



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL  
STAFF REPORT

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal  
Hill, California 90755-3799

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3/25/2025

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**AGENDA ITEM**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO  
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: COLLEEN T. DOAN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: 2024 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**Summary:**

California Government Code Section 65400 mandates that cities prepare, and submit to their legislative bodies, a General Plan Annual Progress Report (GPAPR) for the previous calendar year. The GPAPR tracks the progress of the City's implementation of the General Plan programs with an emphasis on the implementation of the Housing Element. Cities must submit the GPAPR to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, along with the Housing Successor Annual Report (SB 341 report) regarding the low and moderate-income housing asset fund, which must be submitted to HCD annually.

**Strategic Plan Goal(s):**

Goal No. 1 Financial Stability: Ensure the City's long-term financial stability and resilience.

Goal No. 2 Community Safety: Maintain community safety by supporting public safety services and increasing emergency preparedness.

Goal No. 3 Economic & Downtown Development: Improve the local economy, support local businesses, and create a vibrant downtown core.

Goal No. 4 Infrastructure: Maintain and improve the City's physical infrastructure, water system, and recreational spaces.

Goal No. 5 High-Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

Recommendation:

Authorize staff to submit the Signal Hill GPAPR for calendar year 2024, the Housing Successor Annual Report (SB 341 report) to OPR and HCD.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

Background:

California Government Code Section 65400 mandates that cities prepare and submit to their legislative bodies a GPAPR for the previous calendar year. California State law requires that each city adopt a General Plan to include a comprehensive long-term plan guiding its future, covering its entire planning area. The General Plan must address a broad range of issues associated with development, including seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation (Mobility), Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. For some jurisdictions, including Signal Hill, there is an additional element related to Environmental Justice. The Signal Hill General Plan currently contains six separate elements, of which the Environmental Resources Element combines the mandated elements of Conservation and Open Space, and includes the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

State law requires the City to update the General Plan periodically. While there is no specific requirement regarding how often to update the General Plan, the planning period has traditionally been 15 to 20 years. The Housing Element is the only portion of the General Plan with a mandated schedule. The OPR guidance documents considers a General Plan to be current if the local jurisdiction has updated at least five of the seven required elements within the last eight years. The last comprehensive revision of the Signal Hill General Plan occurred in 1986; however, the City has updated various elements over time.

The HCD certified the City's 6th Cycle Housing element in October 2022. The certification triggered the requirement to prepare the Environmental Justice Element. The City executed a contract with Moore, Iacofano & Goltsman Incorporated (MIG) in 2023, which completed the public outreach campaign and, in 2024, a draft of the element was presented to staff for comments. In addition, MIG prepared a draft update to the Environmental Resources Element. City staff reviewed and provided comments to MIG on both drafts. Staff continues to work with MIG on completion of the final documents. Previously planned updates to the Land Use and Circulation Elements have been paused to complete a broad economic and land use analysis of three key areas across the City, called Opportunity Study Areas.

## **Opportunity Study Areas**

In 2024, the City selected the firm PlaceWorks to conduct a comprehensive economic and land use analysis for three large areas of the City, called Opportunity Study Areas (OSAs). Broadly defined, the purpose of the analysis is to assess future land use opportunities that will allow the City to grow economically, create jobs, and diversify the City's tax base for several years. The OSA analysis is estimated to be substantially completed by the end of the 2025 calendar year with follow up actions in 2026. The OSA analysis will lay an important foundation for the next anticipated General Plan

## Element updates to the Land Use and Circulation Elements.

General Plan Elements	Adoption / Updates
1. Land Use *	1986, 1989, 2001
2. Housing	1986, 1989, 2002, 2008, 2014, 2022
3. Circulation *	1986, 2010
4. Environmental Resources (Combines Open Space and Conservation Elements)	1987, 1988, 1989 2022 – Parks Master Plan Update 2024 – Update pending completion
5. Environmental Justice	2024 – Pending completion
6. Safety *	1986, 2016
7. Noise *	1986, 2010

*\* Elements pending updates following OSA analysis*

### Analysis:

The GPAPR provides an annual opportunity to reflect upon the City's progress to implement the City's General Plan. The GPAPR provides an analysis of implementation achievements, connecting these to the relevant General Plan policies (Attachment A). The following sections identify the key accomplishments for each General Plan element for 2024:

### **Land Use Element**

The Land Use Element provides an overview of Signal Hill's vision for the future, setting forth the means to protect the land use philosophy of the community, character of existing neighborhoods, and quality of the physical environment. This element contains criteria and appropriate locations for various land use types. Within each land use type there are guidelines for the intensity of development, design concepts, and standards for measuring the appropriateness of development. Key achievements in 2024 for Land Use, by neighborhood, include completed projects, projects under construction, projects in plan check review and projects under entitlement review, and citywide long-range projects including the OSAs and Civic Center Master Plan. Key achievements are included and outlined in the GPAPR (Attachment A).

### **2021 - 2029 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element**

Housing policy has been a long-standing priority in California. Over the past half-century, the California State Legislature has approved and passed numerous measures requiring local governments to adequately plan for housing needs within their communities. As part of these measures, municipalities are required to prepare and update local General Plan's which have mandated elements, including a Housing Element. The Housing Element is the only element within the General Plan that is required to be certified by the State. To obtain State certification, the Housing Element must include a plan to accommodate each municipality mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation, divided into four income categories. The income levels of "extremely low," "very low," and "low" are typically noted as affordable or workforce housing. The "moderate" and "above moderate" categories are noted as market rate housing. The State closely monitors and tracks housing production annually through the GPAPR.

The Housing Element identifies both constraints and opportunities in creating affordable housing in the City. The Housing Element serves as a comprehensive strategy outlining goals, policies, and programs to preserve, upgrade, and create housing in general. The California HCD requires the GPAPR to include housing data provided in a prescribed format based on the number of project entitlements and permits issued to track the actual production of housing annually. The format has expanded to incorporate new reporting requirements associated with numerous housing-related laws aimed at addressing the statewide housing supply and affordability crisis.

Signal Hill's RHNA allocation for the 2021-2029 Housing Element cycle is 517 units total for all income levels. This RHNA number is more than three times the previous cycle number of 169 units. Staff would note that during the previous Housing Element Cycle, the City facilitated construction of 100% of its affordable housing allocation. The table below illustrates the percentage of units required in each income category.

Income Level	6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA /Units	Percent
Very Low	161	31.1%
Low	78	15.1%
Moderate	90	17.4%
Above Moderate	188	36.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2024, the City approved construction of a new housing project for eight (8) condominium dwelling units on an existing vacant lot. The condominium unit project is anticipated to submit for plan check in 2025. Additionally, the City issued building permits for nine (9) Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in 2024. Of the nine (9) permits issued for ADU's, three (3) have completed construction. An additional ADU completed construction in 2024, which had an original submittal date in 2023; therefore, the City successfully completed four (4) ADU final inspections in 2024.

Since the start of the current housing cycle in 2021, the City has finalized building permits for 51 dwelling units categorized by the following income levels:

Income Level	RHNA Allocation	% of RHNA Allocation	Units Finaled 2021	Units Finaled 2022	Units Finaled 2023	Units Finaled 2024	Total to Date
Very Low	161	31.1%	0	0	0	0	0
Low	78	15.1%	0	0	0	0	0
Moderate	90	17.4%	0	0	0	0	0
Above Moderate	188	36.4%	12	24	11	4	51
Combined	517	100%	12	24	11	4	51

### Implementation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element: 2021 - 2029

As part of the certification activities for the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element, the City identified four housing sites with the capacity to accommodate the required RHNA, plus an approximate 15% surplus. The City prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and rezoned the sites for the development of two mixed-use commercial/residential projects and two affordable/workforce housing projects. In 2023, the City selected the firm National Community Renaissance (National CORE) and entered into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement to assist the City with development of two housing projects. In 2024, National CORE proposed a conceptual design for Walnut Bluff to obtain feedback from the City Council and the public. The City continues to work with National CORE on the final design. Additionally, the City has been actively working on completing all the programs in the Housing Element. The GPAPR shows the housing programs completed thus far.

### Workforce Housing Grants, Funding, and Financing

Historically, the City utilized redevelopment funding to facilitate the development of workforce housing. The funding aided in purchasing, rezoning, and remediating sites to market them to developers. Prior to 2012, the City successfully used redevelopment funding to develop 291 affordable units. With the dissolution of the redevelopment agency, this funding resource is no longer available.

In 2023, the City issued a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) requesting qualified workforce housing developers to apply. The NOFA identified approximately \$10 million of City funds which, subject to formal approval by the City and the Housing Authority, could be available from multiple sources including: the Low- and Moderate- Income Housing Asset Fund, affordable housing in-lieu fees, and the ongoing Permanent Local Housing Allocation grant program. The City funds would be used toward the development of the two workforce housing projects, which would provide a total of 380 units, 90 of which would be for moderate-income housing. After a competitive selection process, the City selected National CORE, a nationally recognized workforce housing developer. As noted above, the City entered into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA) with National CORE in 2024 regarding the projects. National CORE commenced its due diligence of the housing sites, began negotiations with the property owner to execute a Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) and began preparation of numerous applications for available funding sources to complete the projects. National CORE has initially focused on the smaller Walnut Bluff site for securing site control and a PSA for the Walnut Bluff site is expected to be executed in early 2025. The City, the Housing Authority, and National CORE entered into an Affordable Housing Agreement for the development of the Walnut Bluff site in February 2025.

### **Circulation Element**

The Circulation Element establishes guidelines and policy direction for the development and maintenance of a comprehensive transportation system in the City. The Element works to achieve long-term development, maintenance, and enhancement of the City's circulation system by recognizing that transportation routes and utility services play an important role in shaping the physical development of the City.

Key achievements in 2024 include:

- East Burnett Street Improvement Project - The Public Works Department is working on a complete roadway rehabilitation on East Burnett Street, from Walnut Avenue, up Skyline Drive

to Dawson Avenue. The two most critical components upon project completion are sidewalks on Burnett and a bicycle lane on both east and westbound of the street. Public Works is currently preparing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Environmental phase, design will start 2024 and construction is anticipated to start in the FY 2025-2026.

- Cherry Avenue and Jessie Nelson Improvement Project - The Public Works Department completed slurry sealing 13,300 square feet at Jessie Nelson Circle and Hilltop Park in April 2024.
- 2024 Annual Sidewalk Repair - The Public Works Department completed a total of 4,653 square feet of sidewalk repair at 58 locations within the City. The scope also included one new ADA ramp at Jessie Nelson Circle.
- Citywide Median Improvement Project - The Public Works Department completed the plans and specification for the Citywide Median Improvement Project. The objective on this Project is to enhance the landscape and improve irrigation at medians within the City.
- East Willow Street corridor (from Walnut Avenue to Cherry Avenue) congestion relief/intersection improvement project. Construction is anticipated to start in Spring of 2025.
- Hillbrook Park - The Public Works Department started construction on Hillbrook Park in April 2024. Improvements include new play equipment, new barbecue picnic shelters, stormwater infiltration, and the removal of dry creek beds to increase usable space. The City completed the project in early 2025.

## **Environmental Resources Element**

The Environmental Resources Element combines the required Open Space and Conservation categories into one element. Amended in 1989, the Environmental Resources Element includes the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) and associated Prioritization and Implementation Plan (PIP) to provide a blueprint for the development of the City's parks and trails system. The Element guides the management of natural resources and open space within the City by directing the timing, location, amount, and uses of resources related to air, groundwater, soils, wildlife, and minerals.

Key achievements in 2024 include:

- Hillbrook Park - The Public Works Department started construction on Hillbrook Park in April 2024. Improvements include new play equipment, new BBQ picnic shelters, stormwater infiltration, and the removal of dry creek bed to increase usable space. The City completed construction of this project in early 2025.
- Civic Center Master Plan - In 2024, the City continued working on the Civic Center Master Plan (CCMP). The purpose of the CCMP is to work with the community to reimagine the Civic Center and incorporate desired amenities that will serve future residents. Following selection in 2023 of the "The Campus" design, and given the large scope and related cost associated with developing the project, the City Council divided the project into three primary phases. Phase 1 of the CCMP would include the amphitheater and expanded parking lot along East 21

<sup>st</sup> Street. Phases 2 and 3 include a new community center, sports courts, playground, improvements to Jessie Nelson Circle, and accessibility improvements.

- Rooftop Solar Projects - The Community Development Department has been actively implementing expedited plan check review and permit issuance for the installation small rooftop solar projects.
- Food Distribution Program - The Parks and Recreation and Library Services Department continued to offer the Family Food Distribution program for low-income Signal Hill families. 37 low-income families received assistance in November and December. They received a debit card from the City's local grocery store to purchase supplemental groceries each month. In addition, 65 seniors aged 55 and older participated in the program and received the above-mentioned assistance. The program has continued to provide access to food resources to community members who need some support to close food insecurity gaps.
- Paperless Transactions - The Finance Department continued to promote and increase paperless transactions, such as reducing the issuance of paper checks.
- Parks and Recreation Commission Communications - The Parks, Recreation, and Library Services Department provides monthly updates to the Parks and Recreation Commission on projects related to park development, community events, and other community service programs.
- The City Council adopted the Public Works Department's Street Tree Master Plan in 2023. The five-year plan updated the street tree policy and tree planting standards.
  - In 2024, the City utilized the remainder of the grant from the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (NOFO) received in 2023, to plant over 300 trees citywide. The focused areas included vacant tree sites where there were no trees, trees were removed or were dead.
  - The City inspected all seven drill sites on September 11, 2024; inspections have been conducted, on average, monthly throughout the year by the City's Oil Services Coordinator. All State, Federal, and local permits and licensing are current and compliant for the 28 reporting agencies that have monitoring and oversight of operations. No Notices of Violation were received from any of the agencies in 2024. Landscaping, fencing, equipment, and stormwater protection measures were found to be in good condition.

## Safety Element

The Safety Element focuses on policies and programs to mitigate and minimize any unreasonable risks and limit the level of community exposure to a range of hazards. The element includes topics such as public safety, evacuation routes, and potential hazards. Additionally, the Safety Element incorporates the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which outlines mitigation strategies specific to the city to reduce risk by protecting life and property, enhancing public awareness, preserving natural systems, encouraging partnerships, and/or strengthening emergency services.

Key achievements in 2024 include:

- **Advanced Scheduling** - The Finance Department completed the implementation of Advanced Scheduling for the Police Department in Tyler Enterprise Resource Planning System. The new scheduling system is utilized to ensure that the proposed number of officers are scheduled for each shift.
- **Technology Safety Installations** - The Finance Department completed the installation of new Police Department servers, wireless access points, a new fire-wall system, and provided cybersecurity training to all employees.
- **Motorola Police Radio Upgrade** - The Police Department replaced end-of-life hardware with new equipment, and upgraded tower infrastructure, dispatch terminals, and handheld and patrol car radios to increase coverage and capability.
- **Body Worn Cameras** - The Police Department deployed new body-worn cameras for patrol officers, which are equipped with improved technological capabilities.
- **Cloud-Based Evidence Storage System** - The Police Department, along with IT, developed a Cloud-Based Evidence Storage System which electronically stores body worn/in-car camera footage as well as other electronic evidence. This system makes evidence storage more secure, more accessible, and it is easier to maintain.
- **Signal Hill Police Department Funding** - In 2024, the Signal Hill Police Department received grant funding from the State of California Office of Traffic Safety. The funding will facilitate best practice strategies to be conducted to reduce the number of persons killed and injured in crashes involving alcohol and other primary crash factors. The funded strategies may include impaired driving enforcement, enforcement operations focusing on primary crash factors, distracted driving, night-time seat belt enforcement, special enforcement operations encouraging motorcycle safety, enforcement and public awareness in areas with a high number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes, and educational programs. These strategies are designed to earn media attention thus enhancing the overall deterrent effect.
- **Measure H Homeless Services** - The Signal Hill Police Department met regularly with the Measure H Homeless Services Liaison to discuss various available resources for the unhoused population in Signal Hill.
- **Earthquake Drill** - The Safety Committee coordinated employee participation in the statewide "Great California Shakeout" in October.
- **Communications** - City personnel maintained close contact with all operators of hazardous and potentially hazardous facilities, including Signal Hill Petroleum, the City's largest petroleum and natural gas operator.
- **Safety Element Routes** - Staff continued to follow the 2016 Safety Element, which provides a map identifying designated evacuation routes within the City for transportation of hazardous



and toxic materials.

- Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone - The Building and Safety Division required geological investigation reports for all new and existing projects located within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones. In Signal Hill, the only earthquake fault zone is the Newport-Inglewood Fault Zone, which runs diagonally from northwest to southeast across the City.

## Noise Element

The Noise Element is intended to limit the community's exposure to excessive noise levels and ensure that local regulations are consistent with state and federal regulations. The Noise Element identifies noise sources and incorporates measures to effectively reduce excessive noise impacts to residents.

Key achievements in 2024 include:

- Fireworks Ordinance - The Administrative Department prepared a Fireworks Ordinance prohibiting the possession, sale, use, or discharge of dangerous fireworks that pose a serious risk to the public's safety in 2022. The 2024 calendar year was the second year the City implemented the ordinance.
- Noise Standards - The Signal Hill Police Department enforces compliance with noise standards in the current Motor Vehicle Code. Additionally, the City's building plan checks process incorporated review of noise standards covered in the 2022 California Building Code.
- Permitting Process - The City's building plan check process incorporated noise standards covered in the 2019 California Building Code.
- Noise Impacts - Staff analyzed noise impacts during project review as part of the California Environmental Quality Act review process. Any noise impacts following construction are addressed as part of the City's code enforcement program.
- Long Beach Airport - Staff maintained communication with Long Beach Airport personnel regarding airport operations. Staff received one noise complaint in the past year. The City provided residents with contact information to the Long Beach Airport Noise Abatement office for official complaints.
- Council of Governments (COG) - Staff maintained membership in the Gateway Cities COG and participated in regional reviews of transportation and airport operations.

## Conclusion:

The GPAPR and summary of accomplishments for implementation of the City's General Plan for 2024 must be submitted to both OPR and to HCD by April 1, 2025, along with the SB 341 housing asset fund. If authorized by the City Council, staff would submit the documents to the State for review.

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3/25/2025

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Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

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Attachment:

A. Draft General Plan Annual Progress Report