

CATALYZING ATTAINABLE HOUSING IN MONTEREY COUNTY

County Fast-Track Permitting Recommendations



Supervisor Kate Daniels, Monterey County Board of Supervisors
RE: **Fast-Track Permitting Pilot to Accelerate Attainable Housing**
April 28, 2025

Dear Supervisor Daniels,

Thank you for your leadership in advancing solutions to Monterey County's critical attainable housing shortage. Building on the County's \$100,000 investment in Regenerative California's Attainable Housing Initiative, we respectfully propose an additional **\$100,000 County investment** directed to Monterey County's Housing and Community Development Department to pilot a **Fast-Track Permitting Process** for missing-middle housing projects.

This pilot would serve two primary objectives: (1) **expedite near-term attainable housing projects** for households earning 80–150% of Area Median Income (AMI), and (2) **test innovative permitting strategies**, including the application of AI tools and cross-agency coordination, that could scale into a permanent, countywide fast-track program.

Background:

- Monterey County's middle-income workforce, families, and seniors face an urgent shortage of attainable housing options.
- Streamlined and efficient permitting processes are essential to reducing development costs, accelerating project timelines, and strengthening incentives for attainable housing production.
- Planning departments across California are piloting innovative strategies—such as third-party reviews, pre-approved housing models, and digital tools—that offer valuable models for streamlining approvals and expanding the supply of housing.

Recommended Scope:

- Target eligible projects serving 80–150% AMI that meet defined sustainability and quality standards.
- Invite applications for housing models to be pre-approved to streamline future production.
- Engage qualified third-party firms to provide building code and zoning compliance reviews.
- Explore and test AI-assisted review tools to automate code compliance checks and streamline application processing.
- Establish clear service-level agreements (e.g., permit decisions within 10–15 business days) while maintaining County authority for final approvals.
- Facilitate coordination among County departments and collaborate with other local and regional jurisdictions to align standards, share best practices, and support scalable solutions.
- Track pilot metrics, document lessons learned, and produce an evaluation report to guide a permanent program design.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Directly enable 3–5 initial pilot projects to break ground
- Permitting timelines reduced from 6–12 months to 2–4 months.
- Proof of concept for scalable fast-track permitting strategies, including AI-enabled efficiencies.
- A stronger pipeline of shovel-ready attainable housing projects aligned with County goals.

This strategic pilot offers a unique opportunity to accelerate urgently needed housing solutions, foster innovation and collaboration across sectors, and position Monterey County as a statewide leader in middle-income housing development. We would welcome the opportunity to support you in shaping and implementing this effort.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely, Ashley Muse
Attainable Housing Initiative Project Lead
Regenerative California