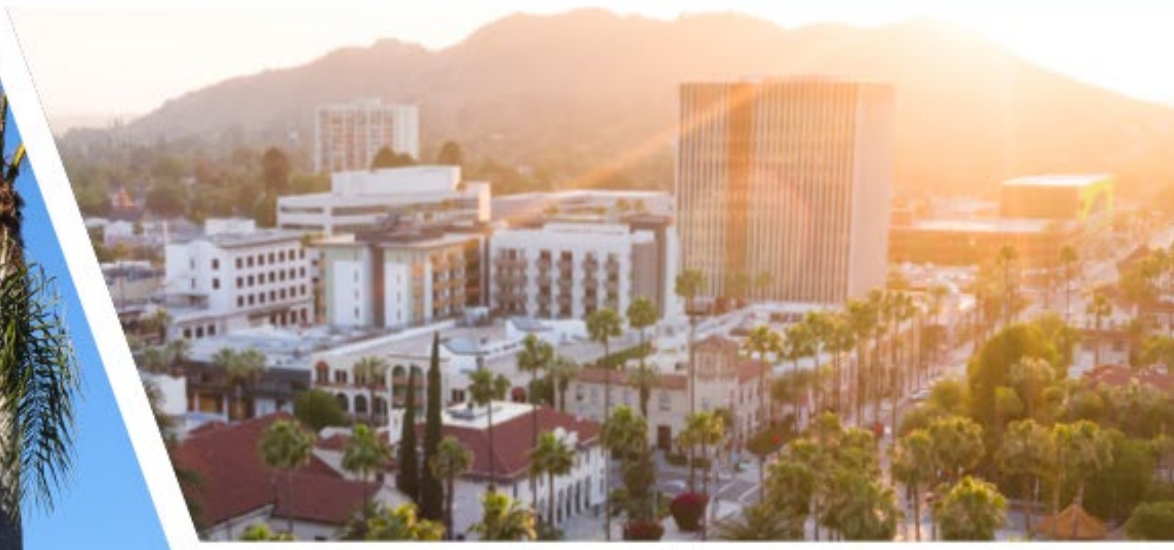
CITY OF RIVERSIDE

GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CA | CALENDAR YEAR 2025



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General Plan
Annual Progress Report

Calendar Year 2025

City of Riverside, California

3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522

Submitted to:
Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) and
California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)

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Pursuant to Government Code § 65400

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I. Annual Progress Report (APR) Introduction

The City of Riverside has prepared and submits this annual progress report (APR) to the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This report satisfies Government Code Section 65400(a)(2), and reflects the programs and actions undertaken to implement the City's "General Plan 2025" (General Plan) between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025. The State of California Government Code Section 65400 requires jurisdictions provide an annual review to their legislative body (in this case City Council), the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on the status of the City's General Plan and progress in implementing the goals, policies and objectives outlined therein. The report highlights completed areas of the General Plan and future priorities and amendments. State law requires that the annual report be completed and submitted to the State by April 1 of each year.

The City of Riverside's General Plan was adopted in 2007 and has been updated periodically as needed or as required by state law. In October 2021, Phase I of the General Plan Update was completed and included the update to the Housing Element and Public Safety Elements concurrent with the Sixth Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). Additionally, Environmental Justice policies were added throughout the General Plan to ensure compliance with Assembly Bill 686 (Santiago, 2018) and a new Action Plan was approved to facilitate implementation of the newly adopted elements.

The General Plan contains twelve (12) elements, including the seven (7) required by the California Government Code and consistent with the LCI guidelines, and incorporates two (2) neighborhood plans as appendices. Table 1 lists the elements included within the General Plan and identifies the required or optional elements:

Table 1 - Contents of General Plan

General Plan Element	Required or Optional
Land Use and Urban Design	**REQUIRED**
Circulation and Community Mobility	**REQUIRED**
Housing	**REQUIRED**
Public Safety	**REQUIRED**
Noise	**REQUIRED**
Open Space and Conservation (2 elements combined)	**REQUIRED**
Environmental Justice Policies[1]	**REQUIRED**
Arts and Culture	OPTIONAL
Education	OPTIONAL
Air Quality	OPTIONAL
Public Facilities and Infrastructure	OPTIONAL
Park and Recreation	OPTIONAL
Historic Preservation	OPTIONAL
*University Neighborhood Plan (General Plan Appendix C)	OPTIONAL
*Eastside Neighborhood Plan (General Plan Appendix D)	OPTIONAL

On September 24, 2022, the City received notification that HCD had certified the revised adopted Sixth Cycle Housing Element Update as fully compliant with the requirements of State Housing Element Law. The City continues to pursue implementation of the Housing Element and associated implementation actions outlined in the adopted Action Plan, including efforts funded by SB 2, LEAP, and REAP planning grants awarded to the City.

The overall goals of the updated Housing Element include:

1. Removing barriers to development in the City;
2. Aligning City priorities with government processes;
3. Streamlining development and reducing administrative/government redundancies; and
4. Identifying implementation programs that enhance key public services.

In 2024, the City initiated an update to the remainder of the General Plan (Phase 2 General Plan Update and Climate Action & Adaptation Plan) that has continued in 2025 and is expected to be adopted in 2027 or early 2028. The funding for the Phase II Update includes Measure Z, a one-cent transaction and use tax adopted in November 2016 to help pay for critical unfunded city programs and services. The Phase II General Plan Update is paired with the development of a CEQA-certified Climate Action & Adaptation Plan. These will comprise separate, but interrelated, parallel comprehensive planning efforts that will result in a once-in-a-generation roadmap for the

[1] Environmental Justice Policies are incorporated throughout each of the other General Plan Elements consistent with the provisions of Government Code §65302(h)(1).

future of the City and its people. Additional information on the comprehensive update can be found under Section V of this report.

II. General Plan Implementation

The General Plan contains an Implementation Plan with "tools" or action items that help the City achieve the objectives and policies within the General Plan elements. This Implementation Plan, which was largely prepared in 2007, or shortly thereafter, includes some programs, projects, and activities that have been completed or are no longer relevant. With the adoption of the updated Housing Element, Public Safety Element and Environmental Justice Policies, the existing Implementation Plan was amended to remove any Implementation Tools related to the previous Housing Element and Public Safety Element. A new supplemental, yet separate, Action Plan was approved alongside the Sixth Cycle Housing Element and Public Safety Element adoption. For this Annual Progress Report, both the original Implementation Plan and the recently approved Action Plan have been evaluated for progress during the 2025 reporting period.

Appendix A highlights the key activities and projects occurring in 2025 that relate to specific tools within the Implementation Plan. Table 3 identifies any 2025 activities that relate to the recent Public Safety and Environmental Justice Elements. Information on the progress of the 6th Cycle Housing Element programs can be found in Appendix B of this report. On-going efforts, or those which rely on standardized processes (i.e., CEQA compliance; building permit review, etc.), are generally not included, unless a noteworthy achievement was accomplished in 2025 or there was a significant change in responsibility. The list of tools provides a snapshot of significant programs or targeted efforts achieved during the reporting period.

Housing Element Reporting and RHNA Requirements

State law requires that the City report on the number of new housing units produced each calendar year and track the progress towards meeting the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) assigned to the City for the RHNA Reporting Cycle.

Appendix B includes the completed Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) form which demonstrates progress towards meeting the City's RHNA obligation. This form will be submitted to HCD through the State's Housing Element Tracking System portal and is only provided in this report as reference.

RHNA Obligation

For the 6th Cycle 2021-2029 RHNA, the City saw a significant increase in the housing obligation of 18,458 total units, broken down by income level per Table 5 below.

Table 2 – 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation by Income Levels

Income Level	Income Limit – Percent of Riverside County Median Family Income ($75,300/year)	Total Number of Units
Very Low Income	Less than 50% ($37,650/year)	4,861
Low Income	50-80% ($60,250/year)	3,064
Moderate Income	80-120% ($90,360/year)	3,139
Above-Moderate Income	More than 120% (over $90,360/year)	7,394
	Total 6th Cycle RHNA Obligation	**18,458**

The City's 6th Cycle Housing Element includes Housing Opportunity sites inventory sites that can accommodate greater density and facilitate compliance with the RHNA unit obligation. To ensure the City can accommodate the minimum 18,458 units and comply with the "No Net Loss" requirements under Government Code Section 65863, staff identified a buffer of 17% to accommodate an additional 3,185 units. This buffer ensures that if sites are not developed at the anticipated density, are developed with uses other than housing, or otherwise become unavailable during the eight-year cycle, there are enough appropriately zoned sites in reserve to ensure the RHNA obligations are continuously met.

RHNA Progress 2025

RHNA progress is tracked and monitored annually by collecting data on the number of permitted units during the reporting period. Appendix B of this report details the progress made towards meeting the 6th Cycle RHNA obligation by income level. From the start of the 6th Cycle in October 2021 to the end of 2025, the City issued permits for 3,613 units. Of these units, 564 were issued during the 2025 calendar year. This includes 148 single family units, 208 multifamily units, and 208 accessory dwelling units. Table 3 shows the progress so far made towards the City's RHNA obligation by number of units issued permits.

Table 3 – RHNA Progress

	RHNA Allocation	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Remaining 6th Cycle Obligation
Very Low	4,861	25	0	0	0	22	4,813
Low	3,064	25	226	33	0	0	2,780
Moderate	3,139	83	176	0	0	0	2,880
Above Moderate	7,394	340	183	1,061	897	542	4,372
Total	***18,458***	***473***	***585***	***1,094***	***897***	***564***	***14,845***

Beyond permits issued, affordable units are also moving elsewhere through the development pipeline. In 2025, the City processed applications for 18 units, entitled 73 units, and finaled building permits for 32 units.

III. Streamlining Housing Production

Since the adoption of the City's 5th Cycle Housing Element Update rezoning program in 2017, all multi-family residential is permitted by right in corresponding higher density residential zones, which reduces development costs, uncertainty, and time. Additional revisions that were adopted at the time included adjustments to parking standards, open space requirements, setbacks, and other criteria that impacted the ability to maximize densities specified by the Zoning Code.

Building upon the previous streamlining efforts, the 6th Cycle Housing Element also included a wide variety of policy and regulatory changes aimed at reducing barriers to housing and encouraging the development of high-density residential projects as facilitated by adopted Zoning Code text and General Plan land use amendments. The General Plan Land Use map was updated and amended to accommodate future housing development of the opportunity sites. Seven specific plans were amended to accommodate new high density residential and mixed-use developments where previously prohibited or limited. Additionally, a number of Zoning Code text amendments were adopted to reduce barriers to residential development including modifications to residential standards to include objective design standards, amendments to the Permitted Uses Table to permit Low Barrier Navigation Centers in mixed-use zones, addition of a new mixed-use Innovation District for an aging industrial area, updates to the Density Bonus Ordinance, reductions in parking requirements for affordable housing, and a more flexible review process for mixed-use projects.

In 2019, the City applied for and was awarded a $625,000 planning grant under the SB 2 Planning Grant Program (PGP). The SB 2 PGP was specifically created to assist cities with planning projects that streamline the production of housing. The City's original grant application outlined nine (9) streamline projects that would be partially funded by the SB 2 PGP. In late 2020, the City requested a number of changes to the approved projects, including the elimination of two projects and the addition of 4 new projects. These changes were accepted by HCD, and, as of the end of CY 2025, all SB 2 projects have been substantively completed. Approved and completed projects include:

1. Streamline Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) - In 2024, the City launched Dwell Riverside which provides applicants with permit-ready ADU plans.

2. CEQA for Streamlined GP/Zoning Consistency - This project amended the General Plan and Zoning Code to facilitate determinations of project consistency with both the General Plan and Zoning Code (This project was completed on August 20, 2019 by General Plan Amendment P19-0054, as required by SB 1333.)

3. Streamline Density Bonus Regulations – This project updated density bonus provisions in the Zoning Code for consistency with new density bonus legislation. In 2024, California's density bonus law was amended to expand eligibility for student housing and to allow residential care facilities for the elderly to qualify, and City Council adopted this change into the Zoning Code in 2025.

4. Update the Zoning Code (Title 19) to streamline housing development– These changes were completed through a series of Zoning Code amendments in 2022 and 2023. Specific changes included:

- Adjustment of parking standards and introduction of parking maximums in certain locations;
- Development of objective design standards for "by right" housing for sites identified in the Housing Element update; and
- Common and private open space requirements to increase housing densities.

5. Promote Housing on Small and Infill Lots – In 2023, the City worked with a consultant team to bring several infill development strategies to the City Council Committee for Land Use, Sustainability, and Resilience for their consideration. The Committee directed staff to create an infill development ordinance for undersized lots, a small lot subdivision ordinance, and to explore the potential for a density transfer program. In August 2024, City Council approved the Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinances.

6. Dashboard to Track Housing Sites – The City continues to manually track housing production, the development of housing element opportunity sites, and the capacity to meet our RHNA obligation.

7. VMT Mitigation – The City of Riverside adopted VMT thresholds in July 2020 following LCI's guidance to use average VMT per person/employee as a baseline to determine needed reductions. In 2024 the Planning Commission recommended approval of the VMT Mitigation Bank Pilot Program

8. Prepare Prescriptive Sound Transmission Control Standards – This has been completed by the Building & Safety Division and saves both time and money for housing applicants.

9. Develop a public plan to address the homeless shelter crisis to include development of homeless shelters and permanent supportive housing, provide onsite supportive services, and a way forward to transition residents from homeless to permanent housing as required by Assembly Bill 2553 – The City of Riverside Homelessness Action Plan was adopted on Tuesday, October 11, 2022

IV. Grant Activity

In 2025 the City was awarded a total of $38,807,859 in funding for various projects and initiatives across all City Departments:

Table 4 – Grant Activity 2025

	CY 2025 Grant Activity
Competitive Funded Applications	$28,669,906
Competitive Earmarks	$1,250,000*
Entitlements	$8,887,953
TOTALS	**$38,807,859**

* Federal subcommittee approved appropriations: NAIC and Real Time Information Center.

V. Major Planning Initiatives

Riverside General Plan 2050 Update and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan:

In May 2024, the City and consultant team (WSP) formally launched Phase 2 of the General Plan Update (GP) and Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The scope of the project includes:

1. A comprehensive update of the City's General Plan;
2. The development of a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and set achievable emissions reduction targets for the City;
3. Revision of the Zoning Code and update of other development-related codes;
4. An evaluation of, and revisions to, the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines and the Citywide Residential Historic District Design Guidelines;
5. An evaluation of the City's 21 existing Specific Plans, including plans that may be eliminated or revised; and
6. A Program Environmental Impact Report for both documents.

In 2025, the General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update effort continued. The City and consultants conducted extensive community outreach, with two workshops, moveable exhibits, and popups and presentations at special events in each ward of the City, to gain community input on land use and transportation policy needs, considerations, and preferences. The General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Advisory Committees (GPAC and CPAC) also convened several times throughout the year, providing their input on the development of the plans and serving as ambassadors to boost interest in community engagement events. On the General Plan side, the year culminated with development of multiple scenarios for a revised General Plan land use designation map along with revised arroyo boundaries and noise measurements, and on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan side, the year culminated with establishment of baseline emissions data, emissions projections, and a climate vulnerability assessment. Development of the General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan will continue in 2026, specifically with creation of specific objectives and policies, initiation of programmatic environmental impact reports for both plans, and further refinement of the land use designation map and arroyo boundaries. Adoption of both plans is anticipated for 2027 or early 2028.

Missing Middle Initiative:

In 2023, the City applied for and was awarded a $500,000 Housing Infill on Public and Private Lands (HIPP) Grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) provided by REAP 2.0 funds. In 2025, the City released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a consultant which will help with professional design, technical, and community outreach services to facilitate the development of prototype housing plans for smaller scale multi-family development. After a competitive bid process, the City selected RADAR INC. as the prime consultant for this project. In 2025, the City and RADAR had a project kick-off and initiated various community outreach and technical tasks. As part of the project, a technical advisory committee was formed to advise the project team on key aspects throughout the project. Informed by community outreach, the project team will be creating pre-approved plans for duplex and bungalow court style housing types. The plans will be approved by summer 2026.

Industrial Development Standards:

In response to community concerns, the City began the process of evaluating current industrial development standards to determine best practices, ongoing regional and state regulatory efforts, and available tools for community benefits and sustainability standards. After several community workshops with residents, grassroots organizations, and the development community, staff explored potential changes to the Zoning Code to address sensitive receptors, floor area ratio, and building size among others. In 2024, staff identified proposed amendments to the Zoning Code. In 2025, Assembly Bill 98 was signed into law which required additional staff time to review state law and the proposed text amendments.

The City Council will consider the proposed amendments for adoption in 2026.

Signs:

On June 24, 2025, City Council adopted a set of focused amendments to sign regulations in the Zoning Code. The goal of the amendments was to create business-friendly standards, promote and permit creative sign design, and bolster the aesthetic caliber of the City's commercial areas. While the update to the code was not comprehensive, specific provisions related to commercial storefront signage and the sign permitting process were clarified, added, or removed. In late 2025, the City initiated work on the Sign Design Handbook, a resource for businesses to reference during the sign permit process to both ensure compliance with the Zoning Code and promote best practices in sign design and form.

Adaptive Reuse:

In 2024, the City received initial guidance from the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) related to technical assistance for an adaptive reuse ordinance. In 2025, the City and WRCOG finalized a Scope of Work which will incentivize the conversion of non-residential structures into standalone multi-family or mixed-use development. The adaptive reuse ordinance will help to implement the 2021 6th Cycle Housing Element policies and priorities.

University Avenue Density Transfer Pilot Program:

In 2025, the City began exploring the possibility of a density transfer program for the University Avenue Specific Plan Area, which will serve as a pilot for a potentially more widespread program in the future. This program will allow lots in the specific plan area with unused residential development capacity to transfer those units to small, vacant City-owned lots that currently do not have enough capacity to be feasible for development. In September 2025, the City Council Land Use Committee reviewed program models incorporating both bank withdrawals and direct transfer agreements and directed the creation of a hybrid program incorporating both models. This program is expected to be further developed and adopted in 2026.

Faith Lands Housing Handbook:

In late 2025, the City of Riverside, in partnership with the nonprofit Blue Zones Riverside and their consultant from Vitruvian Planning, began the process of creating a handbook for religious institutions that want to build housing but are not sure where to begin or what they should know. The handbook will demystify the streamlined SB 4 process as well as the general application process. Work done in 2025 largely consisted of outreach to faith-based organizations, developers, and nonprofits through an open house workshop; follow-up interviews with key informants; tours of religious institutions with existing or proposed housing; and focused discussions with City staff involved in the development process. The handbook is expected to be developed and distributed in early 2026.

VI. General Plan Amendments

Appendix C lists the amendments to the City's General Plan since 2007. The City adopted one (1) General Plan Amendment in 2025 as denoted by Number 82 within Appendix C.

Appendix A - 2025 Activities Related to Implementation Plan & Action Plan

Appendix B - 2025 Housing Element Progress

Appendix C –General Plan Amendment List

Appendix D - Capital Improvement Program (CIP) FY 2025/2026