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## Town Council accepts General Plan Implementation and Housing Element reports

By Vera Kochan

Moraga has begun its 6th Cycle Housing Element for the 2023 to 2031 period, which was adopted on Jan. 25, 2023 after achieving certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Municipalities are required by the state to submit an Annual Progress Report covering their prior calendar year in order to show whether they are on track with regards to meeting their specific Housing Element requirements. The town council accepted and adopted the 2023 Annual General Plan Implementation Report and the Housing Element Annual Report for submission during their March 13 meeting.

The town's last General Plan comprehensive update prior to 2023 was during the year 2002. According to a March 13 staff report by Planning Director Afshan Hamid and Associate Planner Mio Mendez, "California Government Code Section 65400 mandates planning agencies to: 'Investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open-space land and natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the general plan.'" The Code also requires these annual reports to reach the Office of Planning and Research and HCD by April 1.

The state's General Plan Guidelines include identifying seven mandatory elements such as land use, circulation, conservation, housing, noise, open space, and safety. The town added additional elements to include community design, community facilities and services, and growth management. The staff report notes that all of the town's departments collaborated on the updating of the General Plan implementation table, including identifying goals and actions for 2024.

Moraga's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is 1,118 units which is divided into four income levels (318 very low income units, 183 low income units, 172 moderate income units, and 445 above moderate income units). Three dwelling units in the low income level have been constructed and one moderate income unit has been built, bringing the new RHNA balance to 1,114. Several Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) are currently on the horizon.

Some of the Planning Department's ongoing objectives include processing major project applications/entitlements; prioritizing implementation of the programs in the certified Housing Element and working on Phase Two Zoning Text Amendments; moving the General Plan horizon year to 2040 (which includes an Economic Vitality Element); updating the Community Design Element; conducting outreach meetings to multiple community organizations, stakeholders, Planning Commission, and Town Council; and completing the Livable Moraga Road project.

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