



STAFF REPORT

CATHEDRAL CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: November 20, 2024

CASE NO.: General Plan Annual Progress Report - Part 2

APPLICANT: City of Cathedral City

LOCATION: City wide

REQUEST: Presentation and discussion of the General Plan Annual Progress Report for calendar years 2023 and 2024, Part 2.

**STAFF
PLANNER:** Dominique Camps, Associate Planner

RECOMMENDATION:

To receive Part 2 of the 2023 and 2024 General Plan Annual Progress Report for information and discussion.

BACKGROUND/ ANALYSIS:

Government Code Sections 65400 and 65700 require the City to prepare an annual progress report (APR) on the status and implementation of the General Plan for submittal to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

The General Plan is the City's comprehensive, long-term plan to guide development of the community and preserve its resources. While it has a long-term perspective, it is not a static document. Rather, it is dynamic, evolving and multi-faceted, continuously defining and addressing the changing needs of the community. It is also based on an ongoing assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs and conditions.

State General Plan Guidelines do not mandate a specific structure or format for the General Plan, nor do they specify an appropriate number of elements. "Elements" are referred to as "topics that California law require to be covered in a General Plan" (Gov. Code Sec. 65302). Mandatory element discussion topics include Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation,

Open Space, Noise, Safety, Environmental Justice, and Air Quality. These topics may be discussed separately or logically grouped within a common element. The General Plan stands at the apex of a pyramid of City regulatory documents. As such, zoning, subdivisions, public works, specific plans, and other regulatory documents must be consistent with the General Plan and its elements.

The 2040 Cathedral City General Plan was adopted by the City Council on July 28, 2021. The General Plan is comprised of thirteen elements, each of which provides a discussion of the topic and contains goals, policies, and programs. The programs provide implementation measures, including an implementation schedule and identification of the responsible departments, needed to carry out the policies and achieve the stated goals.

This APR provides an update on the implementation status of each of the General Plan policies and programs for calendar years 2023 and 2024. To make the reporting more digestible, the City's General Plan APR is being presented to the Planning Commission in three parts:

- Part 1: "Development" (Ch. 4 – Land Use Element; Ch. 5 – Circulation and Mobility Element; Ch. 6 – Housing Element; Ch. 8 – Community Design Element; Ch. 10 – Economic & Fiscal Health Element)
 - Part 2: "Community Services and Facilities" (Ch. 7 – Parks and Recreation Element; Ch. 9 – Arts & Culture Element; Ch. 11 – Environmental Justice Element; Ch. 12 – Healthy & Sustainable Community Element; Ch. 16 – Public Services & Facilities Element)
 - Part 3: "Environment" (Ch. 13 – Open Space & Conservation Element; Ch. 14 – Air Quality & Climate Stability Element; Ch. 15 – Safety Element)
- This report provides Part 2 of the APR for calendar years 2023 and 2024. The APR will be presented to the City Council for review and acceptance prior to submittal to OPR.

ANALYSIS

This report provides Part 2 of the General Plan APR to the Planning Commission for information and discussion. Please refer to Attachment 1 for a detailed list of the goals, policies and programs contained in the Parks and Recreation, Arts and Culture, Environmental Justice, Healthy and Sustainable Community, and Public Services and Facilities Elements. Attachment 1 also includes a checklist with the implementation status and a description for each policy and program. The full General Plan document can be accessed on the City website (<https://tinyurl.com/mryevh4v>).

For purpose of discussion, this report highlights four key areas of activity undertaken across City departments to implement these elements of the General Plan during 2023 and 2024.

Park Improvements:

The City continues to improve and expand public parks, including through the use of grant funding to support the park design and construction. For example, the City received funding from the Proposition 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant for the design and construction of the Esperanza Park in the Dream Homes community. The City has also submitted an application for the State Parks Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant to reimburse costs associated with the future construction of the Downtown Dog Park. Consistent with the City's Environmental Justice goals, the

locations for these future parks were selected with consideration for improving access to park and recreation lands in under-served areas in proximity to neighborhoods and community facilities.

The City also continues to work on improvements to existing parks facilities. Such efforts include enhancements to the accessibility of public parks for wheelchair accessibility as well as for the elderly and disabled, in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The City's 2023/2024 Parks Improvement Program included ADA improvement projects such as the addition of a concrete paths of travel, crosswalks, and ramps in Century Park, Dennis Keat Soccer Park, and Panorama Park. Improvements to the City's parks also include public art projects, as spearheaded by the Cathedral City Public Arts Commission. For example, the Ocotillo Bench project will install twenty-three benches in Ocotillo Park painted by local artists.

Efforts are also underway to provide residents of Cathedral City with improved access to the region's rich network of hiking trails and natural open space. The Hiking Trails Subcommittee of the City's Parks and Community Events Commission (PACE) is currently exploring the potential for two new trailheads within the City limits. These trailheads, potentially located behind Canyon Plaza off East Palm Canyon Drive and from the wash on the west side of the Cathedral City Cove, are still in preliminary stages of securing easements and environmental approval.

As the City grows, land for parks and recreation is also considered as part of new residential developments. Applications for residential Planned Unit Developments are subject to specific standards for the provision active recreational amenities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, children's playgrounds, or picnic areas. In accordance with the Quimby Act, new residential Tentative Tract Map applications are required to dedicate park land and/or pay fees in-lieu equivalent to three net acres of useable parkland for each one thousand persons residing within the proposed subdivision. These development standards are intended to ensure that the availability of parks, recreation facilities, and open space meets demand resulting from new developments.

In July 2024, the City Council placed Measure W, the Cathedral City Services Measure, on the ballot for the November 2024 election. If approved, the local half-cent sales tax measure would provide funding for the City to contract with the Desert Recreation District (DRD) and to allow for the development of a community center. The preparation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan update is on hold while the City explores the potential to join the Desert Recreation District.

Goals, policies and programs implemented (ongoing or completed) through this activity:

Parks and Recreation Element

- **Program 1.E:** Concurrent with the update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, evaluate the distribution of existing and planned park and recreation lands, and the distribution of under-served or otherwise disadvantaged neighborhoods, and ensure that the need of all sectors of the community are well served.
 - **Program 2.D:** Enhance accessibility throughout the planning of park areas and facilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and include increased wheelchair accessibility and other requirements needed for the elderly and
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disabled.

- **Program 3.C:** Encourage or require the provision of recreation space in private development.

Arts and Culture Element

- **Program 2.C:** Where feasible, incorporate public art into public spaces.

Environmental Justice Element

- **Program 1.B:** Pursue support from federal, state, and private funding sources to assist with acquisition, design, and construction of parks and recreation facilities.

Healthy and Sustainable Element

- **Program 2.B:** To the greatest extent practicable, require the planning and development of parks, trails, and open space resources as part of community development projects.

Public Services and Facilities Element

- **Program 6.B:** Continue to investigate the feasibility of constructing a new community center, including potential sites, constraints, and funding opportunities.

Active Transportation:

As discussed in Part 1 of the General Plan Annual Progress Report, numerous active transportation projects are ongoing throughout the City. Ongoing and recently completed ATP projects include the construction of bicycles lanes on Cathedral Canyon Drive (under construction) and East Palm Canyon Drive (complete). Construction of the CV Link segment along the Whitewater River Channel between Cathedral Canyon Drive and the City of Palm Springs is also ongoing. The expansion of active transportation infrastructure supports the City's Environmental Justice and Healthy Community goals of improving the health, safety, and mental well-being of residents by creating convenient and safe opportunities for physical activity.

Furthermore, these projects will continue to increase multi-modal access to the downtown area and its arts and cultural venues, as well as providing new connections between residential neighborhoods and parks and open space. The City has also been awarded SB 821 grant funding to build a Class IV Protected Bike Lane on Perez Road, from Cathedral Canyon Drive to Date Palm Drive. This bike lane, which is currently in the design phase, will support the City's goal of strengthening the identity of the Perez Road corridor between Cathedral Canyon Drive and Date Palm Drive as a vibrant, cohesive art district. The City also continues to implement physical improvements to make bicycle and pedestrian travel to parks and recreational facilities safer. Recent projects include the installation of a crosswalk at Avenida Maravilla and Jarana Road for Panorama Park (complete) and construction of a CV Link connection to Esperanza Park (under construction).

In conjunction with land use and housing policies to support infill and efficient development patterns, the ongoing improvement and expansion of the City's active transportation infrastructure will contribute to reductions in vehicular trips. This will, in turn, support Environmental Justice goals related to promoting public and environmental health through improved air quality.

Goals, policies and programs implemented (ongoing or completed) through this activity:

Parks and Recreation Element

- **Program 2.A:** Improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle access and connections
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to regional parks and open space by implementing the City ATP, including the striping and/or construction of new and improved sidewalks and multi-class bikeways.

- **Program 2.B:** Implement the General Plan Circulation and Mobility Element, the ATP and other components of the City's transportation plan that address safe pedestrian, bicycle and ADA access to transit connections and facilities, especially those located between residential neighborhoods and parks and open space.
- **Program 4.B:** Identify and program physical improvements, such as crosswalks, sidewalk improvements, signs, and traffic signalization, that would make bicycle and pedestrian travel safer to parks and recreational facilities.
- **Program 4.C:** Provide children with safe and appealing opportunities for walking and bicycling to school in order to decrease rush hour traffic and fossil fuel consumption, encourage exercise and healthy living habits, and reduce the risk of injury.
- **Program 4.D:** Collaborate with CVAG, Coachella Valley jurisdictions, and other relevant agencies to support the completion of all planned CV Link segments and expansion of community connector links, particularly those in Cathedral City and neighboring communities.

Arts and Culture Element

- **Program 2.D:** Strengthen the identity of the Perez Road corridor between Cathedral Canyon Drive and Date Palm Drive as a vibrant, cohesive art district. Potential improvements may include enhanced signage, street furniture, pedestrian walkways, street lights, and/or landscaping treatments.
- **Program 2.F:** Continue to develop multi-modal circulation plans that maximize access to the downtown area and its arts and cultural venues, including the Festival Lawn and new amphitheater.

Environmental Justice Element

- **Program 1.A:** To the greatest extent practicable, require that development be located and designed to reduce vehicular trips (and associated air pollution) by utilizing compact development patterns while maintaining community character.

Healthy and Sustainable Communities Element

- **Program 1.A:** Support the completion of CV Link and other multimodal transportation facilities, including bike lanes, complete sidewalk networks and NEV paths.
- **Program 2.E:** Encourage pedestrian-scale activity and social interaction in the downtown and other public gathering areas through the use of carefully designed open spaces areas with public art, shade features, fountains, landscape elements, and street furniture.
- **Program 1.A:** Identify traffic safety issues associated with the City's Complete Streets program and implement, as needed, roadway and multimodal path design improvements, such as reduced speeds, enhanced roadway markings and signage, separated facilities and traffic calming mechanisms.

Events and Activities Programming:

The City continues to offer rich and diverse events and activities programming, both at City facilities and in partnership with external organizations. Programming in 2023-2024 included Spring Fest, Summer Swimming Program at Cathedral City High School, Mary Pickford Free Movies for Kids, the Butterfly Festival, Cathedral City LGBT Days, and Yoga at the Amphitheater. Consistent with the goals of the Healthy and Sustainable Community Element, these programs support social and civic connections, as well as community health and well-being.

This offering of community programs and events is supported by continued partnerships between the City and historical societies, artists, cultural and civic groups, the Agua Caliente Tribe, schools, and private enterprises. For example, the Taste of Jalisco festival in partnership with Agua Caliente Casino, the Desert Art Tour held during Modernism Week, and the Butterfly Festival held in partnership with SCRAP Gallery and the Riverside County Library System.

Events such as the “Celebrating Agnes Pelton: A Journey to the Desert Art Center’s 75th Anniversary” open house, as well as performances by the Cathedral City High School Jazz Band and Choir at the Tastes and Sounds of Cathedral City event series, highlight local artists, past and present. Additionally, the Public Arts Commission administers Community Arts Grant to fund art education, performances, and other cultural events.

Through events such as the International Hot Air Balloon Festival, Modernism Week, and the Palm Springs International Film Festival, the City continues working to increase participation in regional partnerships and alliances that promote and market Cathedral City and Coachella Valley cultural tourism to broader audiences.

The City’s events programming also supports improved public awareness and access to health and wellness programs, including those for vulnerable populations. For example, the City continues to support events held at the Cathedral City Senior Center, such as a vaccine clinic for shingles and pneumonia, a Covid-19 vaccination clinic, the "PD in Motion" event for people with Parkinson's Disease, and the Fall Prevention Symposium.

Goals, policies and programs implemented (ongoing or completed) through these activities:

Arts and Culture Element

- **Program 1.A:** Pursue and maintain public-private partnerships with artists, historical societies, cultural and civic groups, the Agua Caliente Tribe, schools, and private enterprises to offer community programs and events that appeal to all segments of the population.
- **Program 1.C:** Continue to encourage and sponsor arts and cultural awareness and education programs at local schools, colleges and universities, as well as community centers, and private facilities.
- **Program 1.D:** Increase participation in regional partnerships and alliances that promote and market Cathedral City and Coachella Valley cultural tourism to broader audiences, including western Riverside County and southern California.

Environmental Justice Element

- **Program 1.A:** Maintain a joint use agreement with Palm Springs unified School District and look for additional opportunities to partner in expanding resident access to shared facilities.

Healthy and Sustainable Communities Element

- **Program 3.A:** Work with health care professionals and community and advocacy groups to expand opportunities for health services that reduce the need for driving, such as mobile health care and dental clinics, one-stop health care centers, and improved transit access to health clinics and hospitals.
 - **Program 3.C:** Work with health care providers, community groups, and educational speakers to increase public awareness about available health facilities and wellness
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programs, good nutrition, health lifestyles, preventative care, and health screenings. Particular focus should increase outreach to the most vulnerable populations.

Public outreach and communication:

The City's efforts in communications and public outreach are integral to promoting community events, supporting the downtown/civic center area, and ensuring that public participation is accessible to all residents.

The Communications/Events Department is currently working on a proposal to update the wayfinding signage in the City with the aim of increasing awareness of key destinations such as the Perez Arts District and Agua Caliente Casino. Updating wayfinding signage, in conjunction with the active transportation improvements described above, will help to promote the downtown/civic center area as the City's primary arts and entertainment district and extend and connect to the Perez Road arts district.

The City also continues to explore marketing approaches that showcase community arts programs, events, and resources as a means for expanding tourism. For example, the City's public arts website (cathedralcitypublicarts.org) promotes the Perez Arts District art galleries that participate in the District's Forth Fridays series. The Discover Cathedral City website also promotes arts events and programs, such as the "RESURGENCE" art show at the Desert Art Woman Gallery and the Summer Cabaret Series at CV Rep Theater.

Initiatives are also underway to facilitate public participation, particularly with disadvantaged communities. After training staff across departments, the City is now a Certified Autism Center. In the fall of 2024, the Fire Department is providing CERT and emergency preparedness training in both English and Spanish. The City is also in process of developing a communications strategy related to diversifying methods of outreach and prioritizing where residents get their news and information.

Goals, policies and programs implemented (ongoing or completed) through this activity:

Arts and Culture Element

- **Program 1.B:** Promote programs and events through a range of media, including the City website, newsletters, news outlets, community outreach, and marketing endeavors.
- **Program 1.E:** Explore marketing approaches that showcase community arts programs, events, and resources as a means for expanding tourism.
- **Program 2.A:** Continue to promote the downtown/civic center area as the City's primary arts and entertainment district and extend and connect to the Perez Road arts district.
- **Program 2.D:** Strengthen the identity of the Perez Road corridor between Cathedral Canyon Drive and Date Palm Drive as a vibrant, cohesive art district. Potential improvements may include enhanced signage, street furniture, pedestrian walkways, street lights, and/or landscaping treatments.
- **Program 2.E:** Consider the installation of signage, monuments, and/or other design features at key intersections and roadway corridors to increase awareness and recognition of Cathedral City as an arts and culture community.

Environmental Justice Element

- **Program 1.D:** Provide staff and City officials training on the principles and methods of comprehensive public participation with an emphasis on empowering disadvantaged populations.

Healthy and Sustainable Communities Element:

- **Program 3.C:** Work with health care providers, community groups, and educational speakers to increase public awareness about available health facilities and wellness programs, good nutrition, healthy lifestyles, preventive care, and health screenings. Particular focus should include outreach to the most vulnerable populations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: General Plan APR Checklist - Part 2 (Community)