

June 10, 2025

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to receive and file the 2024 General Plan Implementation Report.
(Citywide)

DISCUSSION

The General Plan annual reporting process has always been a legal requirement but has grown in complexity and importance in recent years due to State requirements and as the City Council has directed further information sharing in response to growing public and decision-maker interest in housing and mobility performance. This year's report is critical as the City of Long Beach (City) celebrates record housing production. The City's housing strategy is working and demonstrating success.

The City's 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 Long Beach 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 project needs into the future, as a basis for determining policies, programs, and objectives. It also establishes a 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 to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. Reports are required to provide the status of implementation measures found in each element of the general plan and include 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. Specifically, this report has been produced to satisfy those requirements for the General Plan, and to highlight the implementation achievements with an emphasis on progress in 2024.

On April 17, 2025, City staff presented a summary report of implementation achievements as part of the 2024 General Plan Annual Report to the Planning Commission (Attachment A), which recommended approval for submittal to the California Office of Planning and Research and Department of Housing and Community Development. The most recent updates to the General Plan include updates to the “Elements,” or chapters, that include the Noise Element (2023), Housing Element (2022), the Land Use Element (LUE) (2019), Urban Design Element (2019), and the Mobility Element (2013). Additionally, an effort to update the Open Space and Recreation Element commenced in 2024.

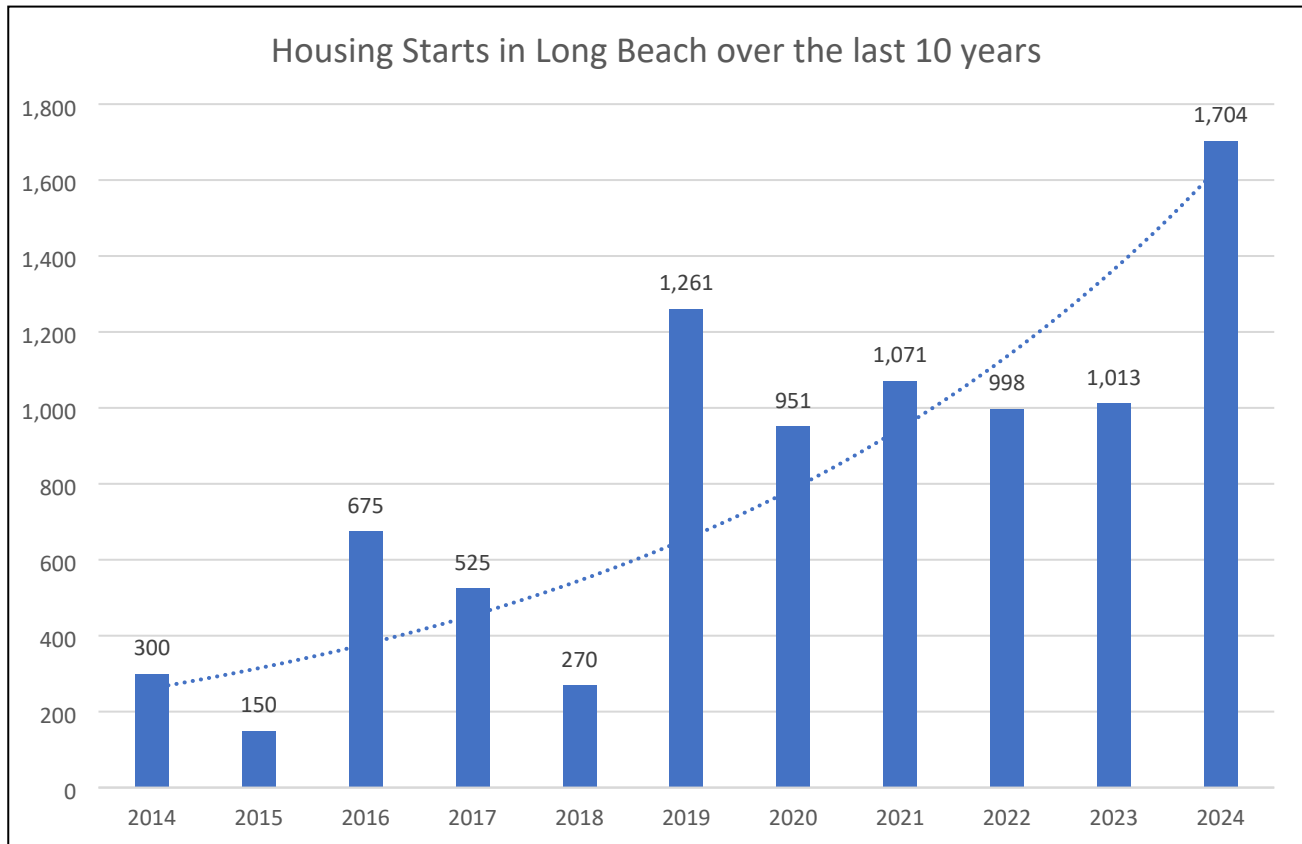
Housing Element

Calendar year 2024 is the third full year in the 6th Cycle Housing Element Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) cycle. For Long Beach, the RHNA is approximately 26,500 new housing units to be permitted by 2029, accommodated through a rezoning program designed to implement the policy direction of both the Land Use and Housing Elements. The Housing Element aims to achieve a number of housing related goals that include accommodating housing needs 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 Long Beach as described in the Long Beach Framework for Reconciliation.

On January 10, 2023, the City Council adopted a proclamation of a local homelessness emergency to facilitate a coordinated, citywide focus and response to the homelessness crisis. This included the temporary suspension of certain procedural requirements in the City’s zoning code to allow further streamlining of affordable housing and homeless services development projects. Therefore, many Housing Element programs designed to serve the City’s unhoused population were implemented on or before the committed timeframes in the element including related to the addition of emergency shelter sites, a safe parking site, and homeless services resource centers. This led to a record year for housing entitlements in 2023, including the entitlement of hundreds of affordable housing units. The City Council declared the local homelessness emergency period over on February 29, 2024; however, implementation of best practices from the emergency period continue to date.

2024 was another banner year for housing production in Long Beach. The City entitled 1,788 housing units, maintaining momentum from the record high established in 2023. More notably, the City set a new annual record for building permits issued with 1,704 housing units permitted, of which 747 were Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and nearly 250 were affordable. Furthermore, 1,204 new units were finalized and made available for tenants to occupy. Due to tariffs on building materials such as steel and lumber, uncertain State and federal budgets and sticky high interest rates, City staff cannot provide projections for the short-term on housing starts but does foresee continued high levels of housing activity in the medium and long-term given the approximately 1,500 units of housing in the development pipeline pending Planning approval as of March 2025. Figure 1 below provides a decadal look at residential building permit activity in Long Beach from 2014 to 2024. As shown on the chart, the trendline for housing construction has progressively increased over time with an increased curve since 2019, which coincided with the adoption of the City’s current LUE. A complete list of permit activity and other

required reporting for HCD is provided in the 2024 Annual Progress Report (Attachment B), which was successfully submitted to HCD prior to the May 15, 2025, deadline.



Implementation of several housing element strategies and programs succeeded in facilitating a broader geographic spread of affordable and mixed-income housing developments across Long Beach in 2024. As evidenced in a 2024 analysis by City staff to support expansion of the inclusionary housing policy, the City's inclusionary housing requirements in the Downtown and Midtown area facilitated 168 affordable rental units in its first three years of implementation. In 2024, the City initiated the process to expand its inclusionary housing policy citywide and guarantee a mix of affordable units in all major future developments throughout Long Beach. The Planning Commission recommended approval for said update in December 2024, and the changes were ultimately adopted by City Council in early 2025. Additionally, the City made major progress with its comprehensive rezoning program known as Zone In. Zone In: City Core and Zone In: Uptown Planning Land Use and Neighborhood Strategy (UPLAN) were both adopted by City Council in September 2024, completing multi-year rezonings for thousands of properties along major corridors in North and Central Long Beach.

The current 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 RHNA allocation or undergo a rezoning program to create that capacity. In addition to Zone In: City Core and Zone

In: UPLAN, several rezoning initiatives that help implement the LUE and the Housing Element have begun or made progress, including the Downtown Plan Update, Zone In: Bixby Knolls, Zone In: Wrigley, and Zone In: 10th to Broadway. Finally, the City secured significant funding in 2024 to supplement its efforts to maximize housing production, affordability, and equitable spatial distribution through grant funded initiatives including Everyone's Coast, a coastal rezoning and mobility effort under Zone In and a study to support a forthcoming update to its Enhanced Density Bonus program citywide. Other related efforts such as the Community Development Department's (Department) update to the ADU Ordinance and creation of a Senate Bill 9 Implementation Ordinance will come to completion later this calendar year.

Additional General Plan Milestones

Although there are many actions underway to implement the LUE, the primary mechanism for implementing the LUE is through a comprehensive update to the zoning code through the Zone In program outlined above. This comprehensive effort is currently underway in several areas throughout the City. In the 2024 calendar year, the rezoning efforts across the City continued to make great progress. UPLAN Phase 2 and Zone In: City Core were adopted by City Council on September 17, 2024. The adoption included amendments to Title 22 of the Long Beach Municipal Code to establish new zoning districts to implement the Neo-Industrial, Multifamily Residential-Low, and Multifamily Residential-Medium PlaceTypes of the Long Beach General Plan LUE Update in 2019 and to adjust and improve all existing zoning districts contained within Title 22 through a series of minor amendments. Other geographic rezoning such as Zone In: Bixby, Zone In: Wrigley, and Zone In: 10th Street to Broadway are still underway, with significant progress on both community engagement and technical review in 2024 following the adoption of Zone In: City Core and Zone In: UPLAN. Zone In: Bixby is anticipated to come before the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption in late 2025.

Additionally, the Community Development Department's Planning Bureau received a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to support coastal rezoning and connectivity studies to provide greater access to the beach for Central Long Beach residents while reducing car dependency. The City began a procurement process to secure a consultant that will help City staff implement the project known as Zone In: Everyone's Coast. One major aspect of the project is rezoning in the greater Alamitos Beach area, tackling issues around mobility and parking shortages, and housing growth, while preventing displacement and loss of naturally occurring affordable housing, coastal resource protection, and visitor and resident serving uses. Furthermore, there was major progress for the PD-30 Downtown Plan and PD-6 Shoreline Plan updates. In 2024, the City developed a draft Specific Plan for the PD-30 Downtown Plan that will be released for public review in 2025. In In 2024, extensive engagement and technical analysis were conducted for the Shoreline Vision Plan, as exemplified by the three-day summer charrette series and release of an accompanying Downtown Shoreline Vision Plan Opportunities Lookbook.

The Long Beach Climate Action Plan (LB CAP) is an implementing plan of the LUE and achieved significant progress in 2024, including spearheading the Open Space and Recreation Element update for the first time in 23 years to expand and improve Long Beach's open space network with critical considerations around park equity, accessibility and climate resilience, and adaptation measures. Furthermore, the Office of Climate Action and Sustainability had significant achievements around education, outreach and community engagement related to

native plants and tree plantings and restoration of Willow Springs Park, alternative transportation options such as bicycling and walking, and green business certification. The Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, adopted in September 2024, included prioritizing our urban tree canopy, clean coastline access, electric vehicle transition efforts, Bikeshare, parks and open space, water quality enhancements, and infrastructure improvements. These efforts all drive movement towards reducing the urban heat island effect, our reliance on fossil fuels, and water quality issues while improving community connectivity and access to open space.

The Mobility Element serves as a guide for a wide range of City planning documents and programming activities, such as the Capital Improvement Program, transportation-related plans, project entitlement applications, and regional planning documents. Since the Mobility Element was adopted, the Downtown/Pedestrian Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, and the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Ability, and Obesity Prevention Pedestrian Plan have all been developed and adopted as technical appendices of the Mobility Element. Key accomplishments include new bikeway and pedestrian improvements, updates to 39 Mobility Capital Improvement projects, and Mobility of Goods, which is made possible in collaboration with our partners at the Port of Long Beach.

In addition, on December 10, 2024, the City Council adopted a major zoning code amendment known as the Change of Use Parking Amendment. This adoption came as a result of both City Council direction and changes in the City's business climate after the pandemic resulting in an effort to ease the pressure of parking requirements on business redevelopment and outdoor operational opportunities. This included a new mechanism to permanently legalize temporary outdoor dining or other outdoor business uses permitted during the COVID19 pandemic. It also eliminated the change use parking requirements on existing buildings more than ten years old to reduce barriers to activating vacant storefronts, which currently leads to blight and adverse impacts on communities. This change also removed the requirement for additional on-site parking to be provided for changes of use of existing buildings or spaces, so that additional onsite parking is no longer required when one business use changes to another use with minimal or no expansion of the existing building or tenant space. 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 also central to implementation of LB CAP. A complete list of progress and implementation achievements are summarized in this report and detailed in the 2024 General Plan Implementation Report (Attachment C).

This matter was reviewed by Principal Deputy City Attorney Erin Weesner-McKinley and Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on May 21, 2025.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on June 10, 2025.

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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,


Christopher Koontz
Community Development Director

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER

ATTACHMENTS: A – PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT
B – HOUSING ELEMENT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
C – GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT