



STAFF REPORT

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3/12/2024

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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: 2023 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 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 General Plan Annual Progress Report for calendar year 2023 to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and to the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

Background:

The 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. 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. In addition, the Environmental Resources Element incorporates the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

State law requires the City 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 Office of Planning and Research (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 State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) certified the City's 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element in October 2022. The mandated update schedule for Signal Hill's Housing Element is every eight years. The 2022 certification triggered the requirement to prepare the Environmental Justice Element. In 2023, the City entered into a contract with Moore, Iacofano & Goltsman Incorporated (MIG), whom completed a public outreach campaign and is currently working with staff to finalize the draft of the Environmental Justice Element. Simultaneously, MIG is also updating the City's Environmental Resources Element. Both elements are expected to be completed within this 2024 calendar year. The Environmental Resources Element will incorporate the 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) and its associated Prioritization and Implementation Plan (PIP).

As shown in the table below, four elements require updates to meet the OPR frequency guidance. Staff anticipates the updates for the remaining elements would begin in calendar year 2024, subject to budget availability.

	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 Element	2024 - Pending completion
6.	Safety*	1986, 2016
7.	Noise*	1986, 2010

*\*Elements required to be updated.*

### Analysis:

The GPAPR provides an annual opportunity to reflect upon the City's progress in implementing 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 2023.

### 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 2023 for Land Use, by neighborhood, include completed projects, projects under construction, projects in plan check review and projects under entitlement review (Attachment B).

### 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 Plans 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 Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) requires that the GPAPR 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 2023, the City issued building permits for seven (7) units and eleven (11) units were completed and permits finalized. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) saw an increase in construction activity in 2023. All residential permits issued and finalized in 2023 were for ADUs.

Since the start of the current housing cycle in 2021, the City has finalized building permits for 46 dwelling units categorized by the following income levels:

Income Level	RHNA Allocation	% of RHNA Allocation	Units Finaled 2021	Units Finaled 2022	Units In Finaled 2023	Units Proposed to be Demolished	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	-1	
<b>Combined</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>46</b>

### 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. An

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared, and the City rezoned the sites for the development of two mixed-use commercial/residential projects and two affordable/workforce housing projects. In April 2023, the City released a Notice of Funding Allocation (NOFA) to invite housing developers/managers to submit proposals to develop and manage the two workforce housing projects. The City selected National Community Renaissance (National CORE) after a comprehensive review process. Subsequently, the City Council approved an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement with National CORE, to establish the tasks and timeframes for how to proceed with securing site control and financing. The City has also been actively working on completing all the programs in the Housing Element. Attachment A shows the housing programs completed thus far.

### Workforce Housing Grants, Funding, and Financing

Historically, the City utilized redevelopment funding to facilitate 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.

The NOFA identified approximately \$10 million of City funds which, subject to formal approval by the City and the Housing Authority (Public Agencies), 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. As required by the ENA, National CORE will update its financing plan, which will include numerous funding sources to complete the project.

In 2023, the City joined the newly organized Gateway Cities Affordable Housing Trust, as an additional funding source. The Housing Trust was formed in 2023 to address the region's housing needs. The Housing Trust 2024 Housing Loan Program provides for the availability of just over \$5.7 million for the new construction or acquisition/rehabilitation of affordable housing. To be eligible for the grant funds, projects must be located in cities compliant with State housing law, as determined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

## **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 2023 include:

- **Citywide Median Improvement Project:** The Public Works Department has completed the majority of design plans for the Citywide Median project. This project is aimed at the reconstruction of multiple medians throughout the City. Staff conducted a series of public outreach meetings to inform the community about the upcoming projects. The project improvements include:

- Ohio Avenue and Palm Drive Rehabilitation Project: Completed re-pavement and rehabilitation of both streets, including ramps, sidewalks, and driveways.
- East Willow Street & Dawson Avenue Traffic Signal Replacement Project: This project replaced a traffic signal pole that was damaged by several traffic incidents creating a concern for the Towne Center East businesses. The pole was successfully relocated within the intersection to reduce the probability of future accidents.
- Spring Street Bicycle Lane Gap Closure Project: The Public Works Department completed the construction of Class 2 bikes lanes along the Spring Street corridor utilizing Active Transportation grant funding.
- 2023 Annual Sidewalk Repair: The Public Works Department Annual sidewalk repair focused on addressing existing sidewalks throughout the City for better pedestrian access.
- Public Works Department Project Funding Secured in 2023:
  - East Willow Street Corridor Project (Walnut Avenue to Cherry Avenue) funded by the I - 710 Technical Advisory Committee
  - Reservoir Park Improvement Design Project funded by the Lower Cerritos Channel Water Management Program
  - Civic Center Parking Lot Improvement Project funded by the California Arts Commission
  - Civic Center Amphitheater funded by the California Arts Commission
  - East 20<sup>th</sup> Street and Redondo Avenue Traffic Signal Improvement Project funded by the Highway Infrastructure Program and Coronavirus Relief Grant
  - East 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Walnut Avenue Water Main Leak funded by the Central Basin Leak Detection Grant Program
  - Citywide Street Trees funded by CalFire/Urban Regional Forest Grant Program

## 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 PRMP and associated 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 2023 include:

- Hillbrook Park Project: Public Works and the consulting firm Architerra developed conceptual design plans for the upgrade to the park. Parks, Recreation, and Library Services conducted public outreach meetings to receive public comments. The City anticipates awarding a contract to construct the upgrades in 2024.
- Street Tree Master Plan: The City Council adopted the Street Tree Master Plan in 2023. The five-year plan updated the street tree policy and tree planting standards.
  - The Public Works Department received a \$1,000,000 grant from the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (NOFO). The grant will be utilized for the planting and maintenance of over 1,000 trees, increasing the urban forest coverage and promoting a healthier, greener community in Signal Hill.
- Well 10: The Public Works Department completed the construction of a new well, which will bolster the reliability of the City's water network by providing an additional source of groundwater. This project will increase the Water Department's ability to provide potable water during peak demand intervals, while reducing the reliance on external water connections.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers and Rooftop Solar Projects: The Community Development Department has been actively implementing expedited plan check review and permit issuance for installation of EV chargers and rooftop solar projects.
- Food Distribution Program: The Parks, Recreation, and Library Services Department's Food Distribution Program delivered 736 boxes of fresh food to senior citizens and 372 boxes of fresh food to families in need in 2023.
- 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 Planning Department worked on an informational brochure and published it on the City website providing information on solar energy in Signal Hill as part of Program 5.2 in Signal Hill's Certified Housing Element.
- Signal Hill Petroleum Drill Sites: As a part of the City's annual inspection of properties with an active Conditional Use Permit (CUP), staff inspected Signal Hill Petroleum's seven oil well drill sites to confirm that the sites are in good condition in relation to landscaping, fence screening, general maintenance, and equipment.
  - The City inspected all seven drill sites on December 1, 2023; 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 reports of nuisance, noise, or odors were received from residents, and no Notices of Violation were received from any of the agencies in 2023. Landscaping, fencing, equipment, and stormwater protection measures were found to be in generally good condition with a few minor maintenance items which were completed in 2023.

- The City and its environmental consultant are preparing a thorough analysis of the oil and gas operations at the drill sites to determine and mitigate any environmental impacts caused by operations as follows:
  - The drill sites operator, Signal Hill Petroleum (SHP) requested a 20-year extension of its seven Drill Sites CUP.
  - The City circulated a Request for Proposal, and the City executed a contract with Catalyst Environmental Solutions (Catalyst) whom has been meeting regularly with City staff and representatives from SHP to prepare the required technical reports and conduct the detailed environmental analysis.
  - Catalyst completed and/or peer reviewed a project description compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act and all environmental technical studies. They also completed a draft Initial Study recommending a Project Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).
  - A Scoping meeting for the PEIR was conducted on January 30, 2023.
  - An initial timeline was prepared to complete the environmental analysis, prepare the PEIR document, and bring an amended CUP for a long-term extension to the City Council for consideration by the end of fiscal year 2023. Although the timeline was delayed by more than 6 months, progress has been steady and the Draft PEIR was prepared and was under review by staff. Staff anticipates the final draft document will be ready for public review and comment in the first quarter of 2024. During that time, SHP also plans to offer one or more public tours of its drill sites to share operational and environmental information with interested parties or individuals.

## **Safety Element**

The Safety Element focuses on policies and programs to mitigate and minimize any unreasonable risks and limit the level of community's 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 2023 include:

- Hazard Mitigation Plan: The City prepared and circulated a draft of the Hazard Mitigation Plan for review by various departments. The second draft is currently out for public comment. Once



completed, the element will be incorporated into the updated Safety Element.

- **Emergency Management Coordinator:** The Signal Hill Police Department hired a full-time Emergency Management Coordinator.
- **Advanced Scheduling:** The Finance Department completed the implementation of Advanced Scheduling for the Police Department in the Tyler Enterprise Resource Planning System. The new scheduling system is utilized to ensure that the proposed number of officers are scheduled for each shift.
- **Measure H Homeless Services:** The Signal Hill Police Department met regularly with the Measure H funded Homeless Services Liaison to discuss various available resources for the unhoused population in Signal Hill.
- **Narcan:** In 2023, the Signal Hill Police Department applied for and received grant funding to purchase Narcan. Narcan is a potentially lifesaving medication designed to help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose in minutes. The grant funding was also utilized to provide Officer training on its use. This has proven to be an invaluable resource when it comes to providing emergency medical care in a timely fashion.
- **Earthquake Drill:** The Safety Committee coordinated citywide 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 SHP, 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 2023 include:

- **Fireworks Ordinance:** The Finance Department prepared a Fireworks Ordinance in 2022 prohibiting the possession, sale, use or discharge of dangerous fireworks that pose a serious

risk to the public's safety. The 2023 calendar year was the first 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 check process incorporated review of noise standards covered in the 2022 California Building Code.
- The City's Neighborhood Enhancement Division oversees noise code compliance and received one noise complaint from a Long Beach resident in 2023.
- 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 the resident 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 2023 must be submitted to both OPR and to HCD by April 1, 2024, along with the SB 341 housing asset fund. If authorized by the City Council, staff would submit the documents to the State for review.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

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Sharon del Rosario

Attachment:

- A. General Plan Annual Progress Report
- B. 2023 Land use Element-Key Achievements