

Date: September 2, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Christopher Koontz, Acting Director of Development Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **2021 Annual Housing Element Progress Report**

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The City of Long Beach's (City) General Plan is a policy document required by State law that establishes the City's goals and policies to guide growth and development in the Long Beach through 2040. The General Plan is comprised of 12 "Elements" or chapters, including the Housing, Land Use, and Mobility Elements. The aim of these documents is to guide the City to a more sustainable future, improve mobility choices, provide needed housing, 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 to the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). Reports are required to provide the status of implementation measures found in each element, including more 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.

To meet these requirements, on March 17, 2022 the City of Long Beach Planning Commission received and filed the [Long Beach General Plan Annual Report for the year 2021](#), and the report was forwarded to the above-referenced State agencies prior to the April 1, 2022 deadline. The Annual Report outlines the City's successes in implementing the General Plan, particularly the Housing, Land Use and Mobility Elements, as detailed further below.

### *Housing Element*

2021 was the final year of reporting for the City's 2013-2021 Housing Element, and the annual report highlights the City's performance in the areas of housing production and affordability, as well as its progress on key goals such as housing assistance, preservation of affordable housing, and the removal of constraints to housing production. The [2021 Housing Annual Progress Report](#), includes a multitude of specific data and informational tables required by HCD. Despite the economic downturn due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was a very

successful year for new housing unit approvals and construction, with the City permitting 1,071 new units of which 445 are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and 88 are affordable. Most notably, 2021 had the highest level of housing units completed in the current Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Cycle, as 1,371 housing units were completed, of which 213 are ADUs and 245 are affordable housing units.

Looking back at the entire 2014-2021 reporting period, the City fully met its goal for the production of market-rate housing as prescribed by the RHNA. The City also demonstrated progress towards producing affordable housing but remains in need of improvement in the development of restricted-affordable housing units. The City’s new Enhanced Density Bonus and Inclusionary Housing Requirements, both adopted in 2021, are expected to help address this need in the coming years. Ultimately, the City issued building permits for 5,202 units, or approximately 74 percent of the City’s 7,048-unit RNHA total for the 2014-2021 period. Recent improvements in housing appears to be a result of Zoning Code, General Plan and Specific Plan updates over the preceding ten years.

As it relates to affordable units, the City has issued permits for 717 of the 4,009 affordable units required for the 2014-2021 period across the three affordability categories of low, very-low and moderate-income units. Thus, while in 2020 the City achieved its above-moderate income, or market-rate, housing unit RHNA requirement, it has only permitted 18 percent of its affordable housing requirement to date. The following table below shows the yearly breakdown of total and affordable units:

Table 1 - Dwelling Units Approved and Permitted in 2014-2021

Year	Deed Restricted Affordable Units	Non-Deed Restricted Units	Total Units
2014	40	260	300
2015	119	31	150
2016	0	675	675
2017	162	363	525
2018	47	223	270
2019	223	1,038	1,261
2020	39	912	951
2021	87	984	1,071
<b>Total</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>4,485</b>	<b>5,202</b>

The following are key trends underlying the City’s progress in 2021 related to housing:

- The City issued building permits for the construction of 1,071 new units and Certificates of Occupancy for 1,371 new units, the highest year of housing completions on record for the current Cycle.
- The City also saw a considerable increase in the number ADUs in 2021, which count toward the City’s market-rate RHNA allocation. The City issued permits for 445 ADUs in 2021 compared to 268 in 2020.
- Emerging from the financial shortfall the Long Beach Housing Authority was again able to convert Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS families to Housing Choice

Vouchers (HCV). Due to the high per unit housing costs, the number of vouchers allocated dropped from 75 to 48. Existing families are being converted to HCV and 2022 will include a pull from the waiting list.

- In 2021 two newly constructed Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) affordable housing projects opened, The Spark and Las Ventanas, and affordable housing was preserved by executing a long-term contract with Woodbride Apartments committing the long-term use of 119 units. This brings the number of Project Based Developments contracted to 777 in 12 communities.

Throughout 2021, the Department of Development Services continued the process of updating the Housing Element for the next Housing Element cycle for the planning period from 2021 to 2029, in compliance with State law. In February of 2022, the City Council adopted the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and HCD certified the plan on April 8, 2022. Long Beach was the first large city in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region to be certified. The comprehensive update to the City's Housing Element for the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle provides a roadmap and set policies for how the City will accommodate its 26,500-unit RHNA allocation and address the existing and future housing demand in Long Beach.

Information about housing production in the City and how the City is progressing in meeting its RHNA targets can be found on the City's Housing Dashboard, which can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/housing-dashboards/>

### *Land Use Element*

Adopted in 2019, the Land Use Element (LUE) provides a policy framework for creating opportunity for future development through land use strategies designed to meet the projected needs for both housing and jobs based on population and employment projections through the year 2040. In addition to focusing new development near transit, the plan seeks to transform under-utilized commercial 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 adopting specific development regulations that accomplish the General Plan's goals into the City's Municipal Code. As outlined in the annual report, 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 in late 2020. 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 2022.

In 2021, the City began its next phase of the comprehensive citywide rezoning program to implement the LUE for areas of Central Long Beach comprising of the Washington Neighborhood, Cambodia Town and the Zaferia neighborhood through the [Zone In: City Core](#) effort. The City also adopted two new Specific Plans in 2021 that help implement the LUE: the Globemaster Specific Plan (GMSP) and the Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP). The purpose of these plans is to guide development in those areas, enhance the quality of life, and improve the functionality and visual appearance of public and private improvements in the area. The GMSP aims to establish a long-term vision and framework for the development of an area near the airport into a 21<sup>st</sup> century employment district focused on the former Boeing site, while the SEASP provides an overall framework for coastal resource protection, mobility, growth, and development for the southeast area of the City.

### *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 including pedestrians, cyclists and those in automobiles. Streets and sidewalks, known together as the “public right of way”, comprise the 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, transportation-related plans, project entitlement applications and regional planning documents. Key accomplishments in 2021 include new bikeway and pedestrian improvements, the implementation of Safe Streets Long Beach, the COVID-19 Open Streets Initiative 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 Climate Action Plan.

The 2021 General Plan Annual Report provides an overview of these and other key accomplishments and status updates. 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 and Health and Human Services 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.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Christopher Koontz, Acting Director of Development Services, at (562) 570-6288.

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