

City of Alameda

General Plan and Housing Element

Annual Report

2023



This Annual Report is prepared for the review and consideration by:

The Alameda City Council:

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Vice Mayor Tony Daysog
Council Member Trish Herrera Spencer
Council Member Tracy Jensen
Council Member Malia Vella

The Alameda Planning Board:

President Hanson Hom
Vice President Xiomara Cisneros
Board member Diana Ariza
Board member Teresa Ruiz
Board member Asheshh Saheba
Board member Sunny Tsou
Board member Andy Wang

The residents and businesses of the City of Alameda, California.

This Annual Report was prepared by the City of Alameda Planning, Building and Transportation Department

Photographs by Maurice Ramirez and Amie McPhee

Executive Summary

Pursuant to Government Code § 65300 et seq., every city and county in California is required to adopt and maintain an up-to-date, integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of General Plan policies to guide physical development and protect the general health, safety and welfare of the community. The Government Code also requires that the City Council annually review the adequacy of the General Plan and progress made to implement the city's regional housing need allocation by April 1 of each year. The City of Alameda General Plan and Housing Element are available for review on the City website. www.alameda2024.org

This annual report on the status of the General Plan provides an opportunity for the City Council and its advisory boards and commissions to consider the adequacy of the Alameda General Plan, progress made over the last year towards implementation, and priorities for the upcoming year.

Government Code section 65400 (a) requires that the planning agency (Planning, Building, and Transportation Department) annually make recommendations to the legislative body (the City Council) regarding “reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan or element of the general plan so that it will serve as an effective guide for the orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and natural resources”.

Following adoption of the General Plan in 2022, the city set some priorities for General Plan implementation in 2023. Progress was made on several of these. Others are carried over to the workplan for 2024, as staffing and funds are available.

2022 Priorities:

- **Alameda Housing Authority North Housing and Webster Street Projects:** Support the Alameda Housing Authority's efforts to provide low income affordable housing at the North Housing site and on Webster Street at the Hawthorne Suites site.

Progress: The North Housing site received entitlements and is proceeding with site preparation and plan review for phased construction of permanent supportive housing and senior housing. The Planning Board approved a use permit for the Hawthorne Suites project to convert hotel rooms to supportive transitional housing units.

- **RESHAP Project.** Complete the necessary amendments to the RESHAP Development Plan and Development Agreement in support of construction of 309 lower income and special needs households and the associated support services and facilities on 10 acres of City-owned land at Alameda Point.

Progress: Entitlement amendments were approved by the Planning Board and are being presented to the City Council in March 2024.

- **West Midway Project.** Complete a Site Development Plan for the West Midway project on 23 acres of City-owned land at Alameda Point.

Progress: The project received approval and is proceeding to phased development of the necessary infrastructure, affordable housing and community resource features, as well as the market rate housing.

- **Housing Regulations:** Hold public hearings to consider amendments to the:

- **Objective Design Standards** to ensure high quality architectural design.

Progress: Objective Design Standards have been adopted following community and board/commission engagement. The standards are in use with projects that are eligible for streamlined review.

- **Subdivision Ordinance** (AMC Article VI) to reduce process and permitting costs for housing projects requiring lot line adjustments, parcel maps, or tentative maps.

Progress: A draft ordinance was reviewed and recommended by the Planning Board and will be presented to the City Council in March 2024.

- **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance** (AMC Section 30-16) to focus inclusionary requirements on the income groups with the greatest need for deed restricted housing.

Progress: A working group is being formed and a workscope is being formulated to study revisions to the ordinance and bring a draft to the Planning Board and City Council in 2024.

- **Universal Design Ordinance** (AMC Section 30-18) to address accessibility and visitability in townhome residential design.

Progress: A working group is being formed and a workscope is being formulated to study revisions to the ordinance and bring a draft to the Planning Board and City Council in 2024.

- Prepare for consideration a **Short Term Rental Ordinance** to preserve Alameda's permanent rental housing supply.

Progress: A working group is being formed and a workscope is being formulated to study revisions to the ordinance and bring a draft to the Planning Board and City Council in 2024.

Affordable Housing. Hold at least one public hearing to provide a forum for a public discussion of the merits of an Affordable Housing Bond and/or a Vacancy Tax for the purposes of funding affordable housing and preserving the existing housing stock.

Progress: A working group is being formed and a workscope is being formulated to study revisions to the ordinance and bring a draft to the Planning Board and City Council in 2024.

In addition, a draft revision of several ordinance sections that would clarify and streamline the review process was presented to the Planning Board at two worksessions in 2023. These revisions are expected to be forwarded to the City Council in 2024.

General Plan 2040

Due to the three year effort by the Alameda Planning Board and community, the City of Alameda "General Plan 2040" is up-to-date, internally consistent, and consistent with State Government Code requirements for a valid General Plan.

In December 2021, the Alameda City Council adopted the first comprehensive update of the General Plan in 30 years. *Alameda General Plan 2040* includes:

- Introduction and Themes
- Land Use and City Design Element
- Conservation and Climate Action Element
- Mobility Element
- Open Space and Parks Element
- Health and Safety Element.

In July 2022, the City Council adopted additional amendments to the Health and Safety and Conservation and Climate Action Elements concurrent with the adoption of the 2022 Disaster Preparedness Plan, which was last updated in 2017.

In November 2022, the City Council adopted a comprehensive update of the Housing Element and the associated zoning amendments necessary to accommodate the regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) for the eight-year period from 2023 through 2031, as required by State law.

Housing Construction 2023

Government Code Section 65400 requires the City to annually consider the prior year's progress in meeting the City of Alameda's regional housing needs allocations (RHNA).

In 2022, the City Council adopted the City's Housing Element for the period 2023 through 2031. The new Housing Element includes the policies and programs necessary to construct at least 5,353 housing units over the eight-year period, or an average of 670 units per year. These units are intended to meet a variety of housing needs, addressing affordability, accessibility, equitable access to community resources, transportation, and employment, and other community goals.

Concurrently, the City Council adopted zoning text and map amendments to facilitate a number of objectives related to overall housing production, affordable housing, and equitable housing. These amendments are influencing decisions by landowners and developers as they consider infill housing development at existing underused office and general commercial properties. New applications are anticipated along the Northern Waterfront, Marina Village, and Alameda Point.

In 2023, the City issued building permits for a total of 141 dwelling units. Of these, 2 were attached ownership units, 3 were detached ownership units, and 85 units were detached multi-family units. Accessory dwelling units accounted for another 51 units located throughout existing neighborhoods. There were 47 affordable housing units.

The City is undergoing an extended recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the housing market is similarly finding its footing in the new marketplace of higher interest rates, continuing cost escalation, and uncertain rental and sales demand in light of migration and employment realignment. In light of this, the City is taking a long-term view of the eight-year housing goals.

In the 2023-2031 planning period, the need (RHNA) for affordable housing includes:

- 1,421 units for very low-income households (27% of the total)
- 818 units for low-income households (15% of the total)
- 868 units for moderate-income households (16% of the total)
- 2,246 for market-rate income households (42% of the total)

Every project of more than 5 units in Alameda provides a minimum of 15% affordable housing. In addition, the projects on City owned land at Alameda Point provided a minimum of 25% of the units as affordable housing, and the Alameda Housing Authority constructs projects which are 100% affordable. As a result, approximately 22% of all the housing constructed in Alameda over the previous eight-year period was deed restricted for lower-income or moderate-income households. The same trends are expected to continue for the current period. The RHNA allocation is 58% affordable units for very-low to moderate income households. Reaching this objective will likely require achieving a higher total number of units and special efforts to build 100% affordable projects in partnership with various providers.

As mentioned above, the City issued permits for 50 accessory dwelling units in 2023. Although these units are not deed restricted, a study of accessory dwelling units in the Bay Area by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), approximately 30% of ADUs serve very low income households, 30% serve low income households, and 30% are serving moderate income households. The study acknowledges that the affordability of ADUs is significantly affected by the fact that many ADUs are occupied by family members who may not be paying any rent at all or far below market rents due to their familial connections to the property owner. Based upon this study, the City added an additional 15 very low income units, 15 additional low income units, and 15 additional units serving moderate income households.

In 2023, the City of Alameda:

- Did not deny any housing applications submitted for land that was zoned for housing.
- Did not reduce the number of units proposed in any of these applications.
- Did not receive any SB 35 applications.

- Did not receive any SB 9 applications.
- Did not receive any SB 330 project applications.

Housing Programs 2023-2031

The Housing Element for 2023-2031 includes 22 programs designed to facilitate and support construction of at least 5,353 housing units over the next 8 years.

The 22 programs represent an eight-year work program for the City of Alameda. The programs are summarized below in the order in which they are described in the Housing Element. The full text for each program can be found starting on page 16 of the Housing Element. Following each program summary below, staff has identified recommended priorities for 2023, the first year of the eight-year period.

Program 1: Alameda Point

This program requires the City to take all necessary actions to facilitate and support the construction of 1,482 new housing units at Alameda Point at Site A in the Waterfront Town Center Specific Plan area and the adjacent RESHAP and West Midway are in the Main Street Neighborhood Specific Plan area.

Progress and Priorities. In 2023, the City Council and City's selected development partner, Alameda Point Partners, LLC (APP), amended the development plans to increase the total unit count at the RESHAP project to achieve 40% affordable housing at the site. In 2024, the City staff, Planning Board and City Council must prioritize the work necessary to approve the necessary entitlements and permits to continue housing construction in Site A Phases 1 and 2, the RESHAP project area, and the West Midway project area.

Program 2: Shopping Center Zoning Amendments

This program requires the City to up-zone approximately 100 acres of land at four shopping centers in Alameda that is occupied by low density, single-story commercial and service buildings, and large surface parking lots to allow for the development of at least 1,200 housing units.

Progress and Priorities. The required zoning amendments were adopted by the City Council in December 2022 and took effect in January 2023. In 2023, the City received and approved a tentative map request to subdivide the property at the Southshore Shopping Center to support residential redevelopment. If a design review application for housing is received for that site or another, staff will expedite the review with the Planning Board.

Program 3: Commercial Transit Corridor Zoning Amendments

This program requires the City to amend the Community Commercial Zoning District (CC District), the Neighborhood Business District (C-1 District), and North Park Street District (NP District), comprising approximately 110 acres of land designated for commercial and residential mixed use in the General Plan along the Park Street and Webster Street transit rich commercial corridors to encourage development of at least 499 residential units.

Progress and Priorities. The required zoning amendments were adopted by the City Council in December 2022 and took effect in January 2023. As of January 2024, the City has processed one design review application for two housing units on the Park Street corridor and processed the

Housing Authority's Webster Street Hotel Conversion project for 50 permanent supportive housing units. If a design review application for housing is received, staff will expedite the review with the Planning Board.

Program 4: Residential District Zoning Amendments

This program requires the City to amend the Municipal Code R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, and R-6 residential zoning districts and rezone five parcels to remove barriers to housing construction and support construction of at least 995 units.

Progress and Priorities. The required zoning amendments were adopted by the City Council in December 2022 and took effect in January 2023. In 2023, the City issued building permits for 51 units in the Residential Districts.

Program 5: Accessory Dwelling Units

The City shall promote and facilitate accessory dwelling unit (ADU) construction to facilitate an annual production of 50 units per year (400 units during the 6th cycle) by promoting, streamlining, evaluating and monitoring ADU construction in Alameda.

Progress and Priorities. In 2023, the City published a new ADU Handout to inform and promote ADU construction in Alameda, established pre-approved building permit plans for certain ADU designs, and published a video that explains the ADU permitting process and incentives for ADU construction in Alameda. In 2023, the City issued permits for 52 ADUs. Streamlined review will continue for all ADUs, and staff will explore publishing prototype plans for community reference.

Program 6: Large Sites and Multifamily Housing

To facilitate the development of affordable housing and provide for development phases of 50 to 150 units, the City will give high priority to processing density bonus applications and subdivision maps or other parceling that include affordable housing and multifamily rental housing. Projects with higher percentages of affordable housing and/or higher residential densities shall be given priority over projects with lower density and higher priced units. All multifamily rental projects and affordable housing projects will be reviewed against adopted Objective Design Standards, and no discretionary process will be used to reduce the number of units in the project below the number of units permitted by the applicable zoning district.

Progress and Priorities. In 2023, City expedited approval of a 23-lot tentative map to facilitate the 332 units for RESHAP and 478 units for West Midway at Alameda Point. Forty (40%) percent of all units will be affordable to very-low and low-income households. Staff has also completed the review and update of Objective Design Standards, the Planning Board has completed a review of the Subdivision Ordinance to streamline subdivisions for residential projects and bring Alameda ordinance into compliance with Subdivision Map Act and recent changes to State subdivision regulations. In 2024, Council will review the subdivision ordinance revisions, and staff expects to issue building permits for the Housing Authority's North Housing project, the Habitat for Humanity project, and other affordable housing projects in the pipeline.

Program 7: Inclusionary Housing Ordinance

Continue to implement the required 15 percent affordable housing requirement on all projects over 5 units in size in Alameda. Consider modifications to the ordinance to lessen or eliminate the 7% moderate income units and increase the 4% requirement for low- income units and 4% very low income units, or alter the percentages for each level or required units in some other way, given the larger need for lower income units.

Progress and Priorities. Staff is preparing a workplan to consider amendments to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, which was adopted 20 years ago. The ordinance should reflect ABAG's technical assistance program, which reflects State law and funding programs. <https://abag.ca.gov/tools-resources/digital-library/inclusionary-housing-checklist05-12-23docx>

Program 8: Affordable Housing Incentives and Waivers

The City will work with housing developers to expand opportunities for affordable lower-income housing for special-needs groups—including persons with physical and developmental disabilities, single-parent households, large families, extremely low-income households, and persons experiencing homelessness—by creating partnerships, providing incentives, and pursuing funding opportunities. Support affordable housing development for special-needs groups throughout the city, including in areas that are predominantly single-family residential. The target populations include seniors; persons with disabilities, including developmental disabilities; single parent-headed households; and homeless persons to reduce the displacement risk for these residents from their existing homes and communities.

Progress and Priorities: In 2023, public hearings were held by the Planning Board to consider amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance to expedite and reduce permitting costs of residential and affordable housing projects. Recommended amendments are being presented to Council in 2024. In 2024, the City will continue to support supportive housing projects for homeless individuals, such as the McKay Wellness Center project and the RESHAP project. There may also be opportunities to pursue partnerships with the Regional Center of the East Bay to identify funding opportunities and promote housing for persons with disabilities.

Program 9: Extremely Low-Income Housing Incentives and Waivers

Encourage additional housing resources for extremely low-income Alameda residents, particularly seniors and persons with physical or developmental disabilities. Assist nonprofit and for-profit developers with financial and/or technical assistance in a manner that is consistent with the City's identified housing needs. Provide financial support annually, as available, to organizations that provide counseling, information, education, support, housing services/referrals, and/or legal advice to extremely low-income households, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness.

Progress and Priorities: The city will continue to support and assist the following projects designed to provide housing for extremely low income households: the McKay Wellness Center Project, the Dignity Village supportive housing project on 5th Street, the Housing Authority North Housing Phase I, and the RESHAP project at Alameda Point. The 2024 workplan includes holding a public workshop(s) to consider amendments to the inclusionary housing ordinance and/or other incentives or financial programs to fund housing for extremely low income households and homeless individuals.

Program 10: Assistance for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

The City will coordinate with the Regional Center of the East Bay to inform Alameda families of the resources available to them and to explore incentives so that a larger number of future housing units include features that meet the needs of persons with developmental disabilities and other special needs. The City will continue to support the development of small group homes that serve developmentally disabled adults and will work with the nonprofit community to encourage the

inclusion of units for persons with developmental disabilities in future affordable housing developments. The City will pursue funding sources designated for persons with special needs and disabilities.

Progress and Priorities: In 2024, establish a semi-regular meeting schedule with Regional Center of the East Bay to discuss potential programs to assist people with developmental disabilities or other special needs, and hold public hearings to consider revisions to the Universal Design Ordinance (AMC Section 3018) to address accessibility in townhome residential design.

Program 11: Resources for Persons Experiencing Homelessness

The City will continue to provide annual funding assistance to the Midway Shelter, a 24-bed, service-enriched shelter for women and children, and develop and implement a plan to establish a service-enriched shelter for men in Alameda. Additionally, the City will continue to implement the strategies identified in the "The Road Home: A 5 Year Plan to Prevent and Respond to Homelessness in Alameda" to address homelessness in Alameda.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to provide funding for Midway Shelter, and begin discussion and planning for a location for a shelter for men in Alameda.

Program 12: Fair Housing Programs

Continue to affirmatively further fair housing. Continue to support the Rent Program (Alameda's Fair Housing and Tenant Protection Ordinance) efforts to prevent displacement and moderate rent increases for tenants of all income levels.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to enforce the Fair Housing and Tenant Protection Ordinance.

Program 13: Tenant Protections

The City will take actions to reduce displacement risk due to discriminatory actions. Ensure all tenants have access to legal counseling, and landlords are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Support coordination of biannual workshops for landlords and property managers on discriminatory practices, reasonable accommodation requirements, and resources and an annual presentation to staff on fair housing practices, beginning in 2023. Continue to enforce just cause eviction ordinance requirements to reduce displacement due to discrimination and enforce anti-discrimination regulations. Distribute clear actionable information regarding tenant protections to all landlords and tenants at least annually on the City's website, through social media, and other standard City information outlets.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to provide and improve tenant protection programs.

Program 14: Replacement Housing

To facilitate place-based revitalization for households at risk of displacement due to new development, the City will require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code, Section 65915, subdivision (c)(3), when any new development (residential, mixed-use, or nonresidential) occurs on a site that has been occupied by or restricted for the use of lower-income households at any time during the previous five years. This requirement applies to non-vacant sites and vacant sites with previous residential uses that have been vacated or demolished.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to require replacement housing units subject to the requirements of Government Code Section 65915.

Program 15: Affordable Housing Monitoring

The City shall maintain and update the affordable housing database as a mechanism to monitor and identify units at risk of losing their affordability subsidies or requirements. For complexes at risk of converting to market rate, the City shall contact property owners of units at risk of converting to market-rate housing within three years of affordability expiration to discuss the City's desire to preserve complexes as affordable housing. Coordinate with owners of expiring subsidies to ensure the required notices to tenants are sent out at 3 years, 12 months, and 6 months. Work with tenants to provide education regarding tenant rights and conversion procedures pursuant to California and local Alameda law.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to monitor the deed restricted affordable housing stock.

Program 16: First-Time Homebuyer Program

The Community Development Department will continue to assist first time home buyers by participating in the Alameda County Housing & Community Development Department Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) and Down Payment Assistance (DPA) programs, which provides down payment assistance to low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers, homebuyer workshops. The Community Development Department will advertise this program through mailers or similar strategies in areas with high rates of renter-occupied households, such as in west Alameda, to increase awareness of housing mobility opportunities. The City will assist lower-income residents locate affordable housing opportunities, such as through a database or website of retail listings, realtor contact information, or other strategies.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to assist first time homebuyers.

Program 17: Neighborhood Revitalization

The City shall continue to assist in the improvement of lower income owner- and renter-occupied housing units in the city through a variety of programs that provide funding to lower income households to create new lower income rental units in existing vacant or underutilized residential structures, to repair and improve their homes, assist property owners with low- and very low income tenants repair and improve their units, and assist eligible seniors and persons with disabilities in making modifications to their residences. Programs include: the Rental Rehabilitation Program, the Housing Rehabilitation Program, the Substantial Rehabilitation Program, the Soft Story Structural Assessment Grant, the Fire Department's Housing Safety Program, the Minor Home Repair Program, the Accessibility Modification Program, and the Amnesty Program.

For the purpose of discouraging removal of residential units from the housing supply, research and present the potential benefits and mechanics of adopting a Vacancy Tax on vacant residential buildings or units at a public hearing before the Planning Board by July 2024, at which the Planning Board may make a recommendation to the City Council. When considering a potential vacancy tax, also consider existing AMC Section 13-15 Boarded Building and Vacant Parcel Monitoring Fee.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to implement the City's neighborhood revitalization programs, and begin public discussion of the merits of a Vacancy Tax on vacant residential buildings.

Program 18: Utility Assistance Programs

Alameda Municipal Power (AMP) will continue to provide funding assistance to lower income households in need of help with their electric bills. Fund at least \$150,000 annually to lower income households to reduce displacement risk due to utility costs.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to implement the Utility Assistance program.

Program 19: Promote Energy Conservation

Continue to offer residential customer energy services that include the weatherization cash grant program, rebate program for energy efficient lights, meter lending program, rebate program for energy efficient appliances, second refrigerator pickup program, free energy audits, energy Assistance Program to help low-income residents reduce their energy use. Provide annual funding in the amount of \$150,000 to lower income households to promote rehabilitation through weatherization or other energy conservation measures for at least 15 households.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to implement the Energy Conservation program.

Program 20: Environmental Health

Facilitate place-based revitalization of neighborhoods, such as the NAS Alameda Priority Development Area in west Alameda and the Northern Waterfront Priority Development Area along the Estuary, which are more heavily impacted by hazardous wastes from prior industrial uses, lead based paint remediation, diesel particulate matter from proximity to regional freeways and the Port of Oakland. Continue to work with the US Navy, DTSC, and property owners to remove hazardous materials, such as lead based paint and other hazards resulting from prior uses in West Alameda and the Northern Waterfront.

Progress and Priorities: Continue to work with local property owners and regional and national agencies to improve environmental health.

Program 21: Municipal Code Amendments to Remove Constraints

The City will annually review, and amend as necessary, the Municipal Code to ensure consistency with State Housing Law requirements and remove or lessen constraints on new housing development, pertaining to, but not limited to emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, Low-Barrier Navigation Centers, and Residential Care Facilities.

Progress and Priorities: Continually evaluate AMC provisions for unnecessary or inappropriate constraints on housing.

Program 22: Annual Review, Monitoring, and the 5-Year Pipeline Report

The Planning Board shall hold an annual public hearing in February or March to evaluate progress toward meeting housing goals and regional housing needs obligations. The review will examine annual quantitative housing production goals and monitor vacant and non-vacant sites in the sites inventory, and if the City is not meeting those quantitative goals, the staff will make recommendation to the Planning Board on adjustments to processes or requirements to improve

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performance. At the public hearing, the Planning Board will make recommendations for City Council consideration and action.

The annual review will include a review of the Annual Progress Report on the Housing Element implementation in the format required by HCD as defined by Government Code Section 65400(a)(2)(B).

Progress and Priorities: Hold a public hearing to evaluate housing goals, accomplishment, and priorities for upcoming year.