

City of Lancaster
2022 General Plan
Annual Progress Report



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INTRODUCTION

Government Code Section 65400 requires local jurisdictions to prepare an annual report on the status of the City of Lancaster's 2030 General Plan and progress in its implementation. This report is provided to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Annual Progress Report (APR) allows for the regular review of the General Plan, to assess its level of implementation and effectiveness as a guide for growth, development, and preservation within the community. This APR summarizes the General Plan implementation progress for the 2022 calendar year, and highlights the City's progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs. The APR includes the following primary elements:

1. Summary of the General Plan background and status; including active General Plan Amendments and compliance with State Law;
2. Summary of recently completed and active Zoning Ordinance amendments, in addition to active long-range projects;
3. Summary of active development projects in 2022; and
4. General Plan Implementation Status.

GENERAL PLAN BACKGROUND AND AMENDMENTS

General Plan Background

General Plan 2030 is the City's long-term outlook for the future, and reflects the community's vision of the City. The General Plan identifies the types of development which will be allowed, and the general pattern of future development. The plan contains goals, objectives, policies, and specific action which provides the framework for achieving the community's long-term vision. All projects must be consistent with the General Plan. In order to keep the Plan on course, the City must, from time to time, re-examine the goals, objectives, policies specific actions in order to ensure that the General Plan remains in line with the community's priorities. The General Plan was adopted on July 14, 2009, and the horizon year for the adopted General Plan is currently 2030.

Pending General Plan Amendments in 2022

Pacific Opal Single-Family Development

Tentative Tract Map No. 83299, Conditional Use Permit No. 20-06, General Plan Amendment No. 20-01, and Zone Change No. 20-01 is to allow for the construction of 413 single-family (55+) residential units with associated amenities. The General Plan Amendment/Zone Change portion of the project proposes to redesignate the site from Non-urban Residential (NU) to Urban Residential (UR) in the General Plan, and to jointly rezone the site from Semi-Rural Residential (SRR) to Residential 7,000 (R-7,000) in order to allow for the proposed density. The proposal is still under staff review.

Lancaster Square Mixed-Use Development

Conditional Use Permit No. 21-01, General Plan Amendment No. 21-01, and Zone Change No. 21-01 is to allow for the construction of a 330-room hotel with amenities including 10,000 square feet of banquet/meeting space, two apartment buildings with 118 units and associated improvements, two restaurant buildings, and 10,000 square feet of retail space. The General Plan Amendment/Zone Change portion of the project proposes to redesignate the site from Non-urban Residential (NU) to Mixed-Use (MU) in the General Plan, and to jointly rezone the site from Rural Residential 2.5 (RR-2.5) to Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-C), in order to allow for the proposed uses. The proposal is still under staff review.

Compliance with State Law and the General Plan Guidelines

The City of Lancaster, along with all jurisdictions in California, is mandated to update its Housing Element for State certification every eight years. On June 14, 2022, City Council adopted the Housing Element, and it has been certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. In accordance with State law, the update to the Housing Element triggers updates to other Elements of the General Plan, requiring the Safety Element to be updated and an Environmental Justice Element to be implemented. These General Plan Elements were also adopted on June 14, 2022 by the City Council. The General Plan does not need to be arranged in eight distinct elements if the content necessary for each of the required elements is included in the General Plan.

RECENT OR ACTIVE ZONING AMENDMENTS AND LONG-RANGE PROJECTS

Long-Range Projects

Lancaster Health District Master Plan

The Lancaster Health District Master Plan area is located in the central portion of the City of Lancaster. The plan area encompasses approximately 272.4 acres and is generally bounded by Avenue J, Avenue J-12, 20th Street West and 12th Street West. The Master Plan allows for the build-out of the Plan Area over the next 20 years. Specifically, the following uses and maximum size in Table 1 are proposed within the Plan Area.

Table 1: Project Information

PROPOSED USE	SIZE
Replacement Hospital and Plant Facility, relocation of helipad	700,000 sf (300 beds); 12,000 sf plant facility
Acute care facility; Sub-acute care	91,000 sf (80 beds); 249,800 sf (284 beds)
Continuum of care facility	480,000 sf (400 beds)
Residential	1,600 units (250 condos; 1,350 apartments)
Office (including medical)	600,000 sf
Commercial (retail and restaurant)	242,000 sf
Hotel and conference center	180 rooms and 70,000 sf conference center
Parking Garage	385,000 sf/1,100 parking space

STATUS OF RHNA OBJECTIVES

State law requires all regional councils of governments to determine the existing and projected housing need for its region. The City of Lancaster is located within the region covered by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). For each Housing Element cycle, SCAG is required to determine the share of the regional housing need to be allocated to each local jurisdiction within the SCAG region. This is called the Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) allocation.

The City is not required to directly build the dwelling units allocated through the RHNA process, but rather is required to plan for the allocated growth. This is accomplished by zoning available land to accommodate RHNA, and by adopting housing programs which promote and facilitate housing construction. As such, the City's Housing Element includes a variety of programs which support housing development inclusive of all income categories.

The City prepares an annual Housing Element APR which provides HCD with an update on building activity and Housing Element implementation. This year's Housing Element APR includes housing data for the 2022 calendar year, and also includes the status of adopted Housing Element programs.

Entitlement and Permit Activity in 2022

As shown in Table 2 below, Planning entitlements were granted for a total of 581 residential units in 2022. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) made up 61 of these units, with the remaining units resulting from 519 single-family residences throughout the area.

Building permits were issued for 199 residential units in 2022. Certificates of Occupancy were granted for a total of 297 units, all of which were either single-family dwellings or ADUs.

Table 2: Entitlement and Permit Activity in 2022

	Planning Entitlements	Building Permits	Certificates of Occupancy
Single-Family Dwellings	519	66	179
Multi-Family & Other	1	72	0
Accessory Dwelling Units	61	61	118
Total	581	199	297

GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

The City makes continuous progress in implementing all aspects of the 2030 General Plan, but in 2022 had the opportunity to excel in a number of areas, including environmental resources and hazards, active living and mobility, jobs creation, and social justice. The following updates outline distinct accomplishments and growth in compliance with General Plan objectives and policies.

Plan for the Natural Environment

Biological Resources	
Objective 3.4:	Identify, preserve and maintain important biological system within the Lancaster sphere of influence, and educate the general public about these resources, which include the Joshua Tree – California Juniper Woodlands, areas that support endangered or sensitive species, and other natural areas of regional significance.
Implementation:	Joshua trees in particular continue to be a conservation priority for the City. All projects involving potential impacts to Joshua trees are referred to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for review and mitigation.
Energy Resources	
Policy 3.6.5:	Reduce the amount of energy consumed by City operations and assist residents and businesses in reducing their energy consumption rates.
Implementation:	<p>Since 2015, Lancaster has operated a local, not-for-profit power program called Lancaster Choice Energy (LCE). Current plans include Clear Choice, which provides power from 35% renewable energy sources, and Smart Choice, which allows customers to “opt-up” to 100% renewable energy. These programs continue to reduce or eliminate the environmental impacts of energy consumption within Lancaster.</p> <p>Through the new Power Choice Program, introduced in 2022, LCE has partnered with Tesla, Inc. to install rooftop solar and a battery on single-family residences at no additional cost to the</p>

	resident. This service requires no credit check or underwriting on the part of the resident, making solar available to homeowners citywide.
Policy 3.6.6:	Consider and promote the use of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar energy.
Implementation:	<p>Beginning in 2020, the City has formed partnerships with Japanese government officials and with numerous hydrogen production companies to become the first hydrogen city in the United States.</p> <p>Currently, SGH2 is working to bring a green hydrogen production facility to Lancaster, which the City would host and co-own. The facility will be able to process 42,000 tons of recycled water annually, and produce 3.8 million kilograms of green hydrogen each year.</p> <p>The City has formed additional partnerships with Heliogen and Hitachi Zosen Inova (HZI). Heliogen, which generates hydrogen from concentrated solar energy, will serve as the technology provider, project developer, builder, operator, and equity partner for a green hydrogen generation facility in the city. Hitachi Zosen Inova (HZI), which converts organic waste into renewable natural gas and hydrogen, has plans to construct a large-scale anaerobic digestion plant.</p> <p>In late 2022, Element Resources secured a long-term site lease in Lancaster to build, own, and operate a 100% zero-carbon, renewable clean energy center. Element will build a large PV solar array to feed renewable electricity to electrolyzers for splitting water into pure hydrogen and oxygen. This non-combustion process does not rely on electricity from the power grid and will produce only Renewable, Zero-Carbon Hydrogen.</p>
Scenic Resources	
Objective 3.8:	Preserve and enhance important views within the City, and significant visual features which are visible from the City of Lancaster.

Implementation:	<p>Clean-Up Days have been hosted by various local organizations and by the City to educate the community and clean up litter, including an event for Earth Day on April 30, 2022. These events help to preserve and beautify heavily trafficked areas and natural landscapes.</p> <p>In 2022, the City continued operation of its TIDE (Team of Illegal Dump Eliminators) Crew, which was established in 2020 and works to clear abandoned trash and graffiti citywide.</p> <p>In early 2022, the City introduced the new TIDE-Y Up A Mile program, allowing community members to adopt a roadway section for a two-year period, affording an opportunity to beautify a portion of the community and bring awareness to their work.</p>
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Plan for Public Health and Safety (Safety Element)

Safety Element Update	
Implementation:	<p>In 2022, the City adopted an updated Safety Element (“Plan for Public Health and Safety”). This update includes revisions to the areas of interest identified by the existing General Plan – issues including Geology and Seismicity, Flooding and Drainage, Noise, Air Installation Land Use Compatibility, Hazardous Materials, Crime Prevention and Protection Services, Fire Prevention and Suppression Services, Disaster Preparedness, and Emergency Medical Facilities. This update serves as a fresh opportunity to analyze and mitigate potential hazards and concerns facing the community.</p> <p>Consistent with the City’s progress in Climate Adaption (Goal 4.11), the current Safety Element update expands the goals of the General Plan to include “a built environment that incorporates new data and understanding about changing hazard conditions and climate stressors”. This supplements and increases hazard prevention in conjunction with existing General Plan goals for Geology and Seismicity (Goal 4.1), Flooding and Drainage (Goal 4.2), Fire Prevention and</p>

	Suppression Services (Goal 4.7), and Disaster Preparedness (Goals 4.8 and 4.9).
Emergency Medical Facilities	
Policy 4.10.1:	Promote the provision of quality medical facilities and services to meet the needs of area residents and facilitate the expansion and extension of quality medical and emergency medical facilities to meet the needs of Lancaster residents and businesses.
Implementation:	Adoption of the Lancaster Health District (LHD) Specific Plan in 2021 provided a vision and implementation guide for developing a “nationally acclaimed and regionally significant center of health, wellness, and innovation”. The LHD will include a significant collection of new medical offices, clinics, and support facilities within the immediate area of the existing Antelope Valley Hospital. In 2022, implementation of LHD began in the form of preparation for future capital improvements to the LHD area.

Plan for Active Living (Open Space Element)

Pedestrian, Equestrian, and Bicycle Trails	
Objective 10.2:	Through the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan of trails, establish and maintain a hierarchical system of trails (including equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian trails) providing recreational opportunities and an alternative means of reaching schools, parks and natural areas, and places of employment, and connecting to regional trail systems.
Implementation:	<p>In 2021 and 2022, the City collected community input on the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Master Plan, which was originally created in 2016 to improve safety and encourage students to walk or bike to school. Based on this feedback, the City was able to reevaluate and update the SRTS Master Plan in September 2022 to reflect current priority areas of improvement.</p> <p>In April of 2022, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) awarded the City of Lancaster \$5 million in Clean</p>

	California Local Grant funding for the City's Amargosa Recreational Trail Project. The Amargosa Recreational Trail provides a roughly two-mile corridor of protected bicycle and pedestrian trails and public art along Amargosa Creek between Avenues H and J, connecting residents and visitors to key cultural centers, businesses, recreational opportunities, residential communities, future developments, schools, healthcare facilities, and transit stops.
Policy 10.2.4:	Facilitate the use of bicycles as an alternative form of transportation, as well as a form of recreation.
Implementation:	Since 2018, the City has operated the See and Be Seen campaign to increase pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle awareness on local streets. The campaign is the first in the nation to integrate traffic safety education with wrapping of signal cabinets, allowing for maximum visibility. Messages promoted through the campaign improve safety and awareness on major streets, making the area more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.
Social Service Programs	
Policy 13.1.2:	Assist in establishing programs to provide a humane social service policy which addresses the needs the needs of a diverse population, including but not limited to senior citizens, children, handicapped individuals, immigrants, the mentally ill, and other special needs groups.
Implementation:	The City took steps to repurpose existing facilities to create a new Lancaster Community Center, which hosted a Grand Opening event in March 2022. The building includes a teen space; homework club; early education area for young children; hobby areas for STEM, fabrication, arts and crafts, dance, and video production; a library; and a game room. The various spaces are open to community members of all ages, and will feature special programming for classes and demonstrations.

Plan for Physical Mobility (Circulation Element)

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Program	
Implementation:	In late 2021, the City began processing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a proposed VMT Mitigation Program, with the intention to gradually reduce citywide VMT. The improvements associated with the proposed program would include pedestrian/bicycle network improvements, traffic-calming infrastructure, improved street connectivity, and incentivizing use of alternative travel modes. Preparation for the VMT program continued through 2022, with a draft ordinance scheduled for Planning Commission hearing in early 2023.

Plan for Municipal Services and Facilities

Solid Waste Management	
Policy 15.2.2:	Minimize the generation of solid wastes as required by State law (AB 939) through an integrated program of public education, source reduction, and recycling.
Implementation:	The City consistently establishes programs and ordinances with the aim of minimizing solid waste generation, in compliance with AB 939, AB 341, AB 1826, and SB 1383. In 2022, the City's contract with Waste Management was amended to include the addition of residential food waste into organics bins. City Council voted to place the standard trash service bill on the property tax bill, and rates were adjusted to address the requirements of SB 1383. Additionally, the City has worked with Waste Management to collaboratively increase the number of existing commercial accounts which have recycling and organics services.

Plan for Economic Development and Vitality

Creation and Retention of Local Employment	
Policy 16.1.1:	Promote a jobs/housing balance that places an emphasis on the attraction of high-paying jobs which will enable the local

	workforce to achieve the standard of living necessary to both live and work within the community.
Implementation:	<p>The ongoing implementation, adaptation, and creation of Specific Plans allow for targeted development in high-impact areas of the city. The Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan and Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan allow for additional commercial property in a high-density area of the city, and the Fox Field Specific Plan and Business Park Specific Plans designate expansive area for office and light industrial. The new Lancaster Health District Specific Plan adopted in 2021 specifically targets medical and associated businesses to locate near the existing Antelope Valley Hospital.</p> <p>In addition, the City continues to process Zone Changes and General Plan Amendments to accommodate changing market demand. The currently proposed Lancaster Square Mixed-Use Development is a prime example of this.</p>
Policy 16.2.2:	Provide local businesses with access to financial, technical, labor, and regulatory assistance when feasible in order to promote business success.
Implementation:	At the end of 2022, Lancaster launched a new program in partnership with Bludot Technologies, Inc., the “Shop Local – Open Rewards” program. Through Bludot’s open rewards platform, consumers can download an app to be rewarded for shopping locally. Consumers either link their card or scan receipts to earn 5% rewards for shopping at locally owned, brick-and-mortar businesses. Once enough rewards are earned, they can be redeemed at other small businesses in the community.

Plan for Physical Development (Land Use Element)

Define Land Use Categories	
Policy 17.1.1:	Maintain an adequate inventory of land for residential, commercial, employment, quasi-public, public, and open space uses.

Implementation:	The City has continued to maintain an adequate inventory of land zoned for a variety of uses, and has reviewed and approved Zone Changes and General Plan Amendments when the development market calls for new or different uses in a given area.
Policy 17.1.4:	Provide for office and industrial-based employment-generating lands which are highly accessible and compatible with other uses in the community.
Implementation:	Implementation of the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan has allowed for the zoning of additional office space near the City's central downtown, and the nearby Transit-Oriented Development Specific Plan permits additional light industrial and office area to meet community demand. Both Specific Plans are in immediate proximity to the Lancaster Metrolink Station, providing convenient access to the Antelope Valley rail line.
Community Design	
Policy 19.1:	Promote the long-term image and livability of Lancaster as a unique community with a strong sense of place through the development and application of comprehensive community design guidelines.
Implementation:	<p>The Lancaster Design Guidelines (LDG), originally adopted in 2009, provide the basis to achieve quality design for all development within the City of Lancaster. The LDG call for Smart Growth through the construction of walkable and mixed-use developments, sustainability and compatibility with existing terrain, water-conserving streetscapes, and consistent 360° architecture in natural earth tones. These design elements are consistent with the City's prioritization of sustainable practices, while paying homage to the area's historic location as part of the Mojave Desert.</p> <p>One aspect unique to Lancaster is the presence of Edwards Air Force Base, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin as three of the principal employers in the area. Public art in Lancaster, including multiple existing installations in the Boulevard downtown area, include references to the City's aviation history.</p>

Interagency Land Use Coordination	
Policy 20.1.1:	Promote harmonious and mutually beneficial uses of land between the City of Lancaster, the City of Palmdale, the Counties of Los Angeles, Kern and San Bernardino, and the United States Air Force.
Implementation:	All development projects with potential for regional impacts are routed for review by the neighboring agencies identified in this policy.

Housing Element

Housing Element Update	
Implementation:	The updated 2021-2029 Housing Element was adopted in 2022, and is certificated by the California Department of Housing & Community Development. This update allows for a reevaluation of housing needs, constraints and resources in the Lancaster area, and identifies adequate capacity to facilitate development of the 9,023 units allocated to Lancaster through the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The Housing Element makes particular note of disadvantaged communities which may be most impacted by housing disparities, identifying goals and funding to alleviate strain on persons experiencing homelessness, special needs residents (including persons with disabilities, the elderly, large households, farmworkers, and female headed households), and racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty.

Environmental Justice Element

Adoption of New General Plan Element	
Implementation:	In 2022, the City has created and adopted a new Environmental Justice Element. This update aims to give everyone the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment to live, learn and work. This new Element improves and expands on existing General Plan goals, with

	focuses on Healthy and Affordable Housing (in conjunction with the Housing Element); Park Access and Active Living (in conjunction with the "Plan for Active Living"); Access to Healthy Food; Climate Resiliency ("Plan for Public Health and Safety"); Civic Engagement, and Community Programs and Services ("Plan for Municipal Services and Facilities").
Access to Healthy Food	
Goal 4:	Expand access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food and resources to reduce food insecurity.
Implementation:	In partnership with Baby2Baby and AVTA, the City of Lancaster distributed more than \$120,000 worth of baby formula to Lancaster families impacted by a nationwide formula shortage throughout 2022.