator of a real estate market with sufficient housing options for both renters and buyers, and a reasonable balance between supply and demand. Blythe’s vacancy rates are fairly high by this standard, and may indicate an oversupply in the housing market, which is consistent with a slightly declining population over the last decade.

According to the US Census, the City of Blythe had an overall vacancy rate of 17.5 percent in 2010. In 2012, the DOF estimated that 15.2 percent of the housing units in the city were vacant. This reveals that Blythe’s vacant units appears to have declined slightly (approximately 2.3 percent) between 2010 and 2012, but in general has not changed significantly since 2000, when the vacancy rate was 17.1 percent.

As depicted in **Table 4-4**, the city’s vacancy rate is affected by seasonal residents, who do not make their units available when they are not in residence. If seasonal and other temporary factors are excluded, the city’s net vacancy rate in 2010 was 13.3 percent.

Table 4-4 Vacancy Status in Blythe 2010		
Unit Type	Number of Vacant Units	% Total Units Citywide
For Rent	248	26%
For Sale	100	10%
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	17	2%
Seasonal or Occasional Use	448	47%
Migrant Workers	3	0.3%
Other Vacant	144	15%

Source: 2010 US Census

Overcrowded Units

Overcrowding is defined as a household with more than 1.01 persons per room, not including kitchens, bathrooms and hallways. The CHAS 2010 data estimated that 345 households, or 5.3 percent of the city’s households, had 1.01 or more occupants per room in the city. Of these units, 125 were owner-occupied, and 120 were renter-occupied units. The 2013 percentage of units that are overcrowded is less than that of 2000, down from 14.5 percent.

B. AGE AND CONDITION OF HOUSING UNITS

Age of Occupied Housing Units

As indicated in **Table 4-5**, the 2010 Census identified 3,617 housing units that were over 30 years old, representing 61.5 percent of the city’s total housing stock.

Table 4-5		
Age of Blythe Housing Units in 2010		
Age of Housing Stock in Years	# of Units	% of Total Units
10 or less	843	14.3%
11–20	860	14.6%
21–30	567	9.6%
31–40	976	16.6%
More than 40	2,641	44.9%
Total	5,887	100.0%

Source: 2010 US Census

Condition of Units

In March 2003 the City of Blythe conducted an area-wide housing study that, among other objectives, determined the quality of the housing stock in the community. The survey included Blythe and the communities of Ripley and Mesa Verde and consisted of drive-by or “windshield” surveys. The study found that 43.3 percent of homes in the study area were in sound condition, while 16.5 percent were in need of minor repairs, 16.7 percent needed moderate repairs, 9 percent needed substantial repairs, and 14.7 percent were in dilapidated condition. Overall the survey found that 42.1 percent of Blythe’s houses were in need of rehabilitation and most of these required minor to moderate repairs.

As indicated above in **Table 4-5**, according to the 2010 Census, 61.5 percent of the housing stock in Blythe is older than 30 years. Although age does not always correlate with substandard housing conditions, neighborhoods with a predominance of homes more than 30 years old are more likely than newer neighborhoods to have a concentration of housing with deferred maintenance and a need for updating utilities or interior amenities, rehabilitation, or replacement.

Based on the age of the housing stock and the results from the 2003 area-wide housing study, it is safe to assume that approximately 50 percent of the housing units in Blythe are in need of rehabilitation.

C. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

According to the 2010 CHAS data (**Table 4-6**), there were 495 renter households and 295 owner households earning between 30 percent and 50 percent of the median family income (MFI) in the city in 2010, and 475 renter households and 200 owner households that fell into the extremely low-income category (incomes less than 30 percent of MFI).

Housing Problems and Overpayment

Households are considered to be overpaying for housing when more than 30 percent of all household income is dedicated to the cost of housing. According to the 2006-2010 CHAS data, approximately 665 (25%) owner occupied households and 795 (41%) renter occupied households were overpaying for housing. When looking at lower income households overpaying, there were a total of 975 households (255 owner households and 720 renter households) with income less than 50 percent of the median family income.

Table 4-6 Housing Problems for Households by Tenure, 2010			
	Total Owners	Total Renters	Total Households
Household Income \leq 30% MFI	200	475	675
% Cost Burden >30%	58%	79%	73%
% Cost Burden >50%	53%	58%	56%
Household Income \leq 30% to \leq 50% MFI	295	495	790
% Cost Burden >30%	47%	70%	61%

Source: CHAS 2006–2010

Housing Prices

By 2012, the price of an existing home was estimated at \$93,000 and a new home was estimated to cost \$208,000, according to the 2nd Quarter Inland Empire City Profile conducted by SANBAG. In 2013, a survey of home listings on realty websites including Trulia.com, realtor.com, and padmapper.com found that the approximate cost of a single-family wood-frame home in Blythe ranged from \$49,000 to \$975,000 with a median cost of \$130,280. The monthly rental rate for a one-bedroom apartment ranged from \$475 to \$595, with a median monthly cost of \$550; however, one-bedroom apartment rental options are fairly limited in Blythe. The median monthly cost was \$1,150 for all monthly rental options, including the more commonly available attached and detached single-family homes.

Rental Rates

Current rental rates as of August 2013 in the City of Blythe are listed in **Table 4-7** and include apartments that are priced at market rates. For purposes of the analysis below, it has been assumed that the average rental rate in the City of Blythe is \$800 for a two-bedroom unit.

Table 4-7 Rental Rates In Blythe, 2013	
Type of Unit	Rent per Month
1-bedroom apartments	\$436–\$575
2-bedroom apartments	\$456–\$1,295
3- and 4-bedroom apartments	\$575–\$4,780

Source: Point in time search of rental listing websites including Trulia.com, Realtor.com, and Padmapper.com; August 2013.

D. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ANALYSIS

HCD defines affordable to mean that a household is not paying more than 30 percent of its income in order to meet its housing needs, regardless of whether the home is rented or owned. This section discusses the affordability of housing within Blythe based on this criterion. This section also analyzes the issue of substandard housing as it relates to affordability.

Sales of existing homes in Blythe grew the most of any city in Riverside County, yet had the lowest prices in 2012, according to the 2012 4th Quarter Inland Empire Report prepared by SANBAG. Blythe is among the most affordable areas in terms of housing in the Inland Empire, in part due to the traditionally lower-income levels in the city. **Table 4-8** illustrates the amount of rent or value of a house which extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income households can afford. Based on the figures in the table, low- and moderate-income households can afford to either rent or buy a home in Blythe at market rates. However, very low- and extremely low-income households may not be able to afford median market rents in the city. Based on this analysis, the market conditions in Blythe reflect the lower household income in the city. Very low- and extremely low-income households are not expected to be able to afford rental housing unless they are able to find rentals that are less than \$646 per month, which is significantly below the market rate average rent for a two-bedroom unit of \$800.

Household Size	HCD Income Limits		Monthly Housing Costs		Maximum Affordable Price	
	Max. Annual Income	Affordable Total Monthly Payment	Utilities ¹	Taxes and Insurance (for Homeowners)	Total Mortgage ²	Monthly Rental ³
Extremely Low						
One Person	\$14,100	\$353	\$75	\$31	\$76,734	\$278
Two Person	\$16,100	\$403	\$100	\$41	\$109,127	\$303
Three Person	\$18,100	\$453	\$125	\$51	\$126,025	\$328
Four Person	\$20,100	\$503	\$150	\$61	\$142,024	\$353
Very Low						
One Person	\$23,450	\$586	\$75	\$71	\$170,975	\$511
Two Person	\$26,800	\$670	\$100	\$86	\$199,365	\$570
Three Person	\$30,150	\$754	\$125	\$101	\$227,754	\$629
Four Person	\$33,500	\$838	\$150	\$116	\$256,144	\$688
Low						
One Person	\$37,550	\$939	\$75	\$131	\$256,144	\$864
Two Person	\$42,900	\$1,073	\$100	\$160	\$335,394	\$973
Three Person	\$48,250	\$1,206	\$125	\$189	\$425,801	\$1,081
Four Person	\$53,600	\$1,340	\$150	\$218	\$425,801	\$1,190
Moderate						
One Person	\$54,600	\$1,365	\$75	\$256	\$361,181	\$1,290
Two Person	\$62,400	\$1,560	\$100	\$303	\$415,991	\$1,460
Three Person	\$70,200	\$1,755	\$125	\$350	\$470,797	\$1,630
Four Person	\$78,000	\$1,950	\$150	\$397	\$525,607	\$1,800

1. Monthly utility costs are assumed as \$75/person and \$25 for each additional person.

2. Total affordable mortgage, including interest paid, based on an annual 5 percent interest rate, 30-year mortgage, and monthly payment equal to 30 percent of income (after utilities, taxes, and insurance), and a 10 percent down payment.

3. Monthly affordable rent based on 30 percent of income less estimated utilities costs.

E. EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

Apartment complexes that have received some form of public subsidy for moderate- and low-income households are listed below. Also shown are the operational dates, term of subsidy, and the number of units by number of bedrooms for each complex. Tenants wishing to lease affordable units located in these complexes must not have incomes exceeding 80 percent of the County's median income.

Baldwin Senior Apartments

This apartment complex, located at 9555 Barnard Street, utilized Tax Credit and Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing. All forty (40) units are income restricted, three are for the mobility impaired and the remainder are restricted for seniors.

Blythe Villa Apartments

Located at 251 N. Palm, this complex utilized HUD subsidies and Rural Development Housing (USDA) financing. Thirty-four (34) of its fifty-two (52) units are reserved for low and very low income tenants.

Briarbrook

The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition constructed these 34 self-help ownership homes which were completed in 2004. The project will remain deed restricted for very low and low income households.

Broadway Manor Apartments

This complex is located at 550 S. Broadway, and utilized HUD Subsidized and Rural Development Housing (USDA) financing. The project consists of 28 one bedroom and 40 two bedroom units. Forty-four (44) of its sixty four (64) units are restricted to very low and low income tenants.

El Solano Apartments

This apartment complex located at 170 S. Spring Street utilized Mortgage Revenue Bond financing and is owned and operated by the County of Riverside Housing Authority. The project consists of 40 studio apartments: 10 of which are provided for very low income households; 21 for low income households; and 9 at market rates. Although not specifically reserved for seniors, most units are occupied by low income seniors. The City's Redevelopment Agency funded a \$200,000 grant for the rehabilitation of the project in the 1998-2006 planning period.

Quail Place Apartments

Located at 551 S. Third Street, this complex utilized 20% Set Aside and California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) financing. All fifty-eight (58) of its units are restricted to very low and low income tenants. There are 18 two bedroom, 36 three bedroom and 4 four bedroom units in the complex.

Rice Street Homes

DACE constructed these 6 units in 2007, using federal funds, a land donation from the City's Redevelopment Agency, and a grant of \$131,400. The project consists of small-lot homes.

Rio Colorado (Rhyolite) Apartments

Located at 400 N. Palm Drive, this apartment complex utilized State Bond financing and RDA Funds financing. All seventy (70) of its units are restricted to very low and low income tenants. The project includes 30 two bedroom and 40 three bedroom units. The City's Redevelopment Agency funded a \$350,000 grant for the rehabilitation of the project in the 2007.

River Heights Apartments

This apartment complex is located at 2400 E. Donlon Drive, and utilized Tax Credit financing to construct this eighty-one (81) unit, rent restricted complex. The project consists of 33 two bedroom, 40 three bedroom and 8 four bedroom units.

Silsby Garden Apartments

This complex, located at 200 N. Ninth Street, utilized CHFA financing and reserves all fifty (50) units for very low and low income tenants. There are 38 two bedroom and 12 three bedroom units in the complex.

Squaw Valley Apartments

Located at 12730 Birch Street, this complex utilized Tax Credit and Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing to construct its 33 units, all of which are restricted to very low and low income households. The complex includes 6 one bedroom, 21 two bedroom and 6 three bedroom units.

Sunrise Apartments

Located at 481 N. Eucalyptus, this complex utilized Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing, and all fifty (50) units are restricted to very low and low income tenants. The project consists of 12 one bedroom and 38 two bedroom units. The project was recently acquired with Tax Credit funding by Highland Property Development. The project is therefore assured of affordability in the long term.

Sunset West Apartments

This apartment complex is located at 200 N. Lovekin. The developer utilized Tax Credit and Rural Rental Housing financing to construct this fifty (50) unit complex, which includes 10 one bedroom, 32 two bedroom and 8 three bedroom units, all restricted to low income households. The project was recently acquired with Tax Credit funding by Highland Property Development. The project is therefore assured of affordability in the long term.

Villa Monterey

This 81 unit complex is located at 1251 East 14th Avenue and was constructed using Tax Credit financing. The project provides 32 two bedroom, 25 three bedroom and 24 four bedroom units, which are all restricted to very low and low income households.

F. PRESERVATION OF ASSISTED UNITS AT RISK OF CONVERSION

Table 4-9 lists the projects in the city which have the potential to lose their affordability covenants or restrictions within 10 years. At this time there are two affordable complexes that are eligible to change from low-income housing uses during the next 10 years due to a termination of subsidy contracts, mortgage prepayment, or expiration of restrictions on uses. The City has included Program 3.A4 to assist with the preservation of these units.

Table 4-9 Inventory of At-Risk Units						
Complex Name	Address	Operational Date	Assisted Units	Section 8 Units	Total Units	Restriction Expiration
Baldwin Apartments C/O Hyder	9555 Barnard St.	1994	39	0	40	2023
Broadway Manor	550 South Broadway	1979	44	0	64	2022

Source: California Housing Partnership Corporation 2013

Baldwin Apartments and Broadway Manor have subsidy termination dates within the next 10 years, in 2023 and 2022 respectively. The cost of preserving these units would be considerably less than developing a new project.

Through the Federal Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home Ownership Act of 1990, HUD will provide financing to assist with the preservation of such projects. This includes financial assistance in the form of rental incentives and acquisition loans up to 95 percent of equity. In addition, a number of other federal and state programs are available, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Section 202/811 Capital Grants, CHFA Mortgage Loans, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The City has also worked with a number of nonprofit organizations to provide affordable housing, and these groups would be recruited to assist if any of the three projects were to be at risk of losing affordability. They include the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment, and the Rancho Housing Alliance.

Preservation and Replacement Options

Overview

The City works to preserve existing assisted units or facilitate the development of new units on an as-needed basis. Depending on the circumstances of the at-risk projects, different options may be used to preserve or replace the units, such as: 1) preserve the existing assisted units or 2) facilitate the construction of new units to take the place of any converted projects. Preservation options can include transfer of project to nonprofit ownership, provision of rental assistance to tenants using non-federal funding sources, or the purchase of affordability covenants. For replacement, the most direct option is the development of new affordable multi-family units. These options are described in more detail below.

Rental Assistance

The project can also be maintained using rental subsidies from non-federal (state, local, or other) funding sources. The feasibility of providing rental assistance is highly dependent upon the availability of other funding sources necessary to make rent subsidies available and the willingness of property owners to accept the City rental vouchers. As indicated in below, the total cost of subsidizing the rents for all 104 at-risk units is estimated at \$40,456 per month or \$485,472 annually.

Rent Subsidies, 2013

Total Units	104
Fair Market Rent ¹	\$879
Very Low Income (50% AMI) ²	\$23,450
Affordable Cost – Utilities ³	\$490
Monthly Per Unit Subsidy	\$389
Total Monthly Subsidy	\$40,456
Total Annual Subsidy	\$485,472

Source: PMC 2013.

1. Fair market rent is determined by HUD for different jurisdictions/areas across the United States on an annual basis.
2. 2013 Area median household income (AMI) limits based on 2013 Income Limits from HCD.
3. Affordable cost = 30% of household monthly income minus estimated utility allowance of \$100 for a one-bedroom unit.

Purchase of Affordability Covenants

Another option to preserve the affordability of at-risk projects is for the City to provide an incentive package to the owners of the assisted units to maintain the projects as affordable housing. Incentives could include writing down the interest rate on the remaining loan balance and/or supplementing the Section 8 subsidy received to market levels. The feasibility of this option depends on whether the complex is too highly leveraged. By providing lump sum financial incentives or ongoing subsidies in the form of rents or reduced mortgage interest rates to the owner, the City can ensure that some or all of the units remain affordable.

Construction of Replacement Units

The construction of new affordable housing units is a more permanent solution to replace at-risk units before conversion to market-rate units. The cost of developing new multi-family housing depends on the number of bedrooms, location, land costs, and type of construction. Assuming an average construction cost of \$200 per unit, and an average size of 800 square feet per unit, the approximate cost per unit would be \$160,000. In total, it would cost approximately \$17 million (excluding land costs) to construct 104 new affordable units. Even excluding land costs, the total costs to develop replacement units far exceeds the cost of the other two alternatives.

Preservation Resources

Efforts by the City to retain low-income housing must be able to draw upon two basic types of preservation resources: organizational and financial. Qualified nonprofit entities need to be made aware of the future possibilities of units becoming at risk. Should a property become at risk, the City maintains an active list of resources by which to preserve that property.

In addition, the City of Blythe will develop procedures for monitoring and preserving at-risk units, which will include the following:

- Monitor the Risk Assessment report published by the California Housing Partnership Corporation (CHPC).
- Maintain regular contact with the local HUD office regarding early warnings of possible opt-outs.
- Maintain contact with the owners and managers of existing affordable housing to determine if there are plans to opt out in the future and offer assistance in locating eligible buyers.
- Develop and maintain a list of potential purchasers of at-risk units and act as a liaison between owners and eligible purchasers.
- Ensure that all owners and managers of affordable housing are provided with applicable state and federal laws regarding notice to tenants of the owner's desire to opt out or prepay. State law requires a 12-month notice.

G. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

The following is a list of federal, state and regional programs and resources that the City of Blythe intends to explore in order to provide greater housing affordability.

Federal Programs

HOME Investment Partnership – HOME funding is a flexible grant program that is awarded on a formula basis for housing activities which takes into account local market conditions, inadequate housing, poverty, and housing production costs. HOME funding is provided to jurisdictions to either assist rental housing or homeownership through acquisition, construction, reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation of affordable housing. Funding is also provided for possible property acquisition, site improvements, and other expenses related to the provision of affordable housing and projects that serve a group identified as having special needs related to housing.

Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program – This program provides rental assistance payments to owners of private market-rate units on behalf of very low-income tenants.

Section 811/202 Program – Nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives are eligible to receive no-interest capital advances from HUD for the construction of very low-income rental housing for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Project-based assistance is also provided in conjunction with this program. Section 811 can be used to develop group homes, independent living facilities, and intermediate care facilities. To be eligible, households must be very low income (within 50 percent of the median income for the area) with at least one adult member with a disability (such as a physical or developmental disability or chronic mental illness). As of mid-2013, 26 Blythe residents currently have Section 8 vouchers, and additional 58 households are on the registered waiting list.

HUD Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act (LIHPRHA) – LIHPRHA was enacted in response to concern over the prepayment of HUD-assisted housing. The legislation addresses the prepayment of units assisted under Section 221(d)(3) and Section 236 (Section 236 replaced the Section 221(d)(3) program in 1968). Generally, the law facilitates the preservation of these low-income units by providing incentives to property owners to either retain their units as low income or to sell the project to priority purchasers (tenants, nonprofits, or governmental agencies). Pursuant to LIHPRHA, HUD must offer a package of incentives to property owners to extend the low-income use restrictions. These incentives would assure property owners an 8 percent return on the recalculated equity or their property, provided the rents necessary to yield this return fall within a specified federal cost limit. The cost limits are either 120 percent of the fair market rent or the prevailing rent in the local market.

Projects that are preserved are required to maintain affordability restrictions for the remaining useful life of the project, which is defined minimally as 50 years. Despite these requirements, property owners may still be able to prepay. First, the owner may prepay the property if no bona fide offer to purchase the property is made. Second, HUD may not provide some of the discretionary monies to priority purchasers in preservation sales. Finally, the overall success of the preservation efforts is contingent on congressional appropriation of sufficient funding to HUD.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) – The NSP program is designed to stabilize neighborhoods in participating cities and unincorporated areas with the greatest need and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes. The county offers various programs for certain activities available to public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations to address these needs.

State Programs

California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) Multiple Rental Housing Programs – This program provides below-market-rate financing to builders and developers of multiple-family and elderly rental housing. Tax-exempt bonds provide below-market mortgage money. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition of properties with 20–150 units.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit – This program provides tax credits to individuals and corporations that invest in low-income rental housing. Tax credits are sold to corporations and people with high tax liability, and proceeds are used to create housing. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition.

California Community Reinvestment Corporation (CCRC) – This private, nonprofit mortgage banking consortium provides long-term debt financing for affordable multi-family rental housing. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition.

County and Local Programs

Riverside County has several programs designed to aid in ensuring there is an adequate affordable and suitable housing made available. The county is frequently the distributing body for federal-level program funds. Economic Development Agency housing programs are offered to meet the goal and objectives of the county's Consolidated Plan and Redevelopment Housing.

Two agencies are responsible for implementing Riverside County's public housing programs. The Housing Authority, which is governed by the Board of Supervisors acting as the Board of Commissioners, assists low- and moderate-income families, including elderly and handicapped persons, throughout the county by operating programs which provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing at affordable costs. The Housing Authority provides rent subsidies, operates public housing complexes and a migrant farmworker center, and owns one family emergency shelter and one shelter for homeless men. The Housing Authority also provides homeownership assistance to low-income families through the Homeownership Empowerment Lease Purchase (HELP) Program, a lease/purchase program which helps eligible families purchase Housing Authority-owned homes. In addition, the Housing Authority has the capacity to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance multi-family housing developments by private developers, with a portion of the units set aside for low-income families and the elderly.

Nonprofit Entities – Nonprofit entities serving Riverside County can be contacted to gauge their interest and ability in preserving current or developing new, affordable units. Some of these organizations already operate facilities that benefit Blythe residents. A partial listing of entities with resources in the Riverside County area includes:

- Alternatives to Domestic Violence
- Shelter from the Storm
- Banning Partners for a Revitalized Community
- Catholic Charities
- Coachella Valley Housing Coalition
- Fair Housing Council of Riverside County
- Family Service Association of Western Riverside County
- Habitat For Humanity
- Lutheran Social Services
- Shared Housing

CHAPTER 5: SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

A. HOMELESS

The Riverside County Department of Public Social Services conducted a point-in-time survey of the county's homeless population in 2013. The survey determined that there are approximately 1,816 persons in the county that were unsheltered adults, and 120 youth and children (ages 24 or under). The homeless population in the county consists of 81.0 percent men. The survey found that the City of Blythe has approximately 55 homeless adult persons on average, which may fluctuate substantially depending on the time of year.

Homeless shelters/housing are not present within the Blythe city limits. However, housing and other homelessness resources are available in the region, which are described below.

In September 2013 the City amended its Zoning Code to include definitions of transitional and supportive housing and emergency shelters, consistent with state law. In addition, the City now permits transitional and supportive housing without a conditional use permit or other discretionary action in all residential zones and subject only to the same development standards that apply to the other permitted residential uses in these zones.

In addition, emergency shelters are permitted without a conditional use permit or other discretionary action in the Service Industrial (I-S) and General Industrial (I-G) zones and subject only to the same development standards that apply to the other permitted uses in these zones, except for standards unique to emergency shelters as set listed below.

The following development and management standards shall apply to emergency shelters as authorized by Section 65583(a)(4) of the California Government Code:

- The maximum number of beds or persons to be served nightly by an emergency shelter shall be 35.
- Off-street parking shall be based upon demonstrated need, provided that parking for an emergency shelter shall not be more than that required for other commercial or industrial uses permitted in the Service Industrial (I-S) and General Industrial (I-G) zones.
- Appropriately sized and located exterior and interior on-site waiting and intake areas shall be provided.
- Appropriate exterior lighting shall be provided.
- On-site management shall be provided.
- Security shall be provided during the hours that the emergency shelter is in operation.
- The maximum length of stay by a homeless person in an emergency shelter shall be six months.
- An emergency shelter shall not be located within 300 feet of another emergency shelter.
- No individual or household shall be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.

The I-S and I-G zones are appropriate for the location of homeless shelters because of their proximity to major arterials, transit services, and job centers. There are currently 350 acres of vacant, I-S land in the city, more than enough to accommodate the 100± homeless persons who could require shelter. With a building coverage maximum of 40.0 percent per lot, it would leave up to more than 6,000,000 square feet of space.

Harmony Lunch Kitchen, a local charity, provides two hot meals a day (breakfast and lunch) free of charge, Monday through Friday, for homeless persons and transients, as well as providing used clothing and free medical care free of charge.

The Salud Health Clinic, also known as the Blythe Family Clinic, provides health services for low-income persons. The facility offers family planning, cancer detection, and gateway for children programs. The gateway program serves children under 18 by offering affordable physicals and immunizations.

The Blythe Office of the Riverside County Mental Health Department offers various services for low-income persons, including the homeless. The department offers, free of charge, therapy services and substance abuse classes.

B. SENIORS

2010 US Census figures show that 8.6 percent of Blythe's population, or approximately 1,190 residents, were seniors over the age of 65, down from 10.0 percent in 2000. In 2010, 17.8 percent of Blythe's population was over 55 years of age. The 2010 Census data also indicates that 12 percent of the seniors residing in Blythe are at or below the poverty level. Approximately 87.2 percent of seniors lived in owner-occupied households, and the remaining 12.0 percent minority in rental units. According to CHAS assessments for 2010, approximately 110 elderly renter households and 190 elderly owner households had housing-related cost burdens, spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

The 2003 area-wide housing study identified the need for additional senior care facilities for the City of Blythe. The study quantified the total demand for various types of senior facilities and suggested that both low income and market rate facilities were needed. According to comments received at Blythe's public hearing in 2005, the city is in need of weekend transportation options for seniors, moderate-income housing for seniors, and legal assistance for seniors. The 2003 study has not been updated.

The City of Blythe currently offers a total of 75 apartment units that are restricted for use by low-income seniors who are 62 years and greater, or disabled persons of any age. The Baldwin Apartment complex contains 40 one-bedroom units. The nearby Squaw Valley is an affordable housing complex, including 33 one-, two-, and three-bedroom units; these are primarily family units with some resources for families with seniors and disabled persons.

Skilled nursing facilities provide the highest level of health care for patients who are no longer able to live at home. Blythe Nursing Care Center is licensed for 50 patients and provides services to Medicare and Medicaid participants.

Indications from several local senior service providers and the area-wide housing study are that home repairs are a largely unmet need. Many seniors who own homes in the older neighborhoods of Blythe have extensive problems with rusting galvanized pipes, clogged sewer pipes, and non-permanent foundations or floors. Also, as described above, the 2003 housing condition survey identified 25.7 percent of housing units in the city needed moderate to major repairs. Although the survey did not identify whether these units were occupied by seniors, at least a portion of these units can be assumed to be occupied by seniors. The condition of the housing stock, combined with the age of Blythe's housing, makes rehabilitation and repairs an important tool in the preservation of housing.

C. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The 2000 Census estimated that a total of 1,495 persons (21.5 percent of the population) between the ages of 16 and 64 had a disability. Of these, 912 are classified as having an employment disability which prevents them from working.

As mentioned above, the Baldwin Apartments and Squaw Valley complex provide dwelling units reserved exclusively for seniors and handicapped, disabled or mobility-impaired individuals.

The Building and Safety Department in the City of Blythe requires compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) measures as part of the building permit, review, issuance, and inspection process.

The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC), a nonprofit with the mission of improving living conditions for low-income families, has built 4,000 homes and apartments. The Desert AIDS Project operates a 39-unit apartment complex called Casas San Miguel located in Cathedral City. This facility serves low-income AIDS-affected individuals as well other special needs groups. Twenty-five of its units are reserved for AIDS patients; the other 14 are reserved for other special needs groups. Casas San Miguel has a mission of providing affordable housing for persons with special needs; on-site integration of social services; and neighborhood rehabilitation and revitalization. The waiting list for its services varies, but is usually three to four months.

D. PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (SENATE BILL 812)

Senate Bill (SB) 812 requires the City to include in the special housing needs analysis the needs of individuals with a developmental disability within the community. According to Section 4512 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, a "developmental disability" means a disability that originates before an individual attains age 18 years, continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual which includes mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. This term shall also include disabling conditions found to be closely related to mental retardation or to require treatment similar to that required for individuals with mental retardation, but shall not include other handicapping conditions that are solely physical in nature.

Many developmentally disabled persons can live and work independently within a conventional housing environment. More severely disabled individuals require a group living environment where supervision is provided. The most severely affected individuals may require an institutional environment where medical attention and physical therapy are provided. Because developmental disabilities exist before adulthood, the first issue in supportive housing for the developmentally disabled is the transition from the person's living situation as a child to an appropriate level of independence as an adult.

The California Department of Developmental Services currently provides community-based services to approximately 243,000 persons with developmental disabilities and their families through a statewide system of 21 regional centers, four developmental centers, and two community-based facilities. The Inland Regional Center is one of 21 regional centers charged by the state of California to provide point of entry to services for people with developmental disabilities. The center is a private, nonprofit community agency that contracts with local businesses to offer a wide range of services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

The following information (**Table 5-1**) from the Inland Regional Center provides a closer look at the disabled population.

Table 5-1						
Developmentally Disabled Residents, By Age						
Zip Code	0-14 Years	15-22 Years	23-54 Years	55-65 Years	65+ Years	Total
92225/92226	33	14	34	5	0	86

Source: Inland Regional Center 2013

There are a number of housing types appropriate for people living with a development disability: rent-subsidized homes, licensed and unlicensed single-family homes, inclusionary housing, Section 8 vouchers, special programs for home purchase, HUD housing, and SB 962 homes. The design of housing-accessibility modifications, the proximity to services and transit, and the availability of group living opportunities represent some of the considerations that are important in serving this needs group. Incorporating ‘barrier-free’ design in all new multi-family housing (as required by California and federal Fair Housing laws) is especially important to provide the widest range of choices for disabled residents. Special consideration should also be given to the affordability of housing, as people with disabilities may be living on a fixed income.

In order to assist in the housing needs for persons with developmental disabilities, the City will implement programs to coordinate housing activities and outreach with the Inland Regional Center, and encourage housing providers to designate a portion of new affordable housing developments for persons with disabilities, especially persons with developmental disabilities, and pursue funding sources designated for persons with special needs and disabilities. Program 2.D.2 describes the City’s efforts to assist those with developmental disabilities and other special needs groups.

E. FARMWORKERS

The 2007-2011 American Community Survey identified 384 persons employed in “agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining” in the city. The City is able to meet the current housing needs of farmworkers with the existing housing stock of single- and multi-family units.

Very little up-to-date formal information about the quality of life and housing exists in the Blythe region. As of 2000, according to the Department of Health and Human Services Department, there were 34,991 migrant or seasonal farmworkers in Riverside County (including cities). The California Employment Development Department (EDD) reports that in 2013 the average hourly wage for farm laborers in the combined Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Metropolitan Statistical Area was \$9.20 an hour. The EDD projects that 9,150 farmworkers will be employed in 2020 in the area.

According to representatives from DACE, the number of farmworkers living in the area, both permanent and migrant, dropped significantly over the last few years, when the recession lowered demand for the work. Currently, many farmers have difficulty finding enough workers, and the majority bus up daily from the City of El Centro to the area for work. These workers are bussed up from the El Centro area for work purposes only, this is not because of a lack of housing. These farm workers choose to live outside of the Blythe area.

In 2005, Riverside County’s Housing Authority purchased a 100-unit migrant farmworker center located at 24-501 School Road in unincorporated Ripley, near Blythe, and received authorization from USDA Rural Development to convert it into a 76-unit year-round residential community. Funded by \$8.5 million in

redevelopment and with the help of a \$3 million Joe Serna Farm Worker Housing Grant, the center was rehabilitated in October 2008.

As of September 2013, DACE reported that there is no additional demand for farmworker rental housing in the Palo Verde Valley, beyond the Ripley Migrant Farm Worker Housing facility. Other housing programs, though not dedicated specifically to farmworker usage, are sufficient, provided through the USDA’s Rural Housing Self Help Program (Section 502) and Desert Rose facility in Ripley. The Riverside County Housing Authority, which converted an abandoned migrant camp into farmworker rental housing, cannot get the units rented. DACE found, however, that there is more demand for farmworker housing in the Palo Verde Valley than there is for permanent housing, preferably ownership units affordable to very low- and low-income households, and housing programs that can help families with low credit achieve homeownership. DACE currently provides housing and educational programs to the farmworking community, to educate them on financing and homeownership, and continues to build single-family homes for ownership, through USDA funding and county and city subsidies. Since there appears to be no market need, additional housing units directed toward farmworkers are planned to be built in Blythe or the immediate surrounding area.

In September 2013 the City amended its Zoning Code to ensure compliance with California Government Code.

F. LARGE HOUSEHOLDS

The 2010 Census estimated that there were 758 households in Blythe with five or more members, 362 of which are renter-occupied, and 396 of which are owner-occupied. Approximately 124 of these large family households who own, and 80 who rent, pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Large families such as these have a special need for three or more bedroom units.

G. FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

According to the 2010 Census, Blythe had a total of 855 female-headed households. Of these, 27.2 percent were below poverty. Furthermore, of the 390 households that were classified as being in poverty, nearly 60.0 percent were female-headed.

Table 5-2 Female-Headed Households in Blythe, 2010		
Householder Type	Number	Percentage
Total Households	4513	100.0%
Total Female-Headed Householders	855	18.9%
Female Heads with Children under 18	647	75.7%
Female Heads without Children under 18	208	24.3%
Total Families Under the Poverty Level ¹	390	11.3%
Female-Headed Households Under the Poverty Level	233	59.7%

Source: US Census 2010

1. Poverty numbers by household type is from ACS 2006–2010.

CHAPTER 6: CONSTRAINTS ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

This section provides information on the City’s non-governmental and governmental constraints unique to the Blythe community that have the potential to inhibit the development, maintenance, or improvement of housing. Various interrelated factors can constrain the ability of the private and public sectors to provide adequate housing and meet the housing needs for all economic segments of the community. These factors can be divided into two categories: (1) non-governmental constraints and (2) governmental constraints. Non-governmental constraints consist of land availability, the environment, vacancy rates, land costs, construction costs, and availability of financing. Governmental constraints consist of land use controls, development standards, processing fees, development impact fees, code enforcement, site improvement costs, development permit and approval processing, and provision for a variety of housing.

A. NON-GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Land Costs

Land costs are one of the major components of housing development costs. Land prices vary to such an extent that it is difficult to give average prices within small geographic regions. Factors affecting the costs of land include overall availability within a given sub-region; environmental site conditions and constraints; public service and infrastructure availability; aesthetic considerations such as views, terrain, and vegetation; the proximity to urban areas; and parcel size. Generally, more remote areas have less expensive land available and larger tracts of land, while smaller, more expensive parcels are located closer to urbanized areas.

While land prices increased rapidly during the last decade through 2005, current land prices have declined during the economic recession that has affected housing and building nationwide. Land costs in the last several years have helped keep the cost of some new housing affordable. While rising land costs tend to directly increase housing costs, declining land costs should give developers more options in serving the affordable housing market segment, recognizing that some land currently held by developers was purchased at substantially higher prices than may be the case now.

While development of vacant land throughout Southern California led to a rapid increase in land values and consequently higher housing costs during the last decade, current land prices have declined during the economic recession that has affected housing and building nationwide.

Land costs in Blythe, like some other rural areas, remained fairly affordable throughout the growth period and remain lower than much of Riverside County and Southern California in general. This is due in part to the abundance of vacant land and the conversion of agricultural land to other uses. This is particularly true regarding residential zones in the central part of the city, where most of the moderate- and lower-income housing exists.

The costs of vacant residential property in Blythe, for lots and home sites, are approximately \$37,500 per acre in the city’s urban core (Landwatch.com 2013). Land costs vary substantially depending on the zone, available infrastructure, and lot improvements. Higher land costs are evident in the northern portion of the city, adjacent to newer tract home developments, near the golf course, and along the Colorado River corridor.

There exists an abundance of urban infill opportunities. However, the practicality of individuals building on these lots is limited to the extent that much of this land lacks paved public access roads and/or is not for sale on an individual lot basis.

Construction Costs

Construction costs for labor and material can have a direct impact on the cost of housing. Building materials alone may account for 40 percent to 50 percent of the home sale price. The cost of construction depends primarily on the cost of materials and labor, which are influenced by market demand. The cost of construction will also depend on the type of unit being built and on the quality of product being produced. The cost of labor is based on a number of factors, including housing demand, the number of contractors in the area, and the unionization of workers. Construction costs for dwelling units vary greatly depending on the size of the unit and whether it is a custom home or part of a larger subdivision.

In the City of Blythe, construction costs for labor and material are relatively high. One reason for high construction costs is due to the availability of building materials, which often have to be delivered from more than 100 miles away. This is typically true for asphalt and cement products that require special hauling procedures, which increases the price, per mile traveled. In addition, labor costs are impacted by the availability of skilled laborers and craftsmen. In Blythe, construction crews and personnel often must be imported from distant metropolitan areas.

Using current pricing sources, the average costs for a newly constructed 2,000-square-foot single-family home (not including land) for the larger Riverside County region would be calculated as shown below.

Item	Cost
Materials	\$114,860
Labor	\$80,355
Equipment	\$2,890
Per Home Costs, Total	\$198,105

Source: Building-cost.net 2013

The demand for new conventionally built dwelling units in Blythe is relatively low, which also increases the cost of construction.

Financing Constraints

Financing costs can impact the ability of potential homebuyers to make a purchase since financing fees such as loans, home owners insurance, and mortgage rates contribute to the overall cost of a home.

Interest rates are determined by national policies and economic conditions, and there is little that local governments can do to affect these rates. Jurisdictions can, however, offer interest rate write-downs to extend home purchase opportunities to lower-income households. In addition, government-insured loan programs may be available to reduce mortgage down-payment requirements.

The subprime mortgage crisis that hit in 2007 chilled financial markets and eliminated the opportunity for many first-time homebuyers to secure financing for home purchases as money lending tightened. The crisis triggered a meltdown in the real estate market as housing values tumbled, vexing the efforts of those holding subprime loans to refinance as loan rates adjusted upward. The inability to refinance many of these subprime loans led to a large increase in bank foreclosures and loan defaults. The mortgage market began to loosen up in mid-2008, but real estate values in Riverside County had already dropped nearly 28.0 percent, creating further problems for homeowners attempting to refinance out of risky loans.

First-time homebuyers are the group most impacted by financing requirements. Current mortgage interest rates for new home purchases have ranged from 3.8 percent to 4.1 percent between 2011 and 2013 for a fixed-rate 30-year loan (rate1st.com). Lower initial rates are available with graduated payment mortgages, adjustable rate mortgages, and buy-down mortgages; however, the subprime crisis has affected the availability of dollars for home mortgages. Variable interest rate mortgages on affordable homes may increase to the point where the interest rate exceeds the cost of living adjustments, which is a constraint on affordability. Although rates are currently relatively low, they can change significantly and substantially impact the affordability of housing stock.

Interest rates at the present time are not a constraint to affordable housing. Financing for both construction and long-term mortgages is generally available in Riverside County subject to normal underwriting standards. A more critical impediment to homeownership involves both the affordability of the housing stock and the ability of potential buyers to fulfill down-payment requirements. Conventional home loans typically require 5.0 percent to 20.0 percent of the sales price as a down payment, which is the largest constraint to first-time homebuyers. This indicates a need for flexible loan programs and a method to bridge the gap between the down payment and a potential homeowner's available funds. The availability of financing for developers under current economic conditions may also pose a constraint on development outside of the City's control.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Environmental and infrastructure issues affect the amount, location, and timing of new residential development. New housing opportunities create challenges regarding public infrastructure extensions and expansions, and encroachment into agricultural land. In addition, the availability of adequate water, public infrastructure such as wells and wastewater treatment facilities, and other public services and facilities can impact the feasibility of new residential development.

Flooding

In order to limit the potential for flooding to occur, the City implements the *Master Plan of Stormwater*, which identifies areas throughout the city that require drainage improvement. Drainage improvements can be cost-prohibitive, but necessary in order to justify construction of residential units in areas where there is a potential for flooding. In particular, Hidden Beaches, Mesa Bluff, the Colorado River Corridor Plan Area, and East Blythe may require drainage improvements to facilitate residential development. However, all housing sites are outside of FEMA-designated flood zones.

Energy Conservation

Housing affordability is also influenced by the cost of energy. Energy rates in California and Riverside County have increased over the last 10 years, but residential rates have leveled out since 2009 (California Public Utilities Commission). Rates remain some of the highest in the country. Thus, increasing energy efficiency is essential, and especially necessary for lower-income residents.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) offers financial assistance for qualified lower-income households to increase energy efficiency in their homes. It also provides additional conservation measures that include the replacement of inefficient water heaters, refrigerators, lighting, windows, and appliances.

Southern California Edison and the Southern California Gas Company also encourage energy efficiency by offering incentives and rebates for the use of energy-efficient appliances, air conditioners, and the more efficient use of fuel.

In addition to conservation measures, solar capacity has also developed within the city. There have been 84 residential solar permits issued. Approximately five of the permits were for entire apartment complexes, as opposed to single-housing units.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

Housing costs can be substantially impacted by the availability of infrastructure. Infrastructure constraints such as lack of adequate water, sanitary sewer lines (or inappropriate soils for septic tanks), electricity, and other essential public utilities and services can preclude development and greatly increase the cost. The primary constraints in Blythe are with regard to the water supply and distribution system, the limited existing sanitary sewer system, and to a lesser degree limited stormwater conveyance facilities.

The City's wastewater treatment plant treats on average 1.3 million gallons per day (MGD) and has an ultimate design capacity of 4.8 MGD. The wastewater treatment plant has excess capacity of 3.5 MGD. With an existing population in the city (not including the prisons, which have their own water and sewer facilities) of 13,225, this means that the City has sewer capacity for an additional 30,045 people. There is more than enough capacity to accommodate the housing need.

Development of the delivery system and connection of existing neighborhoods to the treatment plant continue to be an issue of concern. The City has excess domestic water capacity of 1 MGD. Based on projected daily consumption rates of 218 gallons per capita per day, the City will have sufficient capacity to accommodate an additional 4,500 persons (Blythe 2010 Urban Water Management Plan). Again, this is more than enough to accommodate the housing need. As described above, the City has extended sewer lines to the Palo Verde Community College area and the community of Balzburg, and extended the sewer to the golf course area in 2009. The City has also installed a new water treatment plant facility in 2007 with a 2.2 million gallon steel reservoir. The new water treatment plant replaced wells No. 1 and 16 with two new 1500 gallons per minute groundwater supply wells, filtration treatment equipment, and a reservoir storage tank on one new facility site. The City has demonstrated a commitment to expanding sewer service and assigning funding to the program now and in the future.

As it relates to water production, according to the City of Blythe General Plan 2025, the City has the capacity to generate 7.6 MGD, and has a peak consumption of 6.6 MGD. As discussed above, the City has extended and improved water system infrastructure, and expanded its service area to include areas with deteriorated infrastructure. The City's commitment to long-term expansion of the water system will continue to be key to the provision of housing in the future.

D. GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

This section analyzes the City of Blythe’s development review and approval process, especially with regard to constraints in the development of affordable housing. Although the purpose of regulatory constraints is to protect public health and safety, some constraints become unnecessary obstacles in the development of affordable housing. Governmental constraints are policies, standards, requirements, or actions imposed by the various levels of government upon land and housing ownership and development. Although federal and state agencies play a role in the imposition of governmental constraints, these agencies are beyond the influence of local government and are therefore not addressed in this document.

Building Code

The Blythe Building and Safety Division currently applies the 2010 California Building Codes as well as the Uniform Housing Code to all construction. The City anticipates using the 2013 California codes when they go into effect in January 2014. These codes will not be significantly amended in Blythe to require additional requirements. Building code requirements in the city are not a constraint to the development of housing.

Development Fees

Building permits and development fees, which are adjusted periodically, are based on the individual project’s value and the number of units proposed. The residential development fees schedule is shown in **Table 6-1**. In addition, the city charges sewer connection fees by zone, as depicted in **Table 6-2**. School fees are \$3.20/square foot for residential and \$0.51 for commercial. It is anticipated that these fees may be raised slightly in the near future.

Table 6-1 City of Blythe Development Fee Table	
Type of Fee	Amount
Capital Improvement	
Each Dwelling Unit	\$500.00
Each Trailer Space	\$500.00
Industrial	\$500.10
Commercial	\$500.10
Water Connection	
Residential/Mobile Home Park (per unit)	\$500.00
Commercial (per connection)	\$500.00
Recreational Vehicle Park (per unit)	\$500.00
Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Fee	
Residential (per unit)	\$1,300.00
Mobile Home Park (per unit)	\$1,300.00
Retail Store (each)	\$4,800.00
Bar (each)	\$3,000.00
Motel (per room)	\$500.00
Office (each)	\$3,400.00
Service Station (each)	\$4,200.00

Table 6-1 City of Blythe Development Fee Table	
Type of Fee	Amount
Restaurants (per seat)	\$300.00
Organizations and Churches (each)	\$2,500.00
Laundromats (per washing machine)	\$950.00
Car Wash (each)	\$8,400.00
Schools/Colleges (per ADA)	\$55.00
Recreational Vehicle Park (per unit)	\$750.00
Water Production Facility Expansion Fee	
Residential (per unit)	\$1,500.00
Construction Water Fee	
SFR (per init)	\$50.00
MFR (per init)	\$25.00

Source: City of Blythe adopted fees, through Resolution No. 97-505.

Table 6-2 Sewer Connection Fees	
Zone	Base Rate
I. West Hobsonway	\$1,200.00
II. Mesa Bluff/College	\$2,600.00
III. Riviera Drive	\$3,400.00
IV. Colorado River 500	\$3,400.00
V. Hidden	\$3,200.00
VI. Industrial Area	\$9,000.00

Source: City of Blythe adopted fees, through Resolution No. 97-505.

Compared to other California communities, the City of Blythe’s fees are not excessive, but nonetheless can impact the cost of construction of lower-income projects. In order to encourage the development of lower-income housing, the City Council has the authority to waive some or all of these fees if it is found that the project will be providing low-income housing.

Development Processing and Permit Procedures

State law requires proposed project and development processes to be consistent with the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. The City is also responsible for analyzing a project’s impact under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The following represent the average time frames for various planning applications:

- General Plan Amendment 3–9 months
- Re-zoning 3–9 months
- Tentative Subdivision Map 45–60 days
- Site Design Review (multi-family) 30–60 days
- Building Permit Review for single family 5–10 days

All applications can be processed concurrently. Therefore, the process for a typical housing project, assuming no General Plan Amendment or Re-zone, would typically require 30 to 60 days. Public notice, if required, does not extend processing time. Single-family homes on infill lots are not subject to any planning review, and require only a building permit. The development plan review and approval process consists of a review of development standards for consistency at the staff level, and review and approval by the Planning Commission. The typical processing procedures are listed in **Table 6-3** below.

Table 6-3 Typical Processing Procedures by Project Type			
	Single-Family Unit	Multi-Family Unit	Subdivision
List Typical Approval Requirements	Satisfy building code and zoning code requirements	Generally CUP not required unless a zone change is needed	Zone change Infrastructure requirements
Total Est. Time	1-5 weeks	30-60 days	45-60 days – tentative map 3-9 months – GP or Zoning amendment

Source: City of Blythe 2013

The findings required to approve a project are consistent with all communities in California, and relate to General Plan and Zoning consistency, the physical ability of the site to accommodate the proposed project, and CEQA, as follows:

- A. The proposed Tentative Tract Map is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance and General Plan.
- B. The site is physically suitable for the type and density of development proposed.
- C. The design of the project or the proposed public improvements will not conflict with easements or public rights-of-way acquired by the public at large within or adjacent to the proposed project.
- D. A Mitigated Negative Declaration, in accordance with CEQA, was prepared for the project.
- E. Review of the environmental circumstances regarding this project indicates that no adverse impacts would accrue to wildlife resources from implementation of the project.
- F. The environmental assessment and analysis prepared for this project reflect the independent judgment of the City of Blythe.

General Plan

Blythe’s General Plan 2025 establishes a basis for allowable uses and densities for each residential designation, which are identified in **Table 6-4**.

Table 6-4 Residential General Plan Designations	
Residential Land Use Categories	Density (units to the acre)
Rural Residential (RR)	0-2
Estate Residential (RE)	2.1-4
Low Density Residential (RL-1) (7,800 sf lot)	4.1-5
Low Density Residential (RL-2-72) (7,200 sf lot)	5.1-6
Low Density Residential (RL-2) (6,000 sf lot)	6.1-7
Medium-to-Low Density Residential (RML)	7.1-11
Medium Density Residential (RM)	11.1-14
High Density Residential (RH)	14.1-29
Mobile Home Residential (R/MH)	11.1-14
Other Land Use Categories Allowing Residential	
Downtown	22 (none on 1 st fl.)
Hobsonway	22
General Commercial (GC)	22
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)	22 (none on 1 st fl.)
Community Commercial (CC)	22 (CUP; none on 1 st fl.)
Planned Development (PD)	Varies
Specific Plan Resort (SPR)	Varies

Source: City of Blythe General Plan 2025: Land Use Element

In addition the General Plan allows for mixed-use residential in all commercial zones at a maximum density of 22 dwelling units to the acre, as indicated in **Table 6-4**.

The Housing Element is reflective of the General Plan, and its policies and programs are consistent with it. Due to the passage of Assembly Bill 162 relating to flood protection in 2007, the City may be required to amend the Community Safety and Seismic Safety Element and the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element of the General Plan. If amendments are needed, the Housing Element will be amended to be consistent with these elements. Generally, as required by law, the City will continue to review any amendments to other elements of the General Plan, or to the Housing Element, to ensure that internal consistency is maintained.

Zoning Ordinance

Based upon the City’s General Plan, the City’s Zoning Ordinance defines in more detail the range of density of residential units allowable in each residential zone and other important factors such as the required lot area per dwelling unit and the specific uses allowable for each zone classification. **Table 6-5** identifies the zoning standards applicable in residential zones.

**Table 6-5
Residential Standards**

Land Use Category	Standards							
	Units/Acre	Lot Area (sf)	Min. Unit Size	Max. Bldg. Height	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback	Parking
RR	0-2						25	2
RE	2.1-4	9,600	1,250	2 stories			25	2
RL-1	4.1-5	7,800	800 SF	2 stories	25	5	25	2
RL-1-72	5.1-6	7,200		2 stories	20	5	20	2
RL-2	6.1-7	6,000		2 stories	20	5	20	2
RML	7.1-11	7,800	350 Bachelor 400 Efficiency 500 1-Bdrm. 600 2-Bdrm. 800 SF Dwelling	3 stories	15	15	15	2
RM	11.1-14	10,000	350 Bachelor 400 Efficiency 500 1-Bdrm. 600 2-Bdrm. 800 SF Dwelling	3 stories	15	15	15	1.5
RH	14.1-29	15,000*	350 Bachelor 400 Efficiency 500 1-Bdrm. 600 2-Bdrm.	3 stories	15	10	15	1.5

Source: Blythe Municipal Code
*40 percent maximum lot coverage

The Zoning Ordinance does not include standards which are prohibitive or otherwise hinder the development of housing. The R-M zone allows 14 units per acre with 40 percent building coverage in structures of three stories. Assuming an average unit size of 1,200 square feet, and allowing for open space and surface parking requirements, a density of 14 units per acre can be achieved within one- and two-story buildings. Therefore, the City's development standards do not constrain the development of affordable housing.

The Zoning Ordinance also includes a listing of permitted uses. **Table 6-6** indicates whether each development type is a permitted use (PU) or whether it requires conditional approval (CUP). Note that residential uses are also allowed in certain other zones (listed in **Table 6-5**, above) but only as part of mixed-use facilities, and are thus not incorporated in the table below.

**Table 6-6
Allowable Uses in the Residential Zoning Category***

Zone/GPD	Multi-Family	Single Family	Two Family	Single-occupancy Unit/ Efficiency Apartment	Rest Home	Residential Child Care Facilities (less than 6)	Residential Child Care Facilities (7 to 12)	Emergency Shelters	Transitional and Supportive Housing*	Mobile Home/ RV Parks
Rural Residential (RR)		PU	PU		CUP	PU	PU			
Estate Residential (RE)		PU				PU	PU			CUP
Low Density Residential (RL-1) (7,800 sf lot)		PU				PU	PU			CUP
Low Density Residential (RL-2-72) (7,200 sf lot)		PU				PU	PU			
Low Density Residential (RL-2) (6,000 sf lot)		PU				PU	PU			
Medium-to-Low Density Residential (RML)	PU	PU	PU	PU		PU	PU			CUP
Medium Density Residential (RM)	PU	PU	PU	PU		PU	PU			CUP
High Density Residential (RH)	PU			PU	PU	PU	PU			CUP
Mobile Home Residential (R/MH)										PU
Planned Development (PD)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP					
Downtown	CUP									
General Commercial (GC)		CUP	CUP			CUP				
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)		CUP	CUP			CUP				
Community Commercial (CC)		CUP	CUP			CUP				
Specific Plan Resort (SPR)										
Service Industrial (I-S) and General Industrial (I-G)				PU				PU		

Source: Blythe Municipal Code

*Transitional and supportive housing are allowed without a conditional use permit or other discretionary action in all residential zones and subject only to the same development standards that apply to the other permitted residential uses in these zones. The City has included Program 2.D.3 to revise the City’s zoning code to comply with SB 2 requirements.

Permitting Fees

All jurisdictions charge for the processing of applications. If these fees are excessive, they can have a significant impact on a developer’s ability to provide affordable housing. **Table 6-7** lists the City’s processing fees for planning applications.

Table 6-7 City of Blythe Fee Table	
Application	Fee
Lot Line Adjustment	\$338
Certificate of Compliance	\$555
Tentative Parcel Map	\$2,382
Tentative Tract Map	Deposit
Final Tract Map	\$2,623
Revised or Amended Map	\$568
Change of Zone	\$4,436
General Plan Amendment	Deposit
Conditional Use Permit	\$3,573
Planned Development	Deposit
Specific Plan	Deposit
Site Plan Approval	\$3,573
Environmental Initial Study/Negative Declaration	\$6,709
Environmental Impact Report	Deposit Plus 15% administration fee

Source: City of Blythe, 2013

Table 6-8 identifies the typical development fees for single-family and multi-family housing. The fees for a single-family unit make up about 14 percent of the total construction costs, and for a multi-family units, fees constitute just 10 percent of total construction costs, not a significant percentage when compared with other Southern California jurisdictions.

Table 6-8 Total Processing and Impact Fees for Single- and Multi- Family Units in Blythe			
Housing Type	Total Fees	Estimated Development Cost per Unit	Estimated Proportion of Fees to Development Costs per Unit
Single-family home	\$32,900	\$230,000	14%
Multi-family Unit	\$32,900	\$400,000	10%

Source: City of Blythe 2013; Building-Cost.net 2013; PMC 2013

On-Site and Off-Site Improvements

The installation of curbs, gutters, street lighting, and sidewalks, or the repair of such existing street improvements to city standards, is required along the street frontage of any building site as a condition precedent to issuing any building permit, in accordance with Municipal Code standards. In many cases, off-site improvements and/or mitigations may also be required, such as flood control improvements. Infrastructure costs are incorporated into the total residential development project costs.

In all cases where a development impact fee is charged, the City will set forth specific amounts of the fee, lay out the benefit and impact areas on which the development impact fee is imposed, list the specific public improvements to be financed, describe the estimated cost of these facilities, describe the reasonable relationship between this fee and the various types of new developments, and set forth time for payment. To the extent that the development impact fee includes components for financing projects already included in fees collected under other City ordinances (i.e., sewer connection, water connection), such other fees, when paid, are credited against the appropriate components of the development impact fee. Fees are re-assessed on a biannual basis to determine whether the fee amounts are reasonably related to the burden of developments and whether the described public facilities are still needed.

Effective January 2006, SB 1087 requires water and sewer providers to grant priority for service allocations to proposed developments that include units affordable to lower-income households. Pursuant to these statutes, upon adoption of its Housing Element, the City of Blythe will immediately deliver the element to local water and sewer providers, along with a summary of its regional housing needs allocation.

Subdivision Improvement Requirements

All subdivisions in the City of Blythe must conform to the requirements of the City of Blythe Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, the State Subdivision Map Act, and applicable Conditions of Approval for the project. Subdivision standards for minimum lot size, width, and depth of lots, and parking standards are consistent with those utilized throughout Riverside County. Density bonuses will allow for smaller lots or higher densities in order to facilitate affordable housing goals. The established minimum City public street improvement requirements for residential subdivisions are half-width right of way dedications, curb and gutter (as determined necessary), and five-foot sidewalk adjacent to the curb (as determined necessary). These requirements are typical of all California jurisdictions.

Constraints on Development of Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Per California State Senate Bill 520, this element must analyze potential and actual government constraints specifically on the development of housing for persons with disabilities. The ADA is supported at the state and local level.

Reasonable Accommodation

The City's Building Department requires compliance with ADA standards as part of the building permit review and inspection process, as does every other community in the country. The City has no requirements which would constrain the development of housing for disabled persons—housing for disabled persons, whether in a group setting, apartment or condominium project, or a single-family home, is not considered any differently than housing for any other member of the community. There are no requirements for concentration of residential care facilities; no site planning requirements that constrain housing for persons with disabilities; the Zoning Ordinance defines “family” consistent with the federal definition, as one or more individuals in a household; and there are no special parking requirements for any and all housing types that serve persons with disabilities.

The City amended its Zoning Code in September 2013 to include a procedure for persons requesting a reasonable accommodation.

Emergency Shelters

New legislation (SB 2 (Cedillo, 2007)) (SB 2) requires jurisdictions to allow emergency shelters without a conditional use permit. The California Health and Safety Code (Section 50801) defines an emergency shelter as “housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person. No individual or households may be denied emergency shelter because of an inability to pay.”

The City’s Zoning Ordinance currently classifies an emergency shelter as a shelter for homeless persons or victims of domestic abuse which provides accommodations for persons on a transient basis. The City of Blythe allows for emergency shelters in several industrial zones within the city including IG and IS and requires that they be subject to a conditional use permit for approval. In order to comply with SB 2, the City will (1) add the emergency shelters as a classification to the Zoning Code in accordance with the definition as stated in this document; and (2) list these as permitted uses within residential zones.

The City amended its Zoning Code in September 2013 to comply with state law requirements.

Supportive and Transitional Housing

Pursuant to SB 2, transitional and supportive housing types are required to be treated as residential uses and subject only to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone. In order to comply with SB 2, the City will list these as permitted uses within zones allowing residential uses.

Supportive housing is defined by Section 50675.14 of the Health and Safety Code as housing with linked on- or off-site services with no limit on the length of stay and that is occupied by a target population as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 53260 (i.e., low-income person with mental disabilities, AIDS, substance abuse, or chronic health conditions, or persons whose disabilities originated before the age of 18). Services linked to supportive housing usually focuses on retaining housing, living and working in the community, and/or health improvement.

Transitional housing is defined in Section 50675.2 of the Health and Safety Code as rental housing for stays of at least six months but where the units are recirculated to another program recipient after a set period. It may be designated for a homeless individual or family transitioning to permanent housing. This housing can take many structural forms such as group housing and multi-family units and may include supportive services to allow individuals to gain necessary life skills in support of independent living.

Although the City amended its Zoning Code in September 2013 to comply with state law requirements, to further address the requirements of SB 2, the City has included Program 2.D3 to treat transitional and supportive housing as a residential use that is only subject to the same requirements in the same zone..

Second Units

Second units are self-contained residential units that are one of the following:

- Set aside within a larger single-family home, such as a separate basement or attic apartment.
- Attached to a primary residence, such as an apartment above an attached garage.
- Smaller separate units built on the same lot as single-family homes.

Second units—also called secondary units, accessory dwelling units, granny flats, carriage houses and in-law apartments—can be an important source of low-cost rental housing for small households in many communities. They can provide an opportunity for renters to enjoy the advantages of living in established homeownership

communities, including good schools and safe and quiet neighborhoods. In addition, they can provide affordable options for older adults to live in certain communities in which they have better access to amenities and transit.

Section 65852.2 (second-unit law) of the Government Code requires local governments with a local second-unit ordinance to ministerially consider second-unit applications as of July 1, 2003; and local governments without a local second-unit ordinance or a local ordinance not in compliance with subsections (a) or (c) of second-unit law should ministerially consider second-unit applications in accordance with state standards.

Secondary dwelling units are not currently defined within the Blythe Zoning Code. Program 1.A.2 is proposes to amend the City's Zoning Code to allow second units ministerially in all residential zones.

Code Enforcement

The City utilizes a computer tracking system for code compliance violations. First, a violation, when reported, is entered into the system. The Code Enforcement Department staff schedules an inspection within 24 hours or less, and determines whether there is a code violation and categorizes the violation. A notice of violation or notice of public nuisance will be issued depending on the type of violation. If the problem is not corrected within the given time frame a citation will then be issued. Compliance is usually achieved through the first notice, but a second notice can be sent if the owner does not comply. This procedure is typical of all Southern California cities, and does not impose undue restrictions on land owners or tenants.

CHAPTER 7: STRATEGIES FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

A. REGIONAL HOUSING NEED

HCD predicts housing needs based on a statistical analysis of growth in California, and the state’s need for additional housing for the time period encompassed in each Housing Element update. For this planning period, 2014–2021, HCD developed growth estimates and allocated them to Council of Governments, including SCAG, which is responsible for Riverside County. This allocation is termed the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). State law requires local jurisdictions to plan for the number of units for each income type contained in the RHNA through goals, policies, and programs in the Housing Element. **Table 7-1** provides the RHNA allocation for the City of Blythe from 2014 to 2021.

Table 7-1 City of Blythe Regional Housing Needs Assessment 2014–2021 Planning Period	
Income Category	2014–2021 RHNA
Extremely Low	45
Very Low	46
Low	64
Moderate	75
Above Moderate	172
Total	402

Source: SCAG 2012

B. INVENTORY OF LAND AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING

The city contains an abundance of developable land for residential uses, including affordable housing, across a range of densities. To be conservative, this inventory considers those parcels that are zoned for residential uses only, despite the City’s policy to permit high density residential in all commercial zones. In addition, the inventory only considers parcels of adequate size or that could be assembled into larger parcels.

The specific parcels included in this inventory, their size, and units allowable at the maximum density are presented in **Table 7-2** below. The maps corresponding to these parcels are provided in **Figure 1**.

Table 7-2 Land Inventory					
APN	Zone	GP	Acres	Capacity	Existing Use
845-030-002	R-H	High	0.53	15	Vacant
845-030-003	R-H	High	0.98	29	Vacant
851-120-008	R-H	High	1.88	55	Vacant
851-130-025	R-H	High	1.94	56	Vacant
851-130-028	R-H	High	0.32	9	Vacant
851-130-030	R-H	High	0.81	24	Vacant
851-130-031	R-H	High	0.32	9	Vacant
<i>Subtotal</i>			6.78	197	
833-260-003	R-M	Medium	80.0	1,600	Vacant
833-260-004	R-M	Medium	80.0	1,600	Vacant
833-260-005	R-M	Medium	26.16	366	Vacant
857-190-038	R-M	Medium	15.45	216	Vacant
851-080-021	R-M	Medium	1.65	23	Vacant
854-050-002	R-M	Medium	17.31	242	Vacant
857-190-022	R-M	Medium	0.17	2	Vacant
857-190-024	R-M	Medium	0.24	3	Vacant
857-190-031	R-M	Medium	0.48	7	Vacant
869-080-010	R-M	Medium	0.55	8	Vacant
<i>Subtotal</i>			222.01	4,067	
842-031-007	R-L-2	Low	8.5	59	Vacant
854-110-012	R-L-1	Low	14.5	73	Vacant
842-060-034	R-L-2	Low	8.5	60	Vacant
842-080-031	R-L-2	Low	10.6	75	Vacant
836-050-017	R-L-1	Low	4.7	24	Vacant
842-070-029	R-L-2	Low	4.8	34	Vacant
836-050-015	R-L-1	Low	12.0	60	Vacant
851-090-015	R-L-1-72	Low	6.9	42	Vacant
851-090-014	R-L-1-72	Low	7.2	43	Vacant
842-070-028	R-L-2	Low	1.9	13	Vacant
<i>Subtotal</i>			79.6	483	
Total			308.39	4,747	

Source: City of Blythe

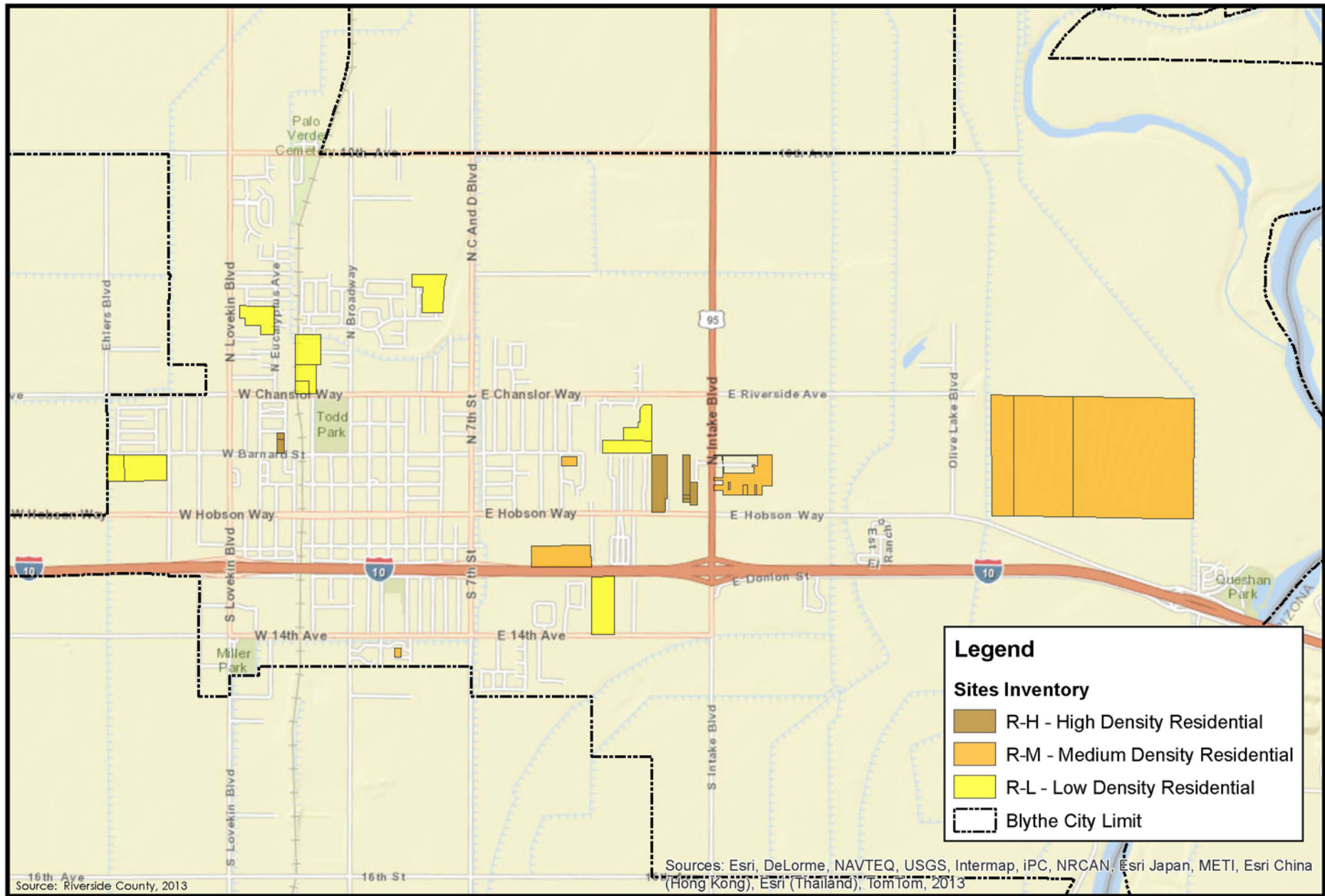


Figure 1
 Sites Inventory Map
 PMC®

The City has approved two projects for higher density development: the Agate Senior Housing Project, which proposed 81 units on 4.03 acres of R-M designated land; and Tentative Tract Map 34792, which includes 16 units on 1.59 acres. These projects demonstrate that the R-M designation, and a density range of 10 to 20 units per acre, can accommodate affordable housing units.

As previously stated, land cost in Blythe is \$37,500 per acre. At a density of 14 units per acre, this equates to \$2,678 per unit; for single-family units at a density of five units per acre, the cost equates to \$7,500 per lot. DACE, which builds affordable housing in Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley, estimates construction costs for affordable multi-family housing units at approximately \$90,000 to \$120,000 per unit, at a density of about 14 units per acre, and single-family affordable units at \$170,000 to \$180,000 per unit, without the cost of land. When added to land cost, this represents a total cost per unit of \$93,500 to \$123,500 per unit for multiple-family units and \$177,000 to \$187,000 for single-family units. DACE funds these projects through tax credit financing.

DACE further reports that there is no demand for farmworker rental housing in the Palo Verde Valley. The County Housing Authority, which converted an abandoned migrant camp into farmworker rental housing, cannot get the units rented. DACE finds that the need for farmworker housing in the Palo Verde Valley is for permanent housing, preferably ownership units, affordable to very low- and low-income households.

In addition, as discussed in the Housing Prices section, the median cost of single-family homes in Blythe is \$130,280, which is affordable to very low- and low-income households.

Although **Table 7-2** does not include all available parcels within the city, the listed parcels are more than sufficient to meet the city’s regional housing need. The city’s allocation of 75 units for moderate-income households and 172 units for above moderate-income households will be accommodated through market rate housing, in the low density residential land use designations.

C. COMPARISON OF REGIONAL HOUSING NEED AND RESIDENTIAL SITES CAPACITY

Table 7-3 compares the City of Blythe’s RHNA to the site inventory capacity.

Table 7-3 Comparison of Regional Housing Need and Residential Sites Capacity 2014–2021 Planning Period			
Income Category	2013–2021 RHNA	Site Inventory Capacity	Surplus
Extremely Low	45	197	42
Very Low	46		
Low	64		
Moderate	75	4,067	3,992
Above Moderate	172	483	311
Total	402	4,747	4,345

Source: City of Blythe, November 2013; SCAG 2012

D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

The cost of housing includes not only the rent but also utility costs. Higher utility expenses reduce affordability. Building affordable homes is not the same as making homes affordable to live in. Cheaply built homes invite callbacks, complaints, and discomfort, and they waste energy. Therefore, additional first costs to improve energy efficiency do not make housing less affordable in the long run. Energy efficiency in affordable housing, more than any other building sector, makes a critical impact on the lives of tenants. According to HUD, utility bills burden the poor and can cause homelessness. Table 5-3 summarizes available programs available in Riverside County and the region related to energy conservation that can be considered and engaged in the production of affordable housing.

Table 5-3 Energy Conservation Programs			
Housing Program	Program Intent/Description	Eligible Activities	Funding Source
Utility Assistance Program	Low-income households are assisted with utility expenses. Several resources are leveraged to provide each consumer with maximum assistance.		
241(a) Rehabilitation Loans for Multi-Family Projects	Provides mortgage insurance for improvements, repairs, or additions to multi-family projects.	Energy conservation Multi-family rehabilitation	HUD
Community Development Block Grant Entitlements	Provides formula funds to metropolitan cities and urban counties to support the development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities.	Acquisition Infrastructure improvements Group homes/homeless and transitional housing Housing preservation and rehabilitation New construction (if completed by nonprofit groups)/self-help housing Public services and community facilities Landlord/tenant mediation Accessibility retrofit and energy conservation Administration	HUD
Community Facilities Loans	Provides loan and loan guarantees to fund the construction, enlargement, or improvement of community facilities in rural areas, towns, and cities.	Community facilities Infrastructure/public works	Rural Housing Service
Rural Housing Preservation Grants	Supports the rehabilitation and repair of homeownership and rental housing for very low- and low-income households living in rural substandard housing.	Rehabilitation Construction Preservation of affordable housing Energy conservation	Rural Housing Service

**Table 5-3
Energy Conservation Programs**

Housing Program	Program Intent/Description	Eligible Activities	Funding Source
CaIHOME	Loans and grants to local public agencies and nonprofit developers to assist individual households through deferred payment loans. Direct, forgivable loans to assist development of projects involving multiple-ownership units, including single-family subdivisions.	Acquisition Energy conservation Infrastructure development New construction single-family	HCD
DOE Energy Weatherization Assistance Program	Reduces the heating and cooling costs for low-income families by improving energy efficiency of their homes. Focuses on low-income seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with children. Assistance includes (1) in-home energy education; (2) energy-related home repairs; (3) blower door-guided air sealing; (4) heat system safety tests, repair, and tune; (5) duct insulation and sealing; (6) attic insulation; and (7) hot water savings measures.	Energy conservation Rehabilitation and repair	California Department of Community Services and Development
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	The LIHEAP block grant is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and provides financial assistance and home weatherization. This is accomplished through three components: (1) The Weatherization Program which provides free weatherization services to improve the energy efficiency of homes including attic insulation, weatherstripping, minor housing repairs, and related conservation measures; (2) the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) which provides financial assistance to eligible households to offset the costs of heating or cooling dwellings; and (3) the Energy Crisis Intervention Program which provides payments for weather-related emergencies.	Financial assistance Energy conservation	California Department of Community Services and Development
Neighborhood Housing Services	NHS is a three-way partnership among neighborhood residents, local government, and local businesses. Neighborhood Reinvestment Group provides direct technical assistance, expendable grants, and capital grants to NHS, which makes loans for rehabilitation.	Rehabilitation Energy conservation Community services/facilities	Neighborhood Reinvestment Group

**Table 5-3
Energy Conservation Programs**

Housing Program	Program Intent/Description	Eligible Activities	Funding Source
Weatherization Program	Provides weatherization services and assistance through grants and financial assistance. Activities may include energy conservation measures, weatherization such as weatherstripping, water heater wrap, insulation of various home components, and financial assistance.	Weatherization rehabilitation	Southern California Gas, DOE, WEER, LIHEAP

Source: HUD, CSD, HCD, SoCal Edison

CHAPTER 8: HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS FOR THE PLANNING PERIOD 2013–2021

Goal 1 **Provide housing to meet the present and future needs of residents in the City of Blythe and provide a fair share of the area housing needs, within identified governmental, market, economic, and natural constraints.**

Policy 1.A **On a citywide basis, increase the number of housing units to meet the need for additional housing during the 2013–2021 period.**

Program 1.A.1 In an effort to comply with Government Code Section 65915 and Senate Bill (SB) 1818, the City will amend its Zoning Code to be consistent with state density bonus law.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: February 2015
Funding: General Fund

Program 1.A.2 In order to comply with Assembly Bill (AB) 1866, the City will define secondary dwelling units and permit them via a ministerial action (by right) in all single-family residential zones.
Responsible Department: Planning Department
Schedule: February 2015
Funding: General Fund

Policy 1.B **Ensure that adequate infrastructure is available to facilitate development that will provide existing and future residences with reliable utility services.**

Program 1.B.1 Monitor the City’s potable water-generating capacity and its potable water distribution system in order to increase the water-generating capacity, when necessary, to meet Blythe’s long-term housing expansion needs, and to provide an adequate supply of potable water to residences citywide.
Responsible Department: Public Works
Schedule: Ongoing, throughout the planning period
Funding: General Fund

Program 1.B.2 Monitor the City’s sewer system and treatment capacity in order to increase the sewer system network, as necessary, to meet Blythe’s long-term housing expansion needs, through grants and loans from state and federal programs.
Responsible Department: Public Works
Schedule: Ongoing, throughout the planning period
Funding: General Fund

Policy 1.C **Enforce the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and/or the California Building Code, and encourage the addition of energy-efficient construction techniques beyond the requirements of these codes.**

- Program 1.C.1 Enforce state laws requiring that all new (non-mobile home) housing units are built in compliance with the new requirements of Title 24, which ensure much greater energy efficiency, and explore various methods of creating incentives and/ requirements to build energy-efficient low-income housing. Such methods could include adopting building codes and landscape ordinances that promote energy and water efficiency, and offering reduced or no development costs for those programs that have been designed to maximize energy efficiency in all new residential development. This will ensure that utility bills, particularly those for cooling of new units, will be affordable to lower-income persons. The City shall make information available from utility purveyors on energy conservation programs available at City Hall and the library.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Continuous
Funding: General Fund
- Program 1.C.2 The City shall work with Southern California Edison (SCE) and CVAG to promote the Green for Life program, a program that provides new tools, training, policies, and guidance on how to become more energy efficient, save money, and reduce the carbon footprint. The City will provide brochures and information regarding workshops at City Hall and at the library.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Continuous
Funding: General Fund
- Policy 1.D Ensure fair, decent, and safe living conditions for city residents regardless of age, sex, family composition, race, ethnicity, religion, disability status, or income.**
- Program 1.D.1 Support and enforce fair housing laws and policies by referring discrimination complaints to the Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA), which maintains the area's clearinghouse for such complaints. Data and information on the EDA's programs is maintained at City Hall and available on the City's website. Brochures are available at City Hall and other community locations.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Continuous
Funding: General Fund
- Goal 2 Work to provide affordable, quality housing for lower income and special needs groups, and those who otherwise would have difficulty affording housing at market rates.**
- Policy 2.A Increase the quality of homeownership options among extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households, especially among overcrowded households.**
- Program 2.A.1 Support self-help programs for lower-income households and provide assistance where possible in the construction of three self-help homes within the city annually through coordination and cooperation with Habitat for Humanity, DACE, and other organizations, and provide information on these programs at City Hall and the library.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Assist as projects are processed through the Development Services Department
Funding: General Fund
-

- Program 2.A.2 Analyze and update various existing programs for lower-income homebuyers that include Mortgage Credit Certificate Programs, First-Time Home Buyer, and various other existing assistance programs, and provide information on these programs at City Hall and the library. Ensure that programs are receiving the maximum utilization by lower-income residents of Blythe.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Ongoing, 2013-2021
Funding: General Fund, Riverside County
- Program 2.A.3 Identify zoning to encourage and facilitate housing suitable for extremely low-income households, such as supportive housing and single-room occupancy units. The City will encourage the development of housing for extremely low-income households through a variety of activities such as performing outreach to housing developers on at least an annual basis, providing financial (when feasible) or in-kind technical assistance or land write-downs, providing expedited processing, identifying grant and funding opportunities, applying for or supporting applications for funding on an ongoing basis, reviewing and prioritizing local funding at least twice in the planning period, and/or offering additional incentives beyond the density bonus.
Responsible Department: Planning Department
Schedule: Ongoing, as projects are processed through the Development Services Department and annual outreach with local developers
Funding: General Fund
- Program 2.A.4 The City shall pursue available and appropriate state and federal funding sources to support efforts to meet new construction needs of extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income households and assist in addressing the needs of households overpaying for housing costs and/or living in an overcrowded situation. Appropriate sources of funding will be determined on a case-by case basis.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Ongoing, monitor NOFAs on an annual basis.
Funding: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (HCD), Downtown Rebound Program (HCD), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) (HCD), Multifamily Housing Program (HCD), Housing Finance Agency, HELP Program, HUD Programs (Section 221(d), Section, Section 811 (persons with disabilities)), Federal Home Loan Bank, Housing Programs, Tax Exempt Bonds, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (state and federal)
- Policy 2.B Meet the various housing and related service needs of lower-income seniors at a local level.**
- Program 2.B.1 Coordinate with the Desert Roadrunner to ensure that public transportation needs of seniors are adequately met. Ensure that seniors have adequate access to needed medical services, shopping, and other amenities from their residences.
Responsible Department: Development Services and Desert Roadrunner
Schedule: 2014 and ongoing
Funding: General Fund
-

Program 2.B.2 Increase participation in the Senior Home Repair Grant run by the EDA. (This program provides emergency and minor repairs to address health and safety concerns that include improvements for handicapped accessibility, repairs to plumbing, electricity, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and roof repairs.) This program will strive to rehabilitate approximately five homes annually with support of the EDA. The City will distribute EDA brochures to senior centers, medical offices, and churches to heighten awareness of the program.

Responsible Department: Development Services, Riverside EDA

Schedule: 2013–2021

Funding: Senior Home Repair Grant

Policy 2.C Increase the supply of shelter options for the homeless.

Program 2.C.1 The City shall cooperate with neighboring cities, the County, and other agencies in the development of programs aimed at providing homeless shelters and related services.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Schedule: 2013–2021, meet with neighboring cities and the County annually to discuss homeless issues

Funding: General Fund

Policy 2.D Meet the housing needs of persons with disabilities.

Program 2.D.1 SB 520 requires residential care facilities of six or fewer persons to be permitted in all residential zones. Currently, residential care homes with six or fewer persons are permitted in some zones with a conditional use permit. The City will revise the current regulations to meet state law requirements. The City will amend the Zoning Code to define group homes and allow for group homes with six or fewer persons by right in all residential zones subject only to the same restriction in that zone, and will allow larger licensed residential care facilities of seven or more persons in the Service Industrial (IS) and General Industrial (IG) zone with a conditional use permit. Additionally, the City will amend the Zoning Code to update its definition of family to be consistent with current housing law.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Schedule: February 2015

Funding: General Fund

Program 2.D.2 The City will work with the Inland Regional Center to implement an outreach program that informs families within the city on housing and services available for persons with developmental disabilities. The program could include the development of an informational brochure, include information on services on the City’s website, and provide housing-related training for individuals/families through workshops, as funding and staffing permit.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Schedule: Develop an outreach program by February 2015

Funding: General Fund

- Program 2.D.3 The City will amend the Zoning Code to ensure that supportive and transitional housing are treated as residential uses subject only to the same restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type in the same zone.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Amend the code by February 2015
Funding: General Fund
- Goal 3** **Facilitate and promote renovations and replacement housing as necessary to upgrade the city’s inventory of substandard and dilapidated houses, mobile homes, motels, apartments, and other seasonal, temporary, or permanent dwelling units.**
- Policy 3.A** **Upgrade the quality of housing through renovations, remodeling, and/or replacement as needed in order to reduce the number of substandard and dilapidated houses in the city.**
- Program 3.A.1 Identify funding mechanisms to use for the purchase and rehabilitation of fixer-up homes by lower-income families. Strive to conserve or rehabilitate five homes annually for lower-income households.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: 2013–2021, annually
Funding: USDA Housing Preservation Grant funds
- Program 3.A.2 Continue to provide funds to leverage the rehabilitation of lower-income owner- occupied homes through the Riverside County EDA’s Home Improvement Program and Housing Preservation Grant. Strive to rehabilitate an average of eight lower-income, owner-occupied homes annually.
Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency
Schedule: Continuous
Funding: Riverside County
- Program 3.A.3 Continue code enforcement action on substandard motels and apartments as complaints occur or inspection demonstrates through General Fund budget allocations.
Responsible Department: Code Enforcement
Schedule: Ongoing
Funding: General Fund
- Program 3.A.4 Monitor units at risk (Table 4-9) to ensure that their affordability is preserved. Annually contact property owners, gauge interest and identify nonprofit partners, and pursue funding and preservation strategy on a project basis. The City will work with tenants of at-risk units and provide them with education regarding tenant rights and conversion procedures. The City will also provide tenants in at-risk projects with information regarding Section 8 rent subsidies through the Housing Authority and other affordable housing opportunities in the city.
Responsible Department: Development Services
Schedule: Ongoing, as projects approach expiration. Annually contact property owners
Funding: Funding for preservation could include: HUD financing through LIHPRHA, the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Section 202/811 Capital Grants, California Housing Finance Agency Mortgage Loans, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits
-

Quantified Objectives

As mentioned above, a number of housing units in the city are of older construction, and require either rehabilitation or conservation in order to be maintained as viable dwelling units. As such, the City has implemented programs to provide funding and assistance in the rehabilitation of housing units, which will continue through this planning period.

Table 7-2 Quantified Objectives (2013–2021)						
Income Category	Extremely Low	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
New Construction	45	46	64	75	172	402
Rehabilitation ¹	5	5	10			20
Preservation ²			44			44

Source: City of Blythe 2013

¹ *Rehabilitation estimates are based on the availability of funding, primarily at the state or federal level.*

² *The City has one project at risk of expiring in the next 10 years.*