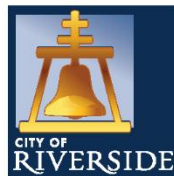


# CITY OF RIVERSIDE

## GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CA

CALENDAR YEAR 2024



**General Plan  
Annual Progress Report**

Calendar Year 2024

**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 Report 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, 2024, and December 31, 2024. 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 OPR 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**

<b>General Plan Element</b>	<b>Required or Optional</b>
Land Use and Urban Design	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Circulation and Community Mobility	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Housing	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Public Safety	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Noise	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Open Space and Conservation (2 elements combined)	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Environmental Justice Policies <sup>1</sup>	<b>REQUIRED</b>
Arts and Culture	OPTIONAL
Education	OPTIONAL
Air Quality	OPTIONAL
Public Facilities and Infrastructure	OPTIONAL

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



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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 and LEAP 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.

On 2024 the City initiated an update to the remainder of the General Plan (Phase 2 General Plan Update and Climate Action & Adaptation Plan). The funding for the Phase 2 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 will also be 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 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 recent 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 2024 reporting period.

Appendix A highlights the key activities and projects occurring in 2024 that relate to specific tools within the Implementation Plan. Table 3 identifies any 2024 activities that relate to the recently Public Safety and Environmental Justice Elements. Information on the progress of the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 2024 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.

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## ***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) forms which provides status updates regarding Housing Element implementation. These forms will be submitted to HCD through the State’s Housing Element Tracking System portal and are only provided in this report as reference.

### *RHNA Obligation*

For the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA Obligation		<b>18,458</b>

The City’s 6<sup>th</sup> 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 2024*

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 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA obligation by income level. From the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle in October 2021 to the end of 2024, The City permitted 3,299 units. Of these units, 897 were permitted during the 2024 calendar year. This includes 221 single family units, 367 multifamily units, and 309 accessory dwelling units. Table 3 shows the progress so far made towards the City’s RHNA obligation by number of units issued permits.

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**Table 3 – RHNA Progress**

Income Level	6th Cycle RHNA Progress – Number of Units Issued Building Permits by Year					
	RHNA Allocation	2021	2022	2023	2024	Remaining 6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle Obligation
Very Low	4,861	25	0	0	0	4,836
Low	3,064	25	226	33	0	2,780
Moderate	3,139	83	176	0	0	2,880
Above Moderate	7,394	340	183	1,061	897	4,913
<i>Total</i>	<b>18,458</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>1,094</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>15,409</b>

### III. Streamlining Housing Production

Since the adoption of the City’s 5<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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. The currently approved projects and their progress are described as follows:

1. Streamline Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) - The City continues to update and streamline existing ADU regulations, review fees and create pamphlets and education materials to help residents understand the differences in unit types. In 2024, the City launched Dwell Riverside, a comprehensive program that provides applicants with permit-ready ADU

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plans ranging from one bedroom, one bathroom to three bedrooms, two bathrooms. Each plan type offers the option of Craftsman, Ranch, and Spanish exterior styles to complement the existing home.

2. CEQA for Streamlined GP/Zoning Consistency - This proposal amends the General Plan and Zoning to create an avenue for determining project consistency with both the General Plan and Zoning Code, although the General Plan use designation and Zoning are not consistent on their face. (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 evaluates new density bonus legislation to create clear and concise regulations and streamlining opportunities, eliminate inconsistencies with State law, and expedite processes to grant by-right density bonuses to affordable housing, senior housing, and qualified student housing projects. 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. The City continues to monitor and implement State Density Bonus law and includes necessary changes with regular omnibus Zoning Code Amendments throughout the year.
4. Update the Zoning Code (Title 19) to streamline housing development– These changes were completed through a series of Zoning Code Amendments adopted in 2022 and 2023. Specific changes included:
  - Adjustment of parking standards and potentially introducing maximum parking requirements for housing projects 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 help increase housing densities.
5. Promote Housing on Small and Infill Lots – In 2023, the City worked with the 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 bring forth an infill development ordinance for undersized lots, a small lot subdivision ordinance, and explore the potential for a Density Transfer Program. In August 2024, City Council approved the Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinances; exploration of a density transfer program is currently on hold.
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. The City will update its Building Permit software system with a geographic information systems (GIS) module and integrate an automated tracking of housing projects. The tracking program will include a publicly viewable dashboard to allow the City to evaluate progress made toward housing initiatives (e.g., ADU regulations, Small Lot Ordinance). The accurate tracking of development will allow the City to initiate multi-family rezoning, pursuant to SB 166, in a thoughtful and deliberate manner, months in advance of any mandated SB 166 rezoning. Development of software upgrades is underway and testing is anticipated to begin in spring of 2025.



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7. VMT Mitigation – The City of Riverside adopted VMT thresholds in July 2020 following OPR’s guidance which uses average VMT per person/employee as a baseline for determining needed reductions. While many development projects within the City are screened out based on the City’s screening criteria, some development projects cannot meet adopted thresholds for reduced VMT. In 2024 the Planning Commission recommended approval of the VMT Mitigation Bank Pilot Program. This project will provide the City with a citywide mechanism to mitigate development projects that cannot mitigate on-site and simultaneously provide additional funding for active transportation and transit projects that help reduce VMT overall via a banking or exchange program. In addition, one of the primary benefits of establishing a VMT Mitigation Program is that it provides the City with the ability to expedite processing projects with identified VMT impacts and minimize or eliminate the need for additional environmental studies
8. Prepare Prescriptive Sound Transmission Control Standards – as part of our Noise, Zoning and Building Codes, to follow in lieu of requiring noise studies to facilitate our GP and streamline the development process. 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.

### IV. 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 will include:

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.

The City held a kickoff event (“Future Fest”) in October 2024 where more than 500 residents, community organizations, and City Officials were in attendance. Various community visioning workshops and pop-ups took place throughout each ward of the City which provided an overview of the GP and CAAP and allowed residents to provide input through interactive exhibits and activities. In November 2024, the City’s existing condition report was prepared. In December 2024, 22 community members were appointed to the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and 12 community members to the Climate Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). These ad-hoc

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committees are responsible for providing input, feedback, and recommendations to decision makers. As representatives of the interests and values of the various communities that make up Riverside, these committees will meet regularly during the life of the project and work to build consensus between divergent viewpoints for the betterment of the City.

### **Missing Middle and Infill Housing Initiatives:**

In September 2019 the City of Riverside applied for and received a package of Senate Bill (SB) 2 Planning Grant Program (PGP) funds from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to facilitate projects that will assist with implementation of Housing Element policies and actions. These funds allowed staff to partner with a consultant team to present a broad range of infill development strategies to the City Council Housing and Homelessness Committee in 2023. One of the strategies presented was the preparation of an infill development and small lot subdivision ordinance. In 2024, staff presented an infill development and small lot subdivision ordinance to the City Council where it ultimately passed. The ordinance introduced development standards for substandard lots throughout the City and streamlined small lot subdivisions by utilizing the existing Planned Residential Development (PRD) process.

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 2024, 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. The City and selected consultant will continue to work on this project in 2025.

### **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 Title 19 (Zoning Code) to address sensitive receptors, floor area ratio, and building size among others. In 2024, staff identified proposed amendments to Title 19. It's expected that the proposed changes will be adopted by City Council in 2025.

### **Magnolia Corridor Strategic Toolkit:**

The City continues to evaluate and study existing neighborhoods within the Magnolia Avenue corridor which leverage economic development, neighborhood revitalization and land use changes to explore how best to serve the neighborhoods. In late 2023, the City began work with the Arlington Village Business Partnership for immediate economic development and public safety solutions. In 2024, the City initiated a formal study into to Arlington Avenue project area including potential land use solutions like adaptive reuse to promote the existing neighborhood. The City initiated

## Signs

At the direction of the City Council Land Use Committee, staff began an update of the existing sign code and design guidelines in September of 2024. The goal of the amendments is 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 is not comprehensive, specific provisions related to commercial store front signage and the sign permitting process are proposed to be clarified, added, or removed. The final code amendments are anticipated to be heard by the City Council in spring of 2025.

## 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. The City will continue to work with SCAG and WRCOG in 2025 to finalize the Scope of Work for the adaptive reuse ordinance.

## Title 20 – Cultural Resources

A comprehensive update to amend Title 20 (Cultural Resources) of the Riverside Municipal Code was completed in 2024. The updated included, but not limited to, revisions to Approvals and Hearings processes, revisions and clarification of the CEQA process for Cultural Resources, clarification on the Designation process, revisions and clarification of the Certificate of Appropriateness process, addition of preliminary review process, codification of Cultural Resource Report requirement for demolition, addition of an Archaeological and Tribal Consultation Chapter, clarification of Enforcements and Penalties processes, revision of Title 20 amendment findings, clarifications to Definitions, addition of definition for demolition and demolition by neglect, and revisions of other technical language.

## V. General Plan Amendments

Appendix C lists the amendments to the City's General Plan since 2007. The City adopted two (2) General Plan Amendments in 2024 as denoted by numbers 80 and 81 within Appendix C.

**Appendix A - 2024 Activities Related to Implementation Plan & Action Plan**

**Appendix B - 2024 Housing Element Progress**



**Appendix C –General Plan Amendment List**

**Appendix D - Capital Improvement Program (CIP) FY 2024-  
2026**

