



Department: Community Development
Cost Center: 4006
For Agenda of: 4/1/2025
Placement: Consent
Estimated Time: N/A

FROM: Timmi Tway, Community Development Director
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SUBJECT: 2024 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

As recommended by the Planning Commission, receive and file the 2024 General Plan Annual Report.

POLICY CONTEXT

According to the General Plan Land Use Element Policy 11.3, the City shall prepare an annual report on the status of the General Plan, which is to include the following items:

- A. A summary of private development activity and a brief analysis of how it helped achieve General Plan goals;
- B. A summary of major public projects and a brief analysis of how they contributed to achieving General Plan goals;
- C. An overview of programs, and recommendations on any new approaches that may be necessary;
- D. A status report for each General Plan program scheduled to be worked on during that year, including discussion of whether that program realization is progressing on schedule, and recommendations for how it could better be kept on schedule if it is falling behind schedule;
- E. A status report on how the City is progressing with implementing its open space preservation policies and programs; and,
- F. Updated population or other information deemed important for the Plan.

In addition, all jurisdictions are required to provide the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with separate General Plan Annual Reports in April, per Government Code Sections 65400 and 65700. The annual report shall include the progress in meeting the city's share of regional housing need allocation (RHNA) for above moderate income, moderate income, lower income, very low income and extremely low income households and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the provision of housing.

REPORT-IN-BRIEF

The 2024 General Plan Annual report (Attachment A) is required by state law to be submitted to state agencies in April each year and provides an opportunity to review the status of the City's implementation of General Plan policies and programs. The report includes highlights of the City's prioritized policies and programs to support housing production and other building trends, progress in homelessness response, and project highlights for transportation and capital projects, as well as public safety services and open space protection.

DISCUSSION

Background

California Government Code Section 65400 requires cities to submit an annual report on the status of their [General Plan](#) and progress in its implementation to their legislative body (City Council), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Prior to submittal to the state, the annual report must be presented to the City Council for review and acceptance. Previous General Plan Annual Reports can be found at [this website](#). The Housing Element portion of the annual report shall include the city's RHNA progress described above and housing production applications, completions, demolitions, as well as measures the city takes to remove housing barriers.

The GPAR is strictly a reporting document and does not create or modify any City goals, policies or programs found within the General Plan.

Report Organization

The General Plan is a comprehensive statement of the City's goals and guides the use and protection of various resources to achieve them. It consists of numerous policies covering a range of City activities, including the creation and/or maintenance of public programs, guidelines on land use and development standards, and more. The General Plan Annual Report (GPAR) is an opportunity for the City to review how well the Plan continues to meet its goals. It also provides an opportunity to review how well programs identified by the Plan are being implemented, and to determine if they are still relevant to City goals and policies. Additionally, assessment of the implementation of the General Plan informs the City Council about programs and projects that might be initiated as the City develops a new financial plan.

The 2024 GPAR is organized around the following key implementation areas:

- Planning and Building Activity
- Residential Growth
- Non-Residential Growth
- Housing Element Program Implementation
- Municipal Code Updates
- Climate Action Plan
- Economic Development
- Policy Initiatives
- Water Supply
- Transportation & Circulation

- Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Progress
- Homelessness Solutions
- Coordination with Other Agencies
- Specific Plan Area Development
- Safety Services
- Neighborhood Wellness
- Conservation & Open Space
- Parks & Recreation

Report Highlights

Development Activity and Trends

Residential Development

The 2024 GPAR presents a variety of data collected by the City to give insight into development activity and trends over several years. Based on the Community Development Department’s (CDD’s) residential building permit data, the City saw 119 single-family residences permitted in 2024, a decrease compared to 136 in 2023 and 163 in 2022. However, 96 accessory dwelling units and 234 multi-family units were permitted in 2024, contributing to a total of 442 new residential units, an increase compared to the 367 total units permitted in 2023.

California cities and counties are required to develop programs designed to meet a share of their surrounding region's housing needs for all income groups. The allocations are included in each jurisdiction’s Housing Element so that plans, policies, and standards may be created to help meet housing needs within the planning period. The City has a total Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of 3,354 housing units to plan for in the 6th Cycle Housing Element. Table 7 of the GPAR, included below, indicates the City’s progress towards 6th Cycle Quantified Objectives for RHNA. Of the 3,354 housing units from the City’s RHNA, 2,065 units have been added to the City’s housing stock, approximately 62% of the initial allocation. The remaining 38% of housing units needed consist of 1,289 Below Market Rate units for extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income levels.

GPAR Table 7 Progress Towards 6th Cycle Quantified Objectives, 2019-2028

Income Level (% of County Median Income)		6th Cycle RHNA Allocation	Building Permitted Units Issued by Affordability						Total Units by Income Level	Total Units Remaining by Income Level
			Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)	Year 4 (2022)	Year 5 (2023)	Years 6 – 10 (2024 - 2028)		
Extremely Low	Deed Restricted	825	0	0	14	36	0	103	153	519
	Non-Deed Restricted		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Very Low	Deed Restricted		0	14	42	14	22	61	153	
	Non-Deed Restricted		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

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Income Level (% of County Median Income)		6th Cycle RHNA Allocation	Building Permitted Units Issued by Affordability						Total Units by Income Level	Total Units Remaining by Income Level
			Year 1 (2019)	Year 2 (2020)	Year 3 (2021)	Year 4 (2022)	Year 5 (2023)	Years 6 – 10 (2024 - 2028)		
Low	Deed Restricted	520	6	0	36	21	5	84	152	242
	Non-Deed Restricted		0	30	46	50	0	0	126	
Moderate	Deed Restricted	603	8	5	9	2	4	4	32	528
	Non-Deed Restricted		0	0	0	0	43	0	43	
Above Moderate		1,406	523	416	472	439	293	190	2,333	0
Total Units		3,354	537	465	619	562	367	442	2,992	
								Total Remaining for RHNA Period:	1,289	

LUE Policy 1.11.2, related to residential growth, states that the City’s housing supply shall grow no faster than 1 percent per year, on average, based on established thresholds in Table 3 of the [Land Use Element](#) (LUE). Dwellings affordable to residents with extremely low, very low, low or moderate incomes, as defined by the Housing Element, new dwellings in the Downtown Core, and legally established accessory dwelling units are exempt from the calculation. The intent of this policy is to ensure that the rate of population growth will not exceed the City’s ability to accommodate new residents and to provide municipal services consistent with the maximum growth rates established in the General Plan.

Housing production has been a Major City Goal for the past several financial plans, with the City successfully prioritizing programs that support new housing production. Each year the City calculates a rolling average number of housing units produced since 2015 (Land Use and Circulation Element adoption). Prior to 2024, the City maintained an average annual housing unit growth rate below the 1 percent threshold. Due to the number of eligible¹ building permits finalized in 2024, the current average annual growth rate is 1.03 percent per year since 2015, which exceeds the 1 percent threshold.

Despite the figure exceeding this threshold for number of eligible housing units, the average annual population growth rate has remained under 1 percent within the same timeframe as reported by the State Department of Finance. Therefore, while the number of housing units currently exceeds the 1 percent threshold, the population is below the

¹ Eligible new units for growth rate calculation purposes are 342 units of the total 442 units for yr. 2024 and exclude deed-restricted affordable units, ADUs, and new dwellings in the Downtown Commercial (C-D) zone.

projected estimate for 2024. Based on State data², the City has a population of 48,684, while the LUE anticipated a population of 50,000 by 2025 with a 1 percent annual growth rate. In addition, given the impending completion of several large housing focused specific plan areas, it is anticipated that the average annual residential growth rate could fall back under the 1 percent threshold within the next several years.

The City Council reviews the rate of growth on an annual basis in conjunction with the General Plan annual report to ensure consistency with the City's gradual assimilation policy. There is no action required to address the residential growth rate exceeding the threshold, although Council could choose to establish limitations on new residential development through phasing of specific plans in annexation areas as allowed by the [Residential Growth Management Regulations](#) in the Municipal Code. Any direction to consider such limitations would need to be further evaluated to ensure compliance with California Gov't Code § 66300 (Housing Crisis Act), which significantly restricts cities' ability to enforce growth and development caps in a manner that impairs issuance of building permits or the development of housing in areas where housing is otherwise allowed. There are narrow exceptions to the statutory restriction on growth caps, likely not applicable here, and any moratorium or other action to restrict housing permits or development would need to be reviewed and approved by HCD. More information about residential growth in the City can be found starting on page 5 of the attached GPAR. Staff will place a study session on a future City Council agenda to provide an opportunity to discuss the City's residential growth management regulations.

Non-Residential Development

Non-residential development saw a substantial increase in number of square feet of development in 2024, specifically a net annual growth rate of 0.60 percent in 2024, compared to 0.35 percent in 2023. Considering "finalized" permits for non-residential development, 71,386 square feet of floor area was added to the City in 2024, yielding a 5-year net non-residential growth of 2.26 percent. LUE Policy 1.11.4 states that the City Council shall consider establishing limits for the rate of non-residential development if the increase in non-residential floor area for any five-year period exceeds 5 percent. The City is significantly below the threshold to establish any non-residential growth limit for 2024. More information about non-residential growth in the City can be found starting on page 7 of the attached GPAR.

Homelessness Solutions

The [City's 6th Cycle Housing Element](#) includes policies and programs to reduce homelessness under Goal 1, Safety and Goal 8, Special Housing Needs. Homelessness Response also remains a Major City Goal (Housing and Homelessness) as part of the 2023-25 Financial Plan.

In June 2024, City Council approved an updated version of the City's Homelessness Response Strategic Plan for 2024-26, outlining objectives and key tasks to prevent and address homelessness in the City. This plan aligns with San Luis Obispo's Countywide

² State of California, Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2023 and 2024. Sacramento, California, May 2024.

Plan to Address Homelessness, providing key lines of effort to reduce homelessness by 50% between 2022 and 2027. Homelessness response activities in 2024 included regional collaboration on state funding opportunities to develop interim and permanent supportive housing and partnering with community and faith-based organizations to develop a Rotating Overnight Safe Parking Pilot Program model. Other programs, including the Human Services Grant Program (which prioritizes City grant funding to community organizations and projects addressing homelessness), Community Action Team, Mobile Crisis Unit, and collaborative efforts with Downtown SLO and CAPSLO, continued throughout 2024. More information on this topic can be found on page 14 of the attached GPAR.

Transportation & Circulation

Numerous transportation planning and engineering projects were implemented in 2024, aligning with this Major City Goal and the [Circulation Element of the General Plan](#). Sustainable transportation also remains a Major City Goal (Climate Action, Open Space, and Sustainable Transportation) as part of the 2023-25 Financial Plan.

Numerous traffic safety improvements were implemented as part of the City's Traffic Safety Program to address collision trends and resident safety concerns. This included striping modifications, sign replacements, and sight distance improvements at several intersections. Additionally, the City's first [Vision Zero Action Plan](#) was released in 2024 in draft form for public review. This plan provides a comprehensive summary of current safety trends and provides a blueprint to guide priorities in areas of engineering, enforcement, and education to improve traffic safety citywide.

In January 2024, a [Transit Innovation Study](#) was provided to City Council who directed staff to finalize said report. Since then, City staff has implemented numerous recommendations provided by the report. Additional transit operations implemented in 2024 include:

- In March 2024, the City issued a purchase order for 2 battery electric buses, increasing the total number on order to 8. Staff anticipates that by 2026, half of the City's bus fleet will consist of zero emission vehicles.
- SLO Transit partnered with SLOCOG and RTA to offer free transit rides during Rideshare Week, providing over 4,000 free rides during this 5-day period.
- In September 2024, SLO Transit reinstated the 6 Express, providing direct service between Cal Poly and Downtown during the Farmers' Market.
- Continued work on SLO Transit's Short-Range Transit Plan update. This plan recommends service, fare, and program changes over the next 5 years to help SLO Transit better meet the community's transportation needs.

Safety Services

[Climate Adaptation and Safety Element](#) (CASE) Policy OP-7.1 requires that there should be adequate planning, organization, and resources for emergency preparedness and emergency response. City staff has made several accomplishments in 2024 to implement this policy.

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The San Luis Obispo Fire Department (SLOFD) responded to 7,004 incidents from 4 strategically placed fire stations throughout the City in 2024, which is a 5.17 percent decrease in incidents as compared to 2023 and more in line with previous years. The increase in responses observed in 2023 is attributed to the federally declared disaster winter storms in 2023. In 2024, SLOFD's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team continued to play a vital role in protecting the lives of both visitors and residents alike. SLOFD, along with its USAR Team members, responded to 16 technical rescues and medical emergencies in open space areas in and around the City. SLOFD's Mobile Crisis Unit (MCU) continues to respond to behavioral health incidents in both a proactive and reactive manner. In 2024, the MCU Team responded to a total of 151 calls for service and 2,998 field contacts, resulting in the MCU providing transport to alternate facilities a total of 46 times. Working with fellow stakeholders, the MCU Team was also able to facilitate the reunification of 35 individuals experiencing homelessness with their family, friends, or other out-of-area support networks.

In 2024, the San Luis Obispo Police Department (SLOPD) completed its first year of work effort of its 5-year strategic plan, which included the completion of a department-wide staffing study, use of data-driven policing tools to reduce crime, establish an online recruitment portal to enhance hiring efforts, improve the physical fitness facility at the department, develop a central resource guide for employee wellness information, and update its current body-worn and in-car camera systems. SLOPD's Community Action Team (CAT) continues to identify problems and crime trends that negatively impact the quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors. In 2024, CAT engaged with 471 individuals and made 197 treatment referrals to mental health and substance abuse services. Additionally, CAT facilitated 8 family reunifications for individuals experiencing homelessness. SLOPD's Community Service Officer (CSO) program has also played a pivotal role in delivering personalized services to residents, the business community, and visitors. In 2024, the CSO program issued 88 citations for offenses such as public alcohol consumption, littering, smoking, and unregistered vehicles, along with 294 cite-and-release arrests for alcohol, drugs, theft, tows, and trespassing.

Conservation and Open Space

The General Plan contains many goals, policies, and programs focused on open space protection. The policies apply to sensitive lands within the City's urban reserve as well as land in the San Luis Obispo Greenbelt area that is protected for its biological, agricultural, aesthetic, and/or watershed protection value. These policies are further detailed in the [Land Use](#) and [Circulation Element](#) and the [Conservation and Open Space Elements](#) of the General Plan. Some highlights for 2024 include:

- Invasive species control efforts in the Miossi Open Space continued throughout 2024, as well as erosion and storm damage repairs, with significant repair work completed to protect the primary access road that was at risk of being lost.
- In June 2024, the City hosted a cultural burn at Johnson Ranch Open Space conducted by the yak tit'vu tit'vu yak tiłhini Northern Chumash Tribe (ytt) with support from CalFIRE. It was the first Indigenous-led cultural fire in SLO County since the 1800's and implements the Climate Adaptation and Safety Element to incorporate

traditional ecological knowledge, such as cultural burns to reduce fuel loads and decrease the likelihood of catastrophic future wildfires.

- Phase 1 of the trail system and trailhead work identified in the Righetti Hill Open Space Conservation Plan was completed in 2024.
- City staff continued invasive species vegetation control along Froom, Prefumo, and San Luis Obispo Creeks, which involved planting native plants and trees, and installation of butterfly gardens in support of the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge.
- City staff began restoration work at Johnson Ranch, which is funded by a \$250,000 grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board and Point Blue Conservation Science.

Previous Council or Advisory Body Action

The Planning Commission reviewed the 2024 General Plan Annual Report on March 12, 2025. Staff responded to Planning Commission questions regarding homelessness response, housing production and growth management, water resources, impacts of state fire hazard severity maps, and transportation connectivity. The report was unanimously recommended to be forwarded to the City Council.

Public Engagement

The General Plan Annual Report is strictly a reporting document and does not create nor modify any goals or policies found within the General Plan. Once accepted by the City Council, the report will be available on the City’s website for public review and will be submitted to OPR and HCD as required. In addition, opportunity was provided for public comment before and during the Planning Commission meeting on March 12, 2025, and the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment before and during the City Council meeting.

CONCURRENCE

The Community Development Department prepared the General Plan Annual Report with significant input from the other City departments. Administration (including Natural Resources, Economic Development, and Office of Sustainability divisions), Utilities, Public Works, Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Departments collaborated with the Community Development Department to complete the report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply because the General Plan Annual Report does not constitute a “Project” under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

FISCAL IMPACT

Budgeted: N/A
Funding Identified: N/A

Budget Year: N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Total Budget Available	Current Funding Request	Remaining Balance	Annual Ongoing Cost
General Fund	\$N/A	\$	\$	\$
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other:				
Total	\$0	\$0	\$	\$0

The acceptance of the 2024 General Plan Annual Report does not have a direct fiscal impact. However, it should be noted that it is estimated that the City’s population will grow to 57,200 at full build out of the General Plan, by 2035. This represents a 15% increase compared to the City’s population of 48,684 as of January 1, 2024, which may precipitate the need for additional staff, capital projects and maintenance, and other resources to support a larger population and respond to an increasing diversity of needs.

ALTERNATIVES

1. ***Council could decide not to accept and file the 2024 General Plan Annual Report.*** Although no action is recommended as part of receiving and filing the report, the report is required to be submitted to OPR and HCD in early April in accordance with Government Code Sections 65400 and 65700. Enforcement provisions per state law allow for a court to compel jurisdictions to comply with the requirement.
2. ***Council could decide to continue consideration of the 2024 General Plan Annual Report.*** Although no action is recommended as part of receiving and filing the report, the report is required to be submitted to OPR and HCD in early April in accordance with Government Code Sections 65400 and 65700. Given growth management considerations outlined in the report, staff will agendize a future study session on the growth threshold topic for further Council discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

A - 2024 General Plan Annual Report