

RESOLUTION NO. 23-19

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALHAMBRA APPROVE GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT GPA NO. 22-1 READOPTING THE 2021-2029 HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA GENERAL PLAN AND DIRECT STAFF TO SUBMIT THE HOUSING ELEMENT TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR CERTIFICATION

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ALHAMBRA DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS OF FACT. The Planning Commission does hereby make the following findings of fact:

- A. Pursuant to state law, cities are required to prepare a Housing Element as a component of their General Plan and to revise it regularly on a schedule set forth in the law;
- B. State Housing Law (Government Code Sections 65580 et seq.) requires that the City of Alhambra, adopt a Housing Element for the eight-year period 2021-2029 to accommodate the City of Alhambra's Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) of 6,825 housing units comprised of 1,774 very-low-income units, 1,036 low-income units, 1,079 moderate-income units, and 2,936 above moderate-income units;
- C. In accordance with state law, the City of Alhambra's Community Development Department initiated an amendment to the Housing Element of the General Plan and prepared a proposed revision to the Housing Element for the 6th Cycle Housing Element covering the 2021-2029 planning period, in accordance with Government Code Sections 65580 et seq., which replaces the Housing Element that covered the prior period from 2013 to 2021;
- D. On July 13, 2020, the City retained ECONorthwest for professional consulting services to prepare the 2021-2029 Housing Element of the Alhambra General Plan;
- E. California Government Code Section 65583 requires that the Housing Element contain (i) an assessment of the City's housing needs and an analysis of the resources and constraints, both governmental and non-governmental, relevant to the meeting of these needs; (ii) an inventory of land suitable and available for residential development and an analysis of the development potential of such sites; (iii) a statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies relative to the maintenance, preservation, improvement, and development of housing; and (iv) programs that set forth a schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element Update;

- F. The Housing Element sets forth the housing policies for the City, facilitating the preservation and development of housing, and establishing programs to accommodate the City's share of the regional housing need in Southern California;
- G. Based on underutilized uses (e.g., parking lots, single-story buildings, uses with marginal economic viability), age of structures, improvement-to-land-ratio, lot size, ratio of allowed to existing density, and in-place value compared to recent residential transaction value, coupled with the significant demand for housing, market conditions supportive of redevelopment, and Housing Element programs to encourage redevelopment on non-vacant sites with greater density housing, the existing uses on sites identified in the site inventory to accommodate lower income RHNA are likely to be discontinued during the planning period and therefore do not constitute an impediment to additional residential development during the planning period covered by the Housing Element.
- H. The 6th Cycle of the Housing Element was due October 15, 2021, and cities were required to adopt a compliant Housing Element within 120 days of the statutory deadline;
- I. After consideration of public comment, input from the Planning Commission on September 20, 2021, and City Council on September 27, 2021, the City of Alhambra transmitted the Draft 2021-2029 Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review on October 5, 2021;
- J. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65585, subdivision (b), HCD reported the results of its review through written correspondence dated December 2, 2021, and stated that the Draft Housing Element addressed many statutory requirements, however, revisions would be necessary to comply with State Housing Law;
- K. The Draft Housing Element was revised to address the revisions from HCD as identified in their correspondence dated December 2, 2021;
- L. In accordance with CEQA, updated Housing Elements are subject to environmental review, and an Initial Study was prepared for the updated Housing Element determining that the above-referenced project will not have a significant effect on the environment;
- M. The Initial Study/Negative Declaration was circulated for public review from December 17, 2021 through January 15, 2022;
- N. The Notice of the Planning Commission Public Hearing and Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration was posted on the project website and emailed to interested parties on December 16, 2020, and published in the Pasadena Star News on December 17, 2021, in accordance with CEQA;
- O. On January 3, 2022, the Planning Commission conducted a duly public hearing and received public comment on the Draft Housing Element. Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361, members of the Planning Commission may teleconference or video into the meeting due to the fact that we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic;

- P. The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council with regard to the approval of General Plan Amendments. At the public hearing on January 3, 2022, the Planning Commission took action to approve Resolution No. 22-03 recommending that City Council approve General Plan Amendment GPA No. 22-1 adopting the 2021-2029 Housing Element to replace the 2013-2021 Housing Element, approved the Negative Declaration, and directed staff to submit the Housing Element to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development for certification;
- Q. On January 31, 2022, the City Council conducted a duly noticed public hearing and approved Resolution No. R2M-22-7, adopting the 6th cycle 2021-2029 Housing Element to replace the 2013-2021 Housing Element and directed staff to transmit the 2021-2029 Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD);
- R. On February 8, 2022, the 2021-2029 Housing Element was transmitted to the HCD for review for their 2nd review. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65585, subdivision (b), HCD reported the results of its review through a written correspondence dated April 8, 2022, and stated that the Housing Element addressed many statutory requirements, however, revisions would be necessary to comply with State Housing Law;
- S. The Housing Element was revised to address the revisions from HCD as identified in their correspondence dated April 8, 2022;
- T. On August 11, 2022, the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element was transmitted to the HCD for review for their 3rd review. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65585, subdivision (b), HCD reported the results of its review through a written correspondence dated October 19, 2022, and stated that the draft revised Housing Element addressed many statutory requirements, however, revisions would be necessary to comply with State Housing Law;
- U. The draft revised Housing Element was revised again to address the revisions from HCD as identified in their correspondence dated October 19, 2022;
- V. The 4th Draft of the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element was available for a public review period that took place from March 8, 2023 to March 15, 2023. A total of 9 written comments were submitted during the public comment review period and considered as part of the housing element update process, as well as additional community input received throughout the project;
- W. On April 13, 2023, the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element was transmitted to the HCD for review for their 4th review. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65585, subdivision (b), HCD reported the results of its review through a written correspondence dated May 25, 2023, and stated that the draft revised Housing Element addressed many statutory requirements, however, revisions would be necessary to comply with State Housing Law;

- X. On August 7, 2023, the Planning Commission conducted a duly public hearing on the draft revised Housing Element, received public comment, and closed the public testimony portion of the hearing. At the public hearing on August 7, 2023, the Planning Commission continued the public hearing to August 21, 2023;
- Y. On August 21, 2023, the Planning Commission conducted a duly public hearing and reopened the public testimony portion of the public hearing to receive additional public testimony on the draft revised Housing Element. After additional public comment was provided, the Planning Commission closed the public testimony portion of the hearing and began their deliberations. Given that deliberations were not concluded, the Planning Commission continued the public hearing to September 5, 2023;
- Z. Due to a lack of quorum at the regular meeting on September 5, 2023, this matter was continued to the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission on September 18, 2023;
- AA. The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council with regard to the approval of General Plan Amendments. At the public hearing on September 18, 2023, the Planning Commission took action to approve Resolution No. 23-19 recommending that City Council approve General Plan Amendment GPA No. 22-19 adopting the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element to replace the 2013-2021 Housing Element and direct staff to submit the revised Housing Element to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development for certification;
- BB. The 6th Cycle Housing Element covering the 2021 to 2029 planning period was prepared based on input received from the public, Planning Commission, and City Council. A total of 2 community meetings, 5 Town Hall meetings, 7 Planning Commission meetings, and 4 City Council meetings were held after notice to the public; and
- CC. The documents that constitute the record of proceedings for General Plan Amendment No. 22-1 upon which the decision of the Planning Commission is based are located within the Community Development Department.

SECTION 2. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT. Based upon the Initial Study/Negative Declaration previously prepared for the project, the Planning Commission further finds and determines as follows:

- A. An Initial Study and Negative Declaration were previously prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act;
- B. The Initial Study and Negative Declaration were posted on the project website, made available at the Alhambra Civic Center Library and Alhambra City Hall, and notification sent to interested parties on December 16, 2021, and published in the Pasadena Star News on December 17, 2021, in accordance with CEQA. The public review period was open from December 17, 2021 through January 15, 2022.

- C. On January 3, 2022, the Planning Commission determined that the 2021-2029 Housing Element would not have any significant environmental impacts and recommended that the City Council adopt a Negative Declaration.
- D. On January 31, 2022, the City Council determined that the 2021-2029 Housing Element would not have any significant environmental impacts and adopted a Negative Declaration; and
- E. The proposed adoption of the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Guidelines Section 15162, since it will not trigger new or additional impact beyond those previously identified as part of a Negative Declaration previously adopted by the City Council.

SECTION 3. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT. Based on the foregoing facts, the Planning Commission hereby determines as follows:

- A. The General Plan Amendment for the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element is consistent with all other goals, policies, and programs of the Alhambra General Plan and complies with the requirements of State Law.
- B. The General Plan amendment promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare of the Alhambra community. The revised 2021-2029 Housing Element is a policy-level document that will guide the development of a wide variety of housing types within the City and provides a strategy to address existing and future housing needs while furthering the State’s mandate for housing to address the housing crisis in California.
- C. The Planning Commission, based upon the findings set forth herein, recommends that the City Council of the City of Alhambra approve General Plan Amendment GPA No. 22-1 adopting the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element of the Alhambra General Plan and direct staff to submit the revised Housing Element to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development for certification.

SECTION 4. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the following additional recommended changes Element (additions are underlined, deletions are stricken) and that these additional recommendations be incorporated into the final Housing Element as part of the readoption of the 2021-2029 Housing. The City Council approves the following changes to the following topics as recommended by the Planning Commission:

A. Residential Planned (RPD) Permit Process.

Retain the RPD permit process, exempting projects with six (6) or less residential units.

B. Addition of Sites to the Sites Inventory.

Include the property at 400 S. Atlantic Boulevard (APN No. 5344-002-044) in Appendix A (“Sites Inventory”).

C. Constraints on Development – Environmental.

Revise the sentence on Page 116 as follows: “Sites with potential environmental constraints (without consideration of contamination status) are noted in the detailed inventory appendix and electronic inventory database”

D. Characterization of Community Sentiment.

- a. Revise the following on Page 66: “It is common for community members to want to influence the types, sizes, and quantities of new housing development in their neighborhoods. This often occurs through public comment and testimony at public government meetings, but can also materialize in other ways. Numerous regulations and processes that govern and oversee new development are designed with public goals in mind, such as ensuring life and safety standards, ensuring environmental sustainability, or improving walkways or rights-of-way. ~~However, these processes can be weaponized against new development, creating opportunities for community members to object to most new development.”~~
- b. Revise the following on Page 67: “~~Some segments of the community are active opponents to development.~~ Common concerns include traffic congestion, overcrowded schools, and strain on utility and emergency service infrastructure. In recent years, the public is increasingly concerned with ensuring that development is affordable to Alhambra residents. In Alhambra, all new residential construction except for single-family construction on an R-1 zoned lot must be approved by the Planning Commission. This may serve[[s]] as an extra delay for even small development projects that meet all codes and standards. Combined, these factors may have result[[ed]] in a greater number of hearings, longer approval timelines for residential approvals, and added costs, resulting in a likely constraint on housing production. The role of the Planning Commission in approving nearly all residential development in the city is addressed in more detail in the section below on Governmental Constraints. ~~However, this approval structure gives an abnormal and out-measured influence of community opposition over housing production.~~ The city should reconsider the type and scale of developments that are subject to Planning Commission approval.
- c. Revise the following on Page 112: “Processing time to obtain a development permit is an often-overlooked burden on housing development. If abnormally long, processing can be a can be a considerable constraint on housing production. This is especially the case for affordable housing development, where developers are utilizing multiple capital stacks with often limited timeframes. Processing times can vary broadly depending on the completeness of applications and the

responsiveness of both developers and staff. Approval times can be lengthened considerably for complicated project that require general plan amendments and projects that are not exempt from CEQA. ~~Communities with strong opposition to development can often use these processes to further prohibit development.~~”

- d. Delete the following on Page 186: ~~“Factor 3.3. Community Opposition. A cross-section of community members expressed considerable opposition to housing production, specifically affordable housing production.”~~
- e. Revise the following included in Program 28 as follows: “Community input into planning and approval processes is a necessary and important function. ~~However, Community opposition to new housing production and development was identified in the constraints analysis as a nongovernmental constraint.~~ One of the tools the city can implement to improve community interactions with development processes is an education and outreach program that demonstrates the role of new housing production to mitigate existing housing problems (such as cost burdening, displacement, homelessness, and properties falling into disrepair) that were identified as important to the community. The city will work with the community to achieve support for housing across income levels. The city will provide information to residents about local housing needs, changes in state law, and other planning and housing-related topics. This program should engage with the established Housing and Community Development Citizen Advisory Committee (HCDA) or other committee as a liaison in crafting community outreach and communication strategies.”

E. 100% Residential Units in Commercial Zones.

Revise the sentence included in Program 27 as follows: “Revise commercial zones other than the CBD or EMC to allow 100 percent residential projects.

F. 20% Affordable Housing by Right on Lower-Income Sites.

- a. Revise the sentence on Page 205 as follows: “Policy 3.3: The city shall allow housing developments with at least 20 percent affordable housing by-right on lower-income housing sites that are suitable for residential development and that have been counted in previous housing element cycles, consistent with Government Code Section 65583.2[[c)].”
- b. Revise Program 18 as follows: “Subject to suitability for residential development as provided in Government Code Section 65583.2, the City of Alhambra will rezone to allow developments by right pursuant to Government Code section 65583.2(i) when 20 percent or more of the units are affordable to lower-income households on sites identified as subject to AB1397 in Appendix A to accommodate the lower income

RHNA that was previously identified in past housing elements. Specifically, the city will rezone the nonvacant sites previously identified in the 5th cycle housing element. The city will amend parking requirements consistent with AB2097 for sites within a half-mile of the City's two AB 2097 eligible intersections at Atlantic and Main and Atlantic and Valley."

G. The Villages Project.

- a. Revise the sentence included in Program 40 as follows: "Because the project referred to as the "The Villages at the Alhambra" represents a ~~sizable~~ significant share of progress toward RHNA, if the project is not approved within two years of adoption, within 180 days the city will make alternative sites available of equivalent capacity at appropriate densities and affordability and reclassify the project as a potential nonvacant redevelopment site. The site will not be utilized for the purposes of no net loss law."
- b. Revise the sentence on Page 245 as follows: "Alternatively, the project would could still have a path toward approval through SB35 or, as a previously used nonvacant site in the 5th Cycle, through by-right approval with qualifying lower income units subject to any such sites being suitable for residential development under Government Code Section 65583.2."

H. Development Standards.

- a. Modify the paragraph on Page 88 referring to "Height Limits" to reflect that the height limit and step back is in reference to the City's existing zoning code for the R2 and R3 zones.
- b. Modify the paragraph on Page 88 referring to commercial zones as follows: "Commercial Zones. With the exception of the PO zone, residential development in commercial zones requires residential to be developed in conjunction with a commercial use. For areas outside of the CBD or EMC zone, this may ~~[[This]]~~ constrain~~[[s]]~~ the ability to reach maximum density in residential zones. Program 21 will remove this requirement and allow 100% residential uses in commercial zones other than the CBD or EMC zone."
- c. Revise Program 27 as follows: "Amend the zoning code to allow Low-Barrier Navigation Centers by-right in all R2 and R3 residential zones, areas zoned for mixed-uses, and nonresidential zones permitting multifamily uses."

I. Other Comments/Recommendations.

Eliminate the entire paragraph discussing Historic Preservation under the "Growth Controls and Local Ordinances" on page 95.

SECTION 5. NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Commission of the City of Alhambra, California, hereby approves the following:

- A. Resolution No. 23-19, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Alhambra recommending that the City Council of the City of Alhambra approve General Plan Amendment GPA No. 22-1 adopting the revised 2021-2029 Housing Element of the Alhambra General Plan, and direct staff to submit the Housing Element to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development for certification.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 18th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2023.



CHRIS OLSON, PRESIDENT
PLANNING COMMISSION

ATTEST:



ANDREW HO, SECRETARY
PLANNING COMMISSION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)
CITY OF ALHAMBRA)


I, Andrew Ho, Planning Commission Secretary of the City of Alhambra, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Alhambra at a regular meeting thereof, held on the 18th day of September, 2023, by the following vote of the Planning Commission:

AYES: GRIJALVA, HO, JUAREZ, TSUJII, GARCIA, OLSON

NOES: MOJARRO,

RECUSED: PHAM

ABSENT: GARDEA



ANDREW HO, SECRETARY
PLANNING COMMISSION