



County of Fresno

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Legislation Text

File #: 20-0360, **Version:** 1

DATE: November 24, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Steven E. White, Director
Department of Public Works and Planning

SUBJECT: 2019 General Plan Annual Progress Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Adopt Resolution accepting the 2019 General Plan Annual Progress Report.

Approval of the recommended action will accept the General Plan Annual Progress Report (APR). The General Plan APR informs your Board of implementation of the policies and programs of all elements of the General Plan during the 2019 calendar year, including the Housing Element.

This report is required to be submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) before April 1st of each year. However, and because public hearings were suspended as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, a public hearing on the APR could not occur prior to the State's deadline. OPR declined to extend the APR submittal deadline but did clarify that the APR could be submitted to OPR prior to Board action, provided that documentation of Board action be submitted when taken. Therefore, staff submitted the APR to OPR and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), on March 30, 2020, thus meeting the State's deadline requirements.

Summaries of the Planning Commission's action and public comments are included as Attachments A, D and E, respectively. The September 10, 2020 Addendum Planning Commission Staff Report is included as Attachment B. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board may determine not to accept the APR and direct Department of Public Works and Planning staff to modify the report with specific direction regarding those modifications and return to the Board for reconsideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action.

DISCUSSION:

Government Code, Section 65300 et seq. requires the County to adopt a comprehensive and long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the unincorporated areas and to accommodate growth while protecting the County's natural resources. As the basis for local government decision making, the General Plan includes goals and policies which guide the analysis of all projects including County initiated projects and those initiated by the public. Actions taken by the decision-making bodies must be consistent with the General Plan.

The General Plan must include seven mandated elements as required by Government Code Section 65302: land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space. Additional elements of special and unique concern to a local government, including economic development, air quality, historic resources, parks and trails, and public facilities, may be included as optional elements. Implementation of the Fresno County General Plan is the responsibility of various County departments as well as certain agencies that are not part of the County's structure but are under contract to provide services to the County.

Government Code, Section 65400 (a)(2) requires that cities and counties submit an APR on the status of their General Plan and progress in its implementation to their legislative body for consideration and acceptance.

Government Code, Section 65400 requires generalized reporting on implementation of General Plan, with specific reporting requirements on the Housing Element. Staff notes that HCD provided revised forms to local governments in January of 2020 and then further revised in February of 2020, which required a significant amount of additional information to prepare the Housing Element portion of the APR.

The APR is required to address implementation of the General Plan programs for the previous calendar year and are due to State agencies by April 1st of each year. Department staff has combined both reporting elements into a single document, the 2019 General Plan APR, included as Attachment C. The APR has been prepared in conformance with County General Plan Policy LU-H.12, which requires the County to review the General Plan annually and revise it as deemed necessary.

It is important to note that there is no standardized form, format, or required content for the General Plan APR with the exception that the report on implementation of the Housing Element must be prepared per the forms prescribed by HCD. Further, per the OPR guidelines, the APR is not required to incorporate all General Plan elements and is not intended to be an elaborate or time-consuming task.

There are two appendices attached to the 2019 APR, with one providing status of implementation for the 122 programs of all elements of the General Plan and the other a report on implementation of the Housing Element prepared per HCD's requirement.

The 2019 APR meets the statutory requirements of Government Code, Section 65400 and exceeds the OPR's advisory guidance for preparation of the APR. The Annual Housing Element Progress Report provides the status of implementation of the Housing Element programs including progress in meeting the County's share of the Fifth-Cycle Regional Housing Needs Allocation.

As previously noted, given the reduced County hearing schedules due to Coronavirus directives and OPR's refusal to extend the filing deadline, staff submitted the APR on March 30, 2020, to OPR and HCD. This was done in order to satisfy the prior to April 1 statutory deadline for APR submittal to the State. Also noted, OPR did inform staff that the APR could be submitted prior to formal County action provided documentation of County action be provided when formal action is taken.

Planning Commission Hearing and Action

The 2019 APR was originally scheduled for the Planning Commission's March 12, 2020 hearing. At that hearing, one Commissioner was absent, two Commissioners left the hearing at the beginning of the presentation of the item, and more Commissioners were going to leave shortly during staff's presentation. Therefore, due to the potential loss of a quorum, the Commission voted to continue the item to the March 26, 2020 Planning Commission hearing. Due to the COVID pandemic, the APR was eventually rescheduled to the September 10, 2020 Planning Commission hearing. Staff notes that there were no changes made to the APR nor the Planning Commission staff reports provided to the Commission for the March 12, 2020 and September 10, 2020 hearings.

During the March 12, 2020 and September 10, 2020 hearings, a member of the public provided written critiques of the 2019 APR, which are included as Attachments D and E.

At the September 10, 2020 Planning Commission hearing:

- Commission members asked if community outreach or outreach meetings were conducted for the 2019 APR.
- One Commissioner suggested the APR could be a phased document updated throughout the year.
- Other Commissioners stated the 2019 APR should be a clean document and that interested members of the public should be allowed to revise the document with those revisions reviewable by staff.
- One member of the public stated the County failed to provide an APR for ten years following 2003 and that the recent APRs are relatively identical. He also asserted the 2019 APR contained inaccuracies and missing information and offered to assist staff in addressing these concerns.

As noted in the attached Planning Commission Resolution (Attachment A), as the third of three motions, the Commission voted to recommend your Board not accept the 2019 APR (4 to 2 with two Commissioners absent). Summaries of the Planning Commission's action and public comments are included as Attachments A, D and E, respectively.

Subsequent to the Planning Commission Hearing, on October 5, 2020 staff received a letter (see Attachment F) from the League of Women Voters requesting that this item be put on the Board agenda as a regular item and requesting clarification of 12 Economic Development programs. Some of the programs listed in this letter staff has discussed and provided responses at various times during the current General Plan Review process. As your Board is aware, certain Economic Development functions of the County are contracted to the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The EDC was provided the League's letter for review and comment. Below is a brief summary of the EDC responses and County comments related to effort in 2019.

- ED-A.A - Creation of a staff position to coordinate countywide economic development. This issue has been addressed in the past. The EDC continues to work with Department of Public Works and Planning staff on identified economic development projects and EDC and County also staff meet on key projects as needed, including the development of an Opportunity Zone prospectus.
- ED-A.B - Creation of an Action Team to coordinate countywide economic development (EDAT). In 2019, the County activated its EDAT in partnership with the City of Sanger and EDC to coordinate joint grant applications for funding to extend infrastructure for the State Route 180/Academy Avenue growth area. County provides senior staff assistance for priority EDAT projects.
- ED-A.C - 5-year evaluations of the success of the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In 2019 EDC updated the 2017-2022 CEDS. EDC engaged with cities for updated economic development information and example projects from multiple cities were included. EDC is initiating the next five-year CEDS update scheduled for June 2022.

- ED-A.D - Creation of criteria for the location of value-added agricultural facilities. The County established location criteria for value added uses which were adopted in 2004. These standards are utilized when reviewing value-added agricultural proposals. In 2019, EDC recruited a sustainable ag-manufacturing company which selected Reedley to locate their United States headquarters. EDC, the County and the City of Reedley have assisted the company in securing financing.
- ED-A.E - Establishment of a set of guidelines for the analysis of economic impacts within staff reports. EDC conducts routine Economic Impact Reports to quantify potential direct, indirect and induced impacts by local projects. EDC has added enhanced data and research capabilities, added two Research Analysts and economic modeling tools.
- ED-A.F - Contract with the Economic Development Corporation for the marketing of county produce. In 2019, the EDC created a tailored Agricultural Industry Packet for use at the AMCHAM Shanghai Conference. EDC is also collaborating with the Bay Area Council to host a series of webinars for local businesses. EDC regularly develops and updates marketing for the County to use as part of tradeshows, targeted efforts and direct business outreach.
- ED-A.G - Determination of the existence of capital deficiencies for farmers shifting to production modes that create greater employment; redirection of existing funds should such deficiencies be found. In 2019, EDC focused on the California Energy Commission's (CEC) Food Production Investment Program. Grants are awarded to companies planning to upgrade processing equipment to reduce energy consumption and Greenhouse Gas emissions. \$753,000 was awarded in CEC grants to area businesses to upgrade their equipment. EDC proactively marketed several key resources and programs that can provide farmers and food processors/producers cost saving incentives.
- ED-B.A - Assemblage of a group of service providers to assess telecommunications infrastructure. In 2019, EDC supported the Sprint and T-Mobile merger, expanding broadband investment in the Central Valley and job creation for a Kingsburg call center. EDC has ongoing communication regarding expansion of fiber for school districts, commercial, and industrial users.
- ED-B.B - Delivery to businesses of a comprehensive package of assistance regarding available technologies. The EDC works with technology and incubator organizations to enhance access to new technologies for local businesses. EDC is also a member of Fresno4Biz, a digital business resource clearinghouse addressing technical assistance needs.
- ED-B.C - Creation of a roundtable of financial institutions to improve access to capital for non-agricultural businesses. In 2019, EDC worked with financial advisors to design the Opportunity Fresno prospectus for businesses to utilize Opportunity Zones to meet potential financing needs. EDC partners with financial institutions and accounting firms to improve access to capital for local businesses.
- ED-B.D - Creation of a planning process to identify additional recreational opportunities countywide. Note: This program applies only to the coast range foothills and other areas where "gateway opportunities" exist. This item is pending with County staff.
- ED-B.E - Evaluation of the Visitor & Convention Bureau's business marketing programs; provision for funding assistance. In 2019, EDC completed the 2019 Opportunity Analysis which enlisted the support of the Bureau. EDC coordinates with the Fresno/Clovis Convention and Visitors Bureau (Bureau) to ensure continued messaging.

As previously noted, your Board may determine not to accept the APR and direct Department of Public Works

and Planning staff to modify the report with specific direction regarding those modifications and return to the Board for reconsideration.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #16, June 4, 2019

BAI #39, May 8, 2018

BAI #49, June 6, 2017

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Attachments A - F

On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Samantha Buck