

March 16, 2023

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach California

RECOMMENDATION:

Find that this action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act; and receive and file the 2022 General Plan Implementation Report and instruct the Director of Development Services to submit the Implementation Report to the City Council, State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach Department of Development Services
411 W. Ocean Blvd, 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

DISCUSSION

Background

The City of Long Beach's (City) General Plan is a policy document required by State law, which establishes the goals and policies that will guide growth and development in the City through 2040. The aim of these documents is to guide the City to a more sustainable future, improve mobility choices, expand transit access, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and accommodate growth projections in accordance with state law. Cities and counties in California are required to prepare and adopt a general plan as a comprehensive guide for long-term development. The General Plan analyzes existing conditions and projects needs into the future, as a basis for determining policies, programs, and objectives. It also establishes the long-term policy framework for day-to-day decision-making based upon these objectives.

California law [Government Code §65400] requires cities and counties to provide annual reports on their General Plans to their respective legislative bodies and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). Reports are required to provide the status of implementation measures found in each element, and with specific reporting requirements for the Housing Element portion of the annual report to be submitted to the State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). The intent of the statute is to ensure that the General Plan directs all land use decisions and remains an effective guide for future development. The purpose of this annual reporting, then, is to provide enough information to allow local legislative bodies to assess how General Plans are



being implemented in accordance with adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures (General Plan Guidelines, 2017, p. 259) 1. Specifically, this report has been produced to satisfy this requirement for the General Plan, and to highlight the implementation achievements with an emphasis on progress in 2022. The most recent updates to the General Plan include the Housing Element (2022), the Land Use and Urban Design Elements (2019), and the Mobility Element (2013). Implementation achievements for each of these Elements are summarized in this report and detailed in the 2022 General Plan Implementation Report (Attachment A).

Housing Element

Despite changing development market conditions challenged by high materials costs, rising interest rates, and the economic downturn due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 was a successful year for new housing units approved and for starting construction of new housing units, with 970 housing units permitted, of which 508 are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and 255 are affordable housing units. Long Beach became the first large city in the region to have its new 2021-2029 Housing Element certified by the state for the 6th cycle. Additionally, several initiatives that help implement the LUE and the Housing Element were either begun or made progress in 2022, including Zone In: City Core and Zone In: WestLB.

Calendar year 2022 is the first full year in the new RHNA cycle. The updated Housing Element provides the City with a roadmap for accommodating the projected housing units needed to house existing and future City residents through 2029 and guides future decisions that impact housing. California law requires that all cities and counties submit to their legislative bodies as well as HCD a Housing Element which demonstrates that the City has sufficient zoning capacity to accommodate the 6th Cycle Housing Element Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation or undergo a rezoning program to create that capacity. For Long Beach, the RHNA is approximately 26,500 new housing units by 2029 and is being implemented through a rezoning program that was already underway to implement the 2019 LUE. The Housing Element aims to achieve a number of housing related goals that include accommodating housing need in compliance with State law; increasing housing production for all income levels and household types, including special needs populations; improving housing affordability; preserving existing affordable housing; and promoting fair housing choice for all. Housing is a critical community priority and has been noted as one of the most important equity issues in the City as described in the Long Beach Framework for Reconciliation. The Housing Element Update was grounded in equity analyses based on extensive data combined with input from communities most impacted by the housing crisis that shaped the plan's goals, policies, actions, and strategies.

Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, housing was already the number one social determinant of health in Long Beach. As the pandemic continued through its third calendar year, housing has become even more critical. Due to the housing crisis and rising costs, rental cost burden impacts 54 percent of all renters and more than 10 percent of all households throughout Long Beach, but both are most predominant in Long Beach neighborhoods with the least access to parks, fresh food, and open space, and the worst environmental health indicators. Housing is a critical community priority and has been noted as one of the most important equity issues in the City as described in the Long Beach Framework for Reconciliation. The Housing Element Update was grounded in equity analyses based on extensive data combined with input from communities most impacted by the

housing crisis that shaped the plan's goals, policies, actions, and strategies to address these and other issues.

Although this report focused on updates from 2022, it should be noted that on January 10, 2023, the Long Beach City Council adopted a proclamation of a local homelessness emergency to facilitate a coordinated, citywide focus and response to the homelessness crisis. Therefore, many Housing Element programs designed to serve the city's unhoused population are anticipated to be implemented on or before the committed timeframes in the element.

Land Use Element

Adopted in 2019, the LUE provides a policy framework for creating sufficient housing opportunity to address both the City's existing housing need due to overcrowding as well as accommodating the City's population and employment projections through the horizon year of 2040. In addition to focusing new development near transit, the plan seeks to transform under-utilized commercial, transit-served corridors to denser, more mixed-use corridors and nodes. This creates development opportunity while helping recycle underperforming strip malls, improving the pedestrian experience, increasing access to jobs and minimizing direct displacement. The LUE advances several goals and policies for addressing equity in access to housing, jobs, community resources, and open space, while creating more opportunities for active living, improved urban design, sustainability, and enhanced quality of life.

Implementation of this ambitious, citywide plan requires a multitude of strategies, the primary of which is updating the City's Zoning Code. While the General Plan establishes broad, long-term policies that guide future development, the Zoning Code implements General Plan policies by specifying detailed development regulations that accomplish the General Plan's goals. As outlined in Attachment A, several Zoning Code updates have been adopted to implement the LUE, including the adoption of 12 new zones to implement three LUE PlaceTypes through the Uptown Planning Land Use and Neighborhood Strategy (UPLAN) process. Recommendations for rezoning of additional corridors within North Long Beach were released in 2021 as part of UPLAN Phase II and are anticipated to be adopted in 2023.

In 2022, the City continued its next phase of the comprehensive citywide rezoning program to implement the LUE for areas of West Long Beach and Central Long Beach comprising of the Westside neighborhood and Washington Neighborhood, Cambodiatown and the Zaferia neighborhood through Zone In: WestLB and Zone In: City Core, respectively. Both projects build upon the efforts and approach piloted by UPLAN and have established co-learning approaches to blending technical analysis with lived and other knowledge to develop new zoning districts for the City. Zone In: City Core achieved multiple milestones in 2022, progressing through all three phases of its public engagement process and is expected to adopt new zoning regulations in 2023.

Mobility Element

Adopted in 2013, the Mobility Element establishes a vision, goals, strategies, policies, and implementation measures necessary to achieve a balanced mobility system that services the needs of all users of the public rights-of-way through complete streets strategies and context-sensitive design principles. Streets and sidewalks, known together as the "public right of way",

comprise the vast majority of public space maintained by the City. Therefore, it is critical that mobility planning focus on all users. A central theme of the Mobility Element is support for a balanced, multi-modal transportation network that enhances connectivity and supports existing development patterns. The emphasis on multi-modal, context sensitive street design advances several broad goals including retaining community character; enhancing environmental sustainability by reducing gasoline consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; and improving public health by improving air quality while providing greater opportunities to be physically active through walking and biking. In addition, the Mobility Element serves as a guide for a wide range of City planning documents and programming activities, such as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), transportation-related plans, project entitlement applications and regional planning documents. Since the Mobility Element was adopted, the Downtown/Pedestrian Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan and the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Ability, and Obesity Prevention (CX3) Pedestrian Plan have all been developed and adopted as technical appendices of the Mobility Element. Key accomplishments include new bikeway and pedestrian improvements, the implementation of Safe Streets Long Beach, the COVID-19 Open Streets Program and continued development of the E-Scooter Program. Given that transportation accounts for nearly half of greenhouse gas emissions in Long Beach, actions to encourage low-carbon and carbon-free forms of transportation such as walking, biking and taking public transit are central to the Long Beach Climate Action Plan (LBCAP).

The 2022 General Plan Implementation Report provides an overview of these and other key accomplishments and status updates. Specific implementation program and project updates are included in an appendix to the report. Significant progress has been made toward achieving the Plan's goals, as this report and the past three annual reports demonstrate. The Implementation Report was prepared by Development Services Department with input from the Public Works, Health and Human Services and Harbor Departments. The City has been recognized with awards of excellence for the Land Use and Mobility Elements by the American Planning Association (APA) California Chapter and the Los Angeles section of the APA, as well as the Southern California Association of Governments.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

This item is not a public hearing; therefore, no public hearing notice is required. However, this item appeared on the Planning Commission meeting agenda that was provided in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Code. No public comments have been received as of the preparation of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This annual report is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 as this action is not defined as a project. The annual report is an administrative activity and does not authorize new development. Furthermore, Negative Declaration 01-11 was prepared in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines for the adoption of the 2013-2035 Mobility Element, a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR 03-16) was prepared in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines for the adoption of the LUE/UDE (Urban Design Element), and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) addendum (EIRA-02-21) was prepared in

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accordance with CEQA Guidelines for the Housing Element Update. The General Plan helps the City achieve its vision and goals for creating a more sustainable community.

Respectfully submitted,



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CC:CK: ASR:ASL:PTE

Attachments: Attachment A – Long Beach General Plan Annual Report
 Attachment B – Housing Element Annual Progress Report- HCD Form