



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

Subject: Housing Element 2023-2031 status update and expansion of Housing Element Council Subcommittee role

Prepared by: Laura Simpson, Interim Community Development Director

Reviewed by: Jon Maginot, Assistant City Manager and Public Information Officer, Sonia Lee

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Initiated by:
Housing Element Subcommittee of City Council.

Fiscal Impact:
No direct fiscal impact is anticipated.

Environmental Review:
Not applicable

Summary:

- On January 25, 2022, the City Council requested a staff update on the status of community engagement and the housing element outreach process, as well as the consultant contract for the Housing Element Update.
- On February 7, 2022, the Housing Element Subcommittee requested, a discussion on the next steps in the housing element preparation process, and a recommendation to the Council on the expansion of the role of the Housing Element Subcommittee.

Staff Recommendation:

That City Council receive the staff update on the status of the Housing Element Update community engagement process, consultant contract, and next steps, and approve the expansion of the role of the Housing Element Council Subcommittee.

Reviewed By:

City Manager

City Attorney

Finance Director



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Discussion:

In June 2021, The City selected Lisa Wise Consulting (LWC) as the consulting firm to prepare the City's 2023-2031 Housing Element. LWC began working with staff to collect housing data in late summer and fall. In October 2021, the City Council Housing Element Update Engagement Subcommittee provided input to staff on a community engagement approach. On October 26, 2021, the community engagement plan was presented to the City Council. Since that time, staff has been working closely with the team at LWC and their outreach subconsultant, Plan to Place, to ensure that Los Altos residents and the business community are engaged and informed about the Housing Element update.

Outreach

Staff began the outreach process with a multi-faceted approach in November 2021 through 1) the establishment of a Housing Element page on the City's website, which is maintained by LWC and city staff, and is linked to the City's main webpage; 2) six Housing Element pop-up tables at various events around the city; 3) ongoing small group virtual meetings about the Housing Element, ranging from 2 to 8 attendees (15 have been held to date); 4) a double page ad in the Town Crier on January 12, 2022 and February 23, 2022; 5) ongoing Housing Element newsletters and alerts for over 125 persons who have signed up on the interest list, 6) Two Community workshops have been held virtually, the first on January 13th for over 50 households, and the second on March 1st, for over 150 households.

To begin the initial phase of education about the Housing Element, LWC and staff presented to the City Council and Planning Commission at a joint study session on December 14, 2021. Small group meetings and Housing Element pop-ups began in December and are ongoing. The first virtual Community Workshop was held on January 13, 2022, and was attended by over 50 participants, who met together and then in small group breakout sessions to allow for maximum participation on identifying the city's housing needs and issues. Additionally, LWC has met with for-profit and non-profit housing developers. Staff is meeting with various business and community groups in February and March to receive input on workforce housing needs in the community. A second virtual Community Workshop was held on March 1st and attended by 150 households. At this meeting, LWC presented opportunity sites that met the HCD screening and also indicated several areas where development standards such as height or density might be approved to allow for more residential development. Many comments were recorded and are documented on the Housing Element website under the summary for Community Workshop #2.

Within small group meetings, staff has met and spoken with members of the League of Women Voters, Los Altos Residents, Los Altos Village Association, and the Los Altos Property Owners Downtown. The week of February 7th, letters were sent to the following organizations with



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upcoming meeting dates and an invitation to schedule small group meetings with the Interim Planning Director: Los Altos Women’s Caucus, Los Altos Assistance League, Los Altos Affordable Housing Alliance, Friends of Los Altos, Green Town Los Altos, Heising-Simons Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos History Museum, Friend of the Library, Los Altos Rotary Club, Los Altos Kiwanis, American Legion, Los Altos Forward, and Los Altos Community Coalition

The next phase of the housing element update preparation process will be information and feedback on the potential housing element sites and potential rezoning sites in the City. Staff will send a postcard mailing in mid-February to all Los Altos residents, informing them of the upcoming community workshop on March 1st, for feedback on the potential sites and rezoning opportunities and directing them to the Housing Element website for complete information. A map of potential sites and rezoning opportunities will be posted on the Housing Element website prior to the March 1st, community workshop.

City staff and LWC added the second Community Workshop on March 1st, regarding the sites analysis and rezoning, prior to the public draft of the Housing Element anticipated in April, in response to public comments and to ensure early feedback from the community.

Housing Element Next Steps

As displayed in presentations to City Council and on the City Housing Element website, which is directly accessible through the main City webpage, the next steps for the Housing Element Update process include the following upcoming key dates:

- March 22, 2022: Request Council direction to staff on a policy for the overall Council goal to update the Housing Element, in particular, in terms of the size of the buffer (units beyond RHNA) to target, and whether it will be minimal or providing greater opportunity for housing development. Additionally, the Annual Progress Report will be presented to City Council on the consent calendar to show the past year’s progress toward current Housing Element.
- Early May 2022: Draft Public Housing Element released and posted for 30-day public comment period.
- May 24, 2022: First Joint Planning Commission/City Council meeting on Draft Housing Element to receive feedback on any revisions to the draft prior to submittal to State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) which will occur by July 2022. A second meeting may also be scheduled in June.



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LWC contract

The City contracted with LWC for the total amount of \$600,228 for Housing Element Update preparation. To date, the City has received an invoiced amount of \$124,000. Staff has taken on a significant amount of the outreach and staffing work in order to reduce overall costs on the project. It is anticipated that the project can remain on budget and on-time to deliver an adopted Housing Element Update by the end of December 2022, provided no additional meetings are requested by the City Council. If additional meetings are required or requested, a per meeting fee will apply and additional funds will need to be allocated from the General Fund. Grant funding was received by the City for \$35,000 toward the Housing Element. The Housing Element is a project within the approved FY 2021-2022 CIP budget.

Housing Element Council Subcommittee Role

The Housing Element Council Subcommittee was initially formed to provide input to staff related to community engagement in the Housing Element Update process. As the Housing Element Update has progressed from the education and outreach stage to a second phase, including sites analysis and feedback, the Housing Element Subcommittee has re-envisioned their role to be expanded to include feedback and input on the overall Housing Element Update process, particularly with regard to policy direction, timing and outreach.

Recommendation

The Housing Element Council Subcommittee and staff recommend the Council expand the role of the Housing Element Council Subcommittee to include feedback and input on the overall Housing Element Update process.