



CITY OF SAN MATEO

City Hall
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo CA 94403
www.cityofsanmateo.org

Agenda Report

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TO: City Council
FROM: Alex Khojikian, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Community Development Department
MEETING DATE: October 16, 2023

SUBJECT:
Draft General Plan 2040 – Circulation; Public Services and Facilities; and Safety Elements

RECOMMENDATION:
Receive an informational overview of the Draft General Plan 2040, take public comments and provide direction on Circulation Element, Public Services and Facilities Element, and Safety Element.

BACKGROUND:
The City’s General Plan Update kicked off in Fall 2018 and began with a series of visioning workshops and community meetings. From April 2019 through October 2023, the General Plan team held a series of meetings and events to establish the General Plan study areas; create the range of alternatives; confirm the draft alternatives; and receive feedback and direction on the preferred land use and circulation scenarios as well as on goals and policies from the community and, ultimately, the City Council. More information about the background information, technical reports, and outreach process, including meeting materials and recordings, is available at www.StriveSanMateo.org.

To date, the Strive San Mateo General Plan Update has focused on crafting a shared community vision for what San Mateo can be in the year 2040, selecting the preferred land use and circulation scenarios that will guide the General Plan’s Land Use and Circulation Elements, establishing the goals and policies for all of the elements in the General Plan, and compiling all of these efforts into the Draft General Plan 2040 ([Attachment 1](#)). Draft General Plan 2040 was published on July 17, 2023, which started the next phase of community outreach and engagement. Public meetings, workshops, and pop-up events, as well as an online commenting tool, will be happening through October 2023. Draft General Plan 2040, plus numerous supporting resources and tools, are available at www.strivesanmateo.org/draft-general-plan.

Draft General Plan 2040 Process
The Draft General Plan was started with a foundation based on the existing General Plan, but has been updated to reflect the community’s current policy priorities, address the key issues the City is facing today, and improve organization and clarity. To reach this milestone, the City of San Mateo has hosted 80+ events, a combination of workshops, staff presentations, and pop-up events, five online activities, 12 General Plan Subcommittee (GPS) meetings, six Planning Commission meetings, and 12 meetings with the City Council from 2018 through 2022.

These events and meetings shaped the development of Draft General Plan 2040 at every step of the project. Draft General Plan 2040 is a culmination of community, General Plan Subcommittee, and Planning Commission feedback and ultimately City Council direction. In addition, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 website included online activities and shared information about upcoming meetings and draft documents throughout the process.

Draft General Plan 2040 Overview

Draft General Plan 2040 is made up of a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, text describing key issues of community interest, and goals and policies that outline how the City will address those issues, as well as accompanying maps and diagrams. Draft General Plan 2040 addresses all the topics required by State law and has tailored the organization to reflect the local context. It also includes other topics that are not required by State law, but that community members have identified as being fundamental to the quality of life in the city. Once adopted, the optional elements have the same legal status as the mandatory elements. No single element or subject supersedes any other, and all elements must be internally consistent; policies and actions must complement one another across topic areas without conflicting. The elements in the Draft General Plan 2040 include: Land Use; Circulation; Housing (adopted separately); Community Design and Historic Resources; Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation; Public Services and Facilities; Safety; and Noise.

Each element, or chapter, of Draft General Plan 2040 also includes a concise set of background narratives that summarizes current conditions in the city related to the topics in the element. The background information provides context about the issues the City plans to address, explaining why there is policy direction so that the policies and actions can focus on how the City can achieve a desired outcome. The narratives also provide information on other regulations and/or agencies that influence the decisionmaking process. Together, these items paint a picture of the community's future.

The elements in Draft General Plan 2040 address a specific set of topics and include a set of goals, polices and actions that provide a blueprint for how the City will address these issues. These goals, policies, and actions provide guidance to the City on how to direct change and manage resources over the next 20 years.

Draft General Plan 2040 also embodies **three key themes: Sustainability, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement**. Because these themes are interrelated with all the other elements, they are woven throughout Draft General Plan 2040 rather than being in a stand-alone element. Policies and actions in each element that relate to each of these themes are marked with a corresponding icon.

Community Outreach on Draft General Plan 2040

The community outreach and engagement effort for this phase of the General Plan Update began on July 17, 2023 with the publication of Draft General Plan 2040. The City has been collecting feedback on Draft General Plan 2040 through a series of workshops, meetings, events, and online commenting tools over the past two and a half months. A more detailed report on the community outreach and engagement activities that happened during this phase of the General Plan Update effort will be presented to Council at the October 30, 2023 special meeting.

As of October 9, 2023, over 236 comments were submitted via the online tool, 52 written comments were submitted via email on the Draft General Plan and 24 written comments were received on the Draft EIR. In addition, over 380 members of the public attended the five district town hall meetings, with many verbal and written comments received at each event. Verbal feedback on the General Plan has also been received by staff at various other pop-up events and activities that have occurred over the past three months. Based on the virtual community workshop, online tool, written comments, town hall meetings and other engagement activities, the emerging community feedback themes on the Draft General Plan, specific to the three elements being reviewed at this meeting, are as follows:

Circulation Element

- *Reduce traffic congestion.*
- *Reduce residential speed limits.*
- *Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and expand infrastructure to support these travel modes.*
- *Ensure new bike lanes do not affect existing parking.*
- *Coordinate with transit providers to ensure efficient and more frequent transit service.*
- *Ensure sufficient parking as the city grows.*
- *Do not classify 5th Ave from S. Delaware to S. Amphlett and 9th Ave from S. Delaware to S. Amphlett as arterials.*

Public Services and Facilities Element

- *More specifically address the topic of seniors and the aging population.*
- *Ensure sufficient infrastructure and public services as the city grows.*

- *Both support and concern for building electrification; concern about the costs associated with these upgrades and requests for more community outreach and input.*
- *Need to regularly maintain the lagoon.*
- *Maintain stormwater infrastructure to prevent flooding.*
- *Ensure access to fresh food and grocery stores especially as local retail is at risk of converting to other uses.*

Safety Element

- *Ensure there is sufficient flood protection infrastructure.*
- *Plan for sea level rise.*
- *Build climate change resilient public facilities.*

General Plan Subcommittee Feedback on Draft General Plan 2040

The GPS met on August 29, 2023, to review and provide feedback on Draft General Plan 2040. At this meeting, the GPS accepted public comments, asked clarifying questions and provided a range of comments and feedback on all of the topics covered in the seven elements. [Attachment 2](#) includes a summary of the GPS comments and feedback. Some of the overarching themes that emerged from the GPS's discussions and comments included:

- *Make it clear how the General Plan will affect the community, perhaps by summarizing the outcomes in an Executive Summary at the start of each element.*
- *Add actions to enhance placemaking in San Mateo to ensure the charm and identity of the city is maintained as the city grows.*
- *Support local businesses and highlight the positive impacts local business has on the community.*
- *Add policies and actions to support seniors and aging and policies and actions to support seniors as a growing proportion of the population.*
- *Outside of the General Plan, examine fees and policies that could be an obstacle to housing production and update City policies that may impede housing development.*

Planning Commission Feedback on Draft General Plan 2040

The Planning Commission held a public meeting on September 26, 2023, to review and provide input on the Draft General Plan. At this meeting, the Commission accepted public comments, asked clarifying questions, and provided a range of comments and feedback on all of the topics covered in the seven elements. With regards to the three elements being reviewed at this meeting, the Commission had the following comments and feedback:

Circulation Element

- *Prioritize implementation of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects that align with the State Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure and other climate goals.*
- *Establish a realistic, but ambitious timeframe to fully complete all infrastructure projects outlined in the CIP.*
- *Add mention of paratransit systems.*
- *Explore incentives for projects that voluntarily provide parking within ½ mile of transit.*

Public Services and Facilities Element

- *Expand access to public restrooms.*
- *Provide for the equitable distribution of public services and facilities throughout the city.*

Safety Element

- *Support for OneShoreline sea level rise overlay zone mapping.*
- *Prioritize establishing microgrids in equity priority communities.*

For the Planning Commission recommendations that align with GPS and community input, as well as past Council direction, staff has added them to the recommended revisions in Attachments 4-6. For the other recommendations, staff would look to Council for direction before including them as revisions to the General Plan.

DISCUSSION:

Staff is seeking direction from the Council on what updates and revisions should be made to Draft General Plan 2040 before the final version is published. Based on the community input received, along with feedback from the GPS and Planning Commission, staff developed a list of recommended revisions for each Element. Does the Council support these recommended revisions? Are there any other changes or updates that should be made to the Draft General Plan?

Circulation Element

This Element sets the policy framework for attaining a future multimodal transportation system that meets the community's needs, is sustainable, advances environmental justice, and improves the community's welfare. This element promotes a circulation system that serves the land use plan in the Land Use Element and is designed for all users and all modes of transportation, welcomes innovation, and addresses the challenges of roadway improvements and parking.

This element includes goals, policies, and actions focused on improving and expanding the multimodal transportation network, promoting transportation demand management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle trips, expanding and improving the safety of the pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility network, making transit a viable transportation option for the community, maintaining a roadway network that operates efficiently as the city continues to grow, providing for efficient parking and curbside management, and utilizing emerging transportation technologies to expand transportation options.

Based on the community input received, along with input from the GPS and Planning Commission, staff prepared a list of recommended revisions for Council consideration ([Attachment 3](#)). Highlights of these recommendations include adding language to signal improving transportation safety is a cornerstone principle of this Element, adding an action to update Figure C-3 Street Classifications to reflect the outcomes of the Complete Street Plan, improving the clarity and intent of various policy and action texts, and incorporating recommendations from SamTrans.

Public Services and Facilities Element

The Public Services and Facilities Element is not one of the required elements for a General Plan. However, the City understands the importance of public services and facilities, and this Element provides the policy framework to maintain and enhance community safety services, water supply, wastewater, flood control, energy infrastructure, solid waste reduction and public facilities such as City Hall, the libraires, and community centers. This element also supports school services, the provision of child care, access to health care and social services and supporting senior citizens and the aging population.

Based on the community input received, along with input from the GPS and Planning Commission, staff prepared a list of recommended revisions for Council consideration ([Attachment 4](#)). Highlights of these recommendations include updating the stormwater policies to improve connections to flood prevention and enhanced water quality, adding a policy to continue maintenance of the Marina Lagoon to improve flood control infrastructure, improving and expanding child care policies, and adding a new goal and policies and actions to support seniors and aging adults.

Safety Element

The Safety Element establishes the policy framework to reduce exposure to potential natural and human-caused hazards that could affect the City of San Mateo's residents, businesses, visitors, environment, and services. San Mateo is at risk from several natural and human-caused hazards such as geologic and seismic hazards, flooding, sea level rise, wildfires, and potential exposure to hazardous materials. Climate change is likely to make many of these hazards more damaging for people, buildings and structures, ecosystems, and other important community assets.

Based on the community input received, along with input from the GPS and Planning Commission, staff prepared a list of recommended revisions for Council consideration ([Attachment 5](#)). Highlights of these recommendations include combining the flood hazard and sea level rise adaptation policies and actions to signal the interconnections between these topics.

NEXT STEPS:

Following the October 16, 2023, City Council Meeting, the next steps to finalize the Draft General Plan 2040 include:

- Hold the final public meeting on Draft General Plan 2040 before the City Council scheduled **October 30, 2023 (Land Use)** to review the input from the community, GPS, Planning Commission, and provide direction on the remaining Draft General Plan 2040 Element.
- Prepare written responses to all comments received on the Draft EIR which will be compiled in the Final EIR (target to publish is **January 2024**).
- Document revisions to General Plan 2040 per Council direction (target to publish is **January 2024**).
- Hold two Planning Commission hearings to provide recommendations to the City Council on General Plan 2040, CAP 2023 Technical Update, and the Final EIR (anticipated in **February 2024**).
- Hold City Council hearings to consider adoption of General Plan 2040 and the CAP 2023 Technical Update and certification of the EIR (anticipated in **March 2024**).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

In accordance with Public Resources Code section 21065, the City Council's direction on Draft General Plan 2040 is not a project subject to CEQA because it can be seen with certainty that this activity will not cause a physical change in the environment. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the General Plan Update was published on August 11, 2023. The DEIR 45-day public comment started on August 11, 2023 and ended on September 25, 2023. A Final EIR will be prepared and presented to the City Council for certification prior to any formal decisions on General Plan 2040.

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Draft General Plan 2040

Att 2 – Summary of General Plan Subcommittee Feedback on Draft General Plan 2040

Att 3 – Circulation Element – Recommended Revisions

Att 4 – Public Services and Facilities Element – Recommended Revisions

Att 5 – Safety Element – Recommended Revisions

Att 6 – Public Comment

STAFF CONTACT

City of San Mateo

Zachary Dahl, AICP, Deputy Director

(650) 522-7207

generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org

PlaceWorks

Joanna Jansen, AICP, LEED AP, Principal