



Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Cynthia Bryant  
Director

April 7, 2016

To: All California Cities and Counties  
From: Scott Morgan, Senior Planner  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
RE: General Plan Annual Progress Report Guidance

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research has updated the *General Plan Annual Progress Report Guidance*. This edition reflects the change in address for reporting to the Department of Housing and Community Development. This *Guidance* document is also available on our website at [www.opr.ca.gov](http://www.opr.ca.gov).

If you have questions regarding the *General Plan Annual Progress Report Guidance*, please contact Scott Morgan, Senior Planner at (916) 445-0613 or e-mail us at [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov).



Governor's Office of Planning and Research

## **GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT GUIDANCE**

**Revised July 11, 2007**

Government Code Section 65400 mandates that certain cities and all 58 counties submit an annual report on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation to their legislative bodies, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Housing and Community Development (HCD) by April 1 of each year. Only charter cities are exempt from the requirement to prepare Annual Progress Reports (APRs) unless the charter stipulates otherwise (Government Code Section 65700).

The guidance that follows intends to assist local governments with the development of the General Plan APR. This guidance is intentionally general to allow maximum flexibility in the form and content of APRs, which may need to vary based on individual circumstances, resources, and constraints.

### **PURPOSE OF THE APR**

The APR provides local legislative bodies with information regarding the implementation of the General Plan for their city or county. APRs must be presented to the local legislative body for its review and acceptance, usually as a consent or discussion item on a regular meeting agenda. Therefore, the APR should provide enough information for decision makers to assess how the General Plan was implemented during the 12-month reporting period - either calendar year or fiscal year. More specifically, APRs explain how land use decisions relate to adopted goals, policies, and implementation measures of the General Plan. The APRs should provide enough information to identify necessary "course adjustments" or modifications to the General Plan, and means to improve local implementation.

### **HOW THE STATE USES THE APR**

Once a local legislative body has accepted the APR, local governments must submit a copy to OPR and HCD.

The APR gives OPR the opportunity to identify statewide trends in land use decision making and how local planning and development activities relate to statewide planning goals and policies. APRs may identify needed modifications and improvements to OPR's *General Plan Guidelines*. In addition, OPR is able to track progress on a local jurisdiction's comprehensive General Plan update using information provided in the APR.

Providing a copy of the APR to HCD fulfills statutory requirements to report certain housing information, including the local agency's progress in meeting its share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to the development of housing



(Government Codes Section 65584.3(c) and 65584.5(b)(5)). HCD is currently developing standardized forms for including this information in the APRs. Please contact HCD's Housing Policy Department (HPD) at (916) 324-8652 or <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/regulations/> for more information.

## **FORMAT GUIDANCE FOR THE APR**

There is no standardized form or format for the preparation of the General Plan APR. The following recommendations serve as guidance in developing an APR that is useful to your specific jurisdiction. The APR prepared for your city or county is not required to incorporate all of the elements suggested and need not be an elaborate and time-consuming task. Instead, the APR may make use of available sources of information that may contain information pertinent to General Plan annual reporting such as: "annual reports", "performance reports", "budget reports", or "state of the city/county reports". OPR encourages jurisdictions to include these types of reports or portions thereof in the APR so long as they specifically address implementation of the general plan. This approach enables General Plan implementation to be discussed in the broader context of the jurisdiction's overall programs and activities, including redevelopment, economic development, and other topics.

In the past, OPR did not require an annual report from cities or counties undertaking a comprehensive General Plan update. Instead, OPR accepted a brief letter describing the status of the update, description of the scope of work, and an anticipated completion date, in lieu of the APR. **OPR will no longer accept such a letter in lieu of an APR.** Planning activities related to the General Plan continue despite the comprehensive update process. Therefore, status on these activities should still be reported to local legislative bodies, OPR and HCD.

### **General Contents**

Each jurisdiction should determine what locally relevant issues are important to include in the General Plan APR. The following are suggested contents for the report:

1. Introduction.
2. Table of Contents.
3. Date of presentation/acceptance by the local legislative body (agenda item or resolution).
4. Measures associated with the implementation of the general plan with specific reference to individual element.
5. Housing Element reporting requirements – Each jurisdiction is required to report certain housing information in accordance with state housing law (refer to Government Code Sections 65583 and 65584) and HCD's housing element guidelines (<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/regulations/> or (916) 324-8652 for more information).



6. The degree to which the General Plan complies with OPR's General Plan Guidelines, including environmental justice considerations, collaborative planning with the military lands and facilities, and consultation with Native American tribes.
7. The date of the last update to the General Plan.
8. Priorities for land use decision making that have been established by the local legislative body (e.g., passage of moratoria or emergency ordinances).
9. Goals, policies, objectives, standards or other plan proposals that need to be added or were deleted, amended, or otherwise adjusted.
10. One or more lists of the following, including reference to the specific general plan element or policy, status (i.e., approved/denied, initiated/ongoing/completed, etc.), and brief comment on how each advanced the implementation of the General Plan during the past year:
  - a. Planning activities initiated – These may include, but are not limited to, master plans, specific plans, master environmental assessments, annexation studies, and other studies or plans.
  - b. General Plan amendments<sup>1</sup> – These may include agency-driven as well as applicant-driven amendments.
  - c. Major development applications processed

### **Additional Content**

The following are additional suggestions to make the APR a more comprehensive tool for illustrating planning and development activities within the jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions may not have the resources to address them annually. However, they are mentioned here as examples of how some jurisdictions have effectively incorporated other types of information into their APRs. Cities and counties should feel free to incorporate this information into their APRs, where available and as deemed appropriate.

- 1) Review of:
  - a. Interagency or intergovernmental coordination efforts and identify areas for improvement. This may include participation in a regional blueprint or partnerships with State or Federal programs.
  - b. The implementation of mitigation measures from the General Plan Final Environmental Impact Report or Negative Declaration.
  - c. Equity planning considerations of the General Plan, such as impacts on particular ethnic or socioeconomic population groups (i.e., environmental justice issues).
- 2) Summarize efforts to:

---

<sup>1</sup> Except as provided in Government Code Sections 65358(c) and (d), no mandatory element of the General Plan may be amended more than four times during a calendar year.



- a. Promote infill development, reuse, and redevelopment particularly in underserved areas while preserving cultural and historic resources.
  - b. Protect environmental and agricultural resources and other natural resources
  - c. Encourage efficient development patterns
- 3) Describe the jurisdiction's strategy for:
- a. Economic development – Depending on the needs of your jurisdiction, this analysis could include information on the ratio of jobs to dwelling units, tax revenues, demographics, census information, etc.
  - b. Monitoring long-term growth – For example: population growth, employment growth, land use development, and the provision of adequate supporting public services and infrastructure.
- 4) Other actions:
- a. Outline department goals, objectives, activities and responsibilities, as they relate to land use planning.
  - b. Perform a regional or sub-regional outlook of population growth, housing, job generation, and other socioeconomic trends.
  - c. Summarize the comments of other boards and commissions on the general plan implementation.
  - d. Identify and monitor customer service improvements and methods to encourage public involvement in planning activities.
  - e. Review and summarize grant administration for land use planning activities.
  - f. Provide a technology review such as implementation of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or establishment of web sites.

### **SUBMITTING THE APR**

*To OPR:* Submit a printed copy of the Annual Progress Report to the State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044, or 1400 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. You may also email the APR as an attachment in MS Word or Adobe PDF to [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov). If your city or county posts the APR electronically, please notify us of your website address so that we may review it online.

*To HCD:* A copy of the APR should also be submitted to Housing and Community Development, Housing Policy Department, Division of Housing Policy Development P.O. Box 952053, Sacramento, CA 94252-2053.



## **CONCLUSION**

OPR is open to your suggestions on how to make this guidance more meaningful and useful to local planning agencies. Please contact Scott Morgan, Senior Planner, at telephone (916) 445-0613 or email the State Clearinghouse at [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov).