



# Housing and Homelessness Committee Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE      DATE: MAY 3, 2021**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARDS: ALL**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CITY'S PHASE 1 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE –**  
**HOUSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**  
**POLICIES INCLUDING PRELIMINARY HOUSING POLICIES AND ACTIONS AND**  
**PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICIES**

**ISSUE:**

Receive an update on the City's Phase 1 General Plan Update – Housing and Public Safety Updates and Environmental Justice Policies including the preliminary Housing Element policies and actions and preliminary Environmental Justice policies.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Housing and Homelessness Committee receive an update on the City's Phase 1 General Plan Update – "Housing and Public Safety Updates and Environmental Justice Policies", including the preliminary Housing Element policies and actions and preliminary Environmental Justice policies.

**BACKGROUND:**

*Housing Element*

The California Government Code requires that all cities and counties adopt a Housing Element as one of the mandatory components of the General Plan. The Housing Element guides the City in ensuring that housing needs of all residents in Riverside are met. The Housing Element also includes an action plan to promote safe, decent, and affordable housing for all.

The Housing Element must be updated every eight years to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving its stated housing goals and objectives, account for changes in the economic and regulatory landscape, and accommodate City's Regional Housing Need Assessment obligations. The City's 5<sup>th</sup> cycle Housing Element was finalized in December 2017 and covers the time frame from 2013 to 2021. The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle begins October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and covers the period through 2029.

Per State law, the specific purposes of the Housing Element include assessing current and future housing needs and establishing housing goals, policies and programs that provide a strategy for meeting the City's housing needs.

State law requires the following be included in the Housing Element:

- A detailed analysis of the City's demographic, economic and housing characteristics;
- A comprehensive analysis of the barriers to producing and preserving housing;
- A review of the City's progress in implementing its adopted housing policies and programs;
- Identification of goals, objectives, and policies, in addition to a full list of programs that will help the City carry out the plan's vision; and
- A list of sites that could accommodate new housing, demonstrating the City's ability to meet its target number of 18,458 new homes established in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

### Public Safety Element

California Senate Bill (S.B.) 1035 (Jackson, 2018) requires that the Public Safety Element, one of the mandatory components of the General Plan, be updated concurrently with the Housing Element to address flood and fire hazards, climate adaptation and resiliency strategies that may not have been addressed in previous updates of the General Plan. Updating the Public Safety Element helps to ensure that the City takes action to reduce natural and man-made hazards and safety threats as well as respond quickly to any public safety incident.

### Environmental Justice Policies

The City is also required, by State law, to include Environmental Justice policies in the General Plan to focus on reducing health risks, promoting civic engagement, and prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities. They will be developed by identifying disadvantaged communities/demographics and conducting community outreach to understand the challenges faced. This process will guide the City's efforts to address issues related to public health, social equity, and environmental justice.

### Timeframe

The State mandated deadline to submit the City's Phase 1 General Plan Update – "Housing and Public Safety Updates and Environmental Justice Policies" to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is October 15, 2021. The Phase 2 General Plan Update, which will include all remaining Elements, is expected to commence in late 2021 and be completed in 2024-2025.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In September 2020, City Council approved a contract with Houseal Lavigne Associates for professional services to assist Staff with the Housing Element Update and associated housing opportunity sites inventory and rezoning program, the Public Safety Element Update, the Environmental Justice policies, and a Program Environmental Impact Report (the Update) – are scheduled to be completed by the October 15, 2021 State deadline.

### Opportunity Site Selection

As part of the Update, the City has identified potential sites to accommodate the RHNA obligation and buffer. The first step in this process was identification of sites across the City that could potentially accommodate housing. Based on criteria, including but not limited to availability of vacant and underutilized land, sites large enough to accommodate multiple family residential

developments, and proximity to transportation, employment, amenities and services, staff established a preliminary inventory of potential opportunity sites. A constraints analysis was also performed that resulted in the removal of potential sites that are within areas affected by a number of physical, regulatory, and environmental constraints, such as properties within areas protected by Proposition R and Measure C, residentially restrictive Airport Land Use Compatibility Zones, floodplains, or far from transportation, employment and other amenities. This initial analysis yielded a preliminary inventory of approximately 2,270 acres Citywide.

The next step in the process included development of scenarios to meet the RHNA obligations. Not all sites identified in the preliminary inventory are currently zoned to allow for housing development. The following scenarios were created to explore options for how the RHNA obligations could be met:

- **Business as Usual Scenario** – No changes to existing zoning or allowed development on preliminary inventory sites. This scenario does not meet the City’s goal of 24,000 units.
- **Dispersed Growth Scenario** – housing development is spread more widely across almost all inventory sites, generally at lower densities resulting in less intensive but more widespread land use changes. This scenario exceeds the City’s goal of 24,000 units.
- **Focused Growth Scenario** – housing development is limited to strategic locations with superior access to transportation, employment, services, and amenities, generally at higher densities and more intensive land use changes. This scenario also exceeds the City’s goal of 24,000 units.

Public meetings in January and February 2021 allowed residents to input into the scenarios and a Preferred Alternative was prepared. The Preferred Alternative was based on the various criteria and constraints. The Preferred alternative will be used to develop the rezoning program that will be considered by City Council and ultimately submitted to HCD.

### Public Outreach Summary

Public input is essential in preparing the Update to ensure its success. The City is undertaking an inclusive process in which all residents have the chance to participate. State planning law requires that the City engage the public and include all stakeholders and income groups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff and project consultants shifted to a variety of virtual and on-line mechanisms to engage residents and other stakeholders throughout the process.

For the Housing Element specifically, outreach has included:

- A series of three virtual public workshops in January and February 2021;
- Virtual stakeholder group meetings as requested;
- Coordination with the Mayor’s Housing Action Team;
- Coordination with the Office of Sustainability;
- One-on-one discussions with residents and stakeholders upon request;
- A dedicated project website;
- Two on-line surveys;
- Two interactive web-based maps that allow anyone to leave comments or suggestions;
- Recorded public meetings posted online;
- Electronic billboard announcements;
- Social media outreach through official City channels;
- Meeting flyer & widgets shared by City and Councilmembers; and
- Regular e-mail blasts to over 50,000 recipients.

Two additional community meetings are planned for May and June 2021 to review and refine the preliminary policies and actions for the Housing and Public Safety Elements and Environmental Justice policies and actions will be prepared and incorporated into the General Plan 2025.

### HCD Initial Review

City Staff will be submitting the draft Housing Element, including draft policies and actions, opportunity site inventory, and the rezoning strategy to HCD by May 7, 2021 for their review, with an anticipated response in July 2021. HCD will preliminarily review the opportunity sites inventory, site selection criteria, and initial rezoning strategy to ensure the City is meeting State requirements prior to formal submittal. During the 60-day review period, staff will continue to work with City officials, City staff and the public in refining the policies and actions to be included in the final Housing Element submitted by October 15, 2021.

### Preliminary Policies and Actions – Housing Element

Per State law the General Plan and its component elements must include policies and implementable actions. Preliminary policies and actions have been developed for the Housing Element. The eight preliminary Housing Element include:

- Policy HE-1.0 - Affordable Housing: Preserve and increase affordable housing options, including subsidized and non-subsidized affordable units for lower-income and environmental justice communities, special needs, and under-served populations.
- Policy HE-2.0 - Homelessness: Expand housing and services that address the needs of the City's homeless population.
- Policy HE-3.0 - Fair Housing: Promote safe, healthy, and attainable housing opportunities for all people regardless of their special characteristics as protected under State and Federal fair housing laws.
- Policy HE-4.0 - Thriving Neighborhoods: Facilitate and encourage a variety of new housing development, including both single- and multi-family and missing middle housing, and the necessary public amenities that support a sense of community that results in equitable and sustainable neighborhoods.
- Policy HE-5.0 - Regulations: Reduce and remove government barriers, where feasible and legally permissible, to reduce the cost of housing development and facilitate both ownership and rental opportunities for all residents.
- Policy HE-6.0 - Monitoring/Engagement: Ensure regular monitoring and reporting, including outreach to the public, on the status of housing in the City.
- Policy HE-EJ-7.0 - Environmental Justice: Facilitate a development process that promotes design and rehabilitation of housing that is responsive to the needs and desires of the residents of environmental justice communities.
- Policy HE-EJ-8.0 - Environmental Justice: Provide opportunities to access fresh, healthy, and affordable food from food sources that are accessible to neighborhoods and within a quarter mile of public transit.

Preliminary actions to implement each policy have also been developed and will be reviewed with the public during the May public meeting.

### Preliminary Policies – Environmental Justice Housing Element

Preliminary policies related to Environmental Justice have also been prepared. Actions to implement the policies will be developed as the project moves forward and will be presented to the public in the June public meeting, along with the Public Safety policies and actions.

The existing Elements of General Plan 2025 will be amended to add the preliminary policies related to Environmental Justice. As the Phase 2 General Plan Update is completed, developing

a separate Environmental Justice Element will be considered. The preliminary Environmental Justice policies to be incorporated into General Plan 2025 include:

- Land Use and Urban Design Element
  - Policy LU-EJ-1.0 - Ensure new housing developments adhere to local, state, and federal requirements to avoid disproportionate impacts on environmental justice communities.
  - Policy LU-EJ-2.0 - Ensure the Citywide Community Engagement Policy provides residents with opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their environment and health.
- Circulation and Community Mobility Element
  - Policy CCM-EJ-1.0 - Promote physical activity and active transportation to address negative health outcomes, particularly among environmental justice communities.
  - Policy CCM-EJ-2.0 - Encourage increased public transportation and multi-modal transportation choices as means of reducing roadway congestion and associated air pollution and promoting overall health.
- Education Element
  - Policy ED-EJ-1.0 - Coordinate with public school districts, charter and private K12 schools and local universities and colleges to promote equity in educational facilities and opportunities for all student populations
  - Policy ED-EJ-2.0 - Support the Safe Routes to School programs of public-school districts, as well as charter and private K-12 schools.
- Noise Element
  - Policy N-EJ-1.0 - With a particular focus on environmental justice communities, reduce noise pollution by enforcing noise reduction and control measures within and adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- Air Quality Element
  - Policy AQ-EJ-1.0 - Ensure that land use decisions, including enforcement actions, are made in an equitable fashion to protect residents and workers in environmental justice communities from the short- and long-term effects of air pollution.
- Parks and Recreation Element
  - Policy PR-EJ-1.0 - Distribute recreational facilities equitably throughout Riverside's neighborhoods.
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure Element
  - Policy FI-EJ-1.0 - Coordinate with healthcare providers to expand healthcare access for residents of environmental justice communities.
- Arts and Culture Element
  - Policy AC-EJ-1.0 - Promote equitable distribution of arts and cultural facilities across the City.
- Historic Preservation Element
  - Policy HP-EJ-1.0 - Encourage identification and preservation of historic and cultural resources associated with communities whose histories and historical contributions are not well documented.

### Next Steps

To ensure the City submits the Draft Housing Element to HCD by the October 15, 2021 deadline, staff has prepared an aggressive schedule of overlapping tasks, including the preparation of the

related Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The following summarizes target dates and major milestones:

- May 7 – Preliminary HCD Review – 60-days
- May – Stakeholder meetings as requested - ensure input from the broader community is incorporated into the policies and actions
- Mid-May – Virtual Public Meeting - preliminary Housing Element policies and actions/Environmental Justice policies
- Mid-June – Virtual Public Meeting - preliminary Public Safety Element policies and actions/Environmental Justice actions
- Final HCD review (mid-July) - 30-day review
- July/August – Finalize PEIR, Housing Element, Public Safety Element and Environmental Justice Policies
- August – Planning Commission Public Hearing
- September - City Council Public Hearing
- October 15 – submit to HCD

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this update of the City’s Phase 1 General Plan Update – “Housing and Public Safety Updates and Environmental Justice Policies” including the preliminary Housing Element policies and actions and preliminary Environmental Justice policies.

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Attachments:

1. Preliminary Housing Element Policies and Actions and Environmental Justice Policies
2. Presentation