

GPU Town Hall Meeting Notes – District 4

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

- Q1. When engaging the community on the City's website, you should put the agenda to know when the presentation will start so we don't have to rush after work.
- *Response:* We did note this on the website but can make it clearer.
- Q2. Has the decision been made to dredge the lagoon?
- *Response:* No decisions have been made yet.
- Q3. How did you designate the different areas for lower or higher density?
- *Response:* At the start of the General Plan outreach process, there was a focus on how and where growth should go. It culminated into ten study areas. Some themes were distance to transit and shopping centers in transition. For areas outside of these study areas, the land uses will remain close to what they are in the current General Plan. Most areas of change will be in the ten study areas.
- Q4. Some of the lower density areas are close to 280 or 92, so they are close to main roads without having to go through local roads. It depends on what your perspective is. We should entertain idea of getting shuttles to support growth that is going to happen to shuttle people to train stations instead of people getting into cars.
- Q5. How is the Fish Market project determined to be transit-friendly? There is a close bus stop but it is not near the train.
- *Response:* There are constraints to the site that staff needs to evaluate. It was included in a study area as a commercial site that was likely to develop.
- Q6. We need to work better with CalTrans and transit agencies. There are hardly any stops to the train. Even Station Park Green residents have to go to the Hillsdale Station.
- Q7. How much teeth does the Circulation Element have?
- *Response:* There is discretion in how some elements are addressed, with the exception of the Housing Element, for example, that has State obligations. For the Circulation Element, projects do have to meet some objectives and requirements.
- Q8. For the Fish Market project, we have not seen traffic studies yet. There are obstacles in the way of 19th Ave. and traffic will continue to increase. When does the traffic study happen? Is it after the building permit? If you look at Denver, there are shuttles that are successful.
- *Response:* We can't get into specifics about projects but will consider transportation impacts during the project review that we don't have answers to yet. It is subject to CEQA that will evaluate several impacts, but this evaluation has not been done yet.
- Q9. I spoke to a Traffic Engineer who said that the only thing that developers are responsible for is the impact of their project from their units to streets. They're studying intersections but only have to mitigate their units. They don't have to factor other projects. You have to look at the whole corridor of how it impacts the City and not just the units. Can you put on the website what vacancies there are where there is affordable housing (15% affordable). Every time the developer builds, it seems not affordable and we are frustrated in the community.
- *Response:* Traffic analysis does need to look at cumulative impacts and streets it affects. When looking at impacts, it is not the project in isolation and consider projects not occupied yet.

- *Response:* We don't have occupancy to the data of building vacancies but can verify that all BMR units are occupiable are filled. We don't know vacancy of market rates.
- Q10. This is more specific to this area. I think the draft General Plan Update is fine but we need actionable results now. For example, we don't have a rec center, our roads have not been fixed. We're talking about future projects but we need our infrastructure fixed today in this District. I want to see the plan that shows how things will get fixed now.
- *Response:* The General Plan is the umbrella document and then it moves to actions through other plans such as Complete Streets or capital improvements. Having a strong General Plan in place is a critical place to then find the revenue source to get projects done. The General Plan results in the framework to be competitive.
- Q11. As a follow up, if you go to Baywood or Beresford their roads are paved. But there are potholes, some stop signs are not fixed. We are talking about upgrades but there are under-represented neighborhoods like Shoreview and Parkside that are not getting them.
- *Response:* The concept of equitable priority communities is important to this plan to spotlight areas. The environmental justice section should be looked at, and it is one of the objectives and has not been in the General Plan before. It will facilitate more investment.
- Q12. Could you expand on the First Presbyterian Church on Hacienda and 25th? Is it still going to allow housing?
- *Response:* Initially the church was looking at redeveloping the parking lot site for housing in District 3. But its location was not optimal. Its designation allows for housing but within a quasi public setting like churches. It will still allow housing but it is not in a study area.
- Q13. Does the General Plan look at changing some of the office buildings to housing? It seems like more offices are being built which means more cars into the city versus more housing into places. There are high rises that are being converted to biotech that should have been converted to housing. I hope the plan is looking at eliminating office and putting housing instead. Also, why is the Marina Library but needing fixes instead of building a proper library. I don't see that in the General Plan at all.
- *Response:* As part of this General Plan Update, the height limit for office uses has been lowered. There are other policy initiatives such as setting min density for mixed use. To achieve housing you need multiple uses to pencil financially. Overall, one of the key pieces is focusing on housing over pure office projects. While we still need office and jobs we need a dynamic economy to allow San Mateo to thrive. We need a balance for people to live and work closer and reduce VMT and congestion on streets and GHG. The General Plan does allow office but focuses on mixed use and more housing and not office.
- Q14. Downtown has lost a lot of food stores and access to foods with all these developments. Is there any thought to allowing food stores in the empty food spots? We lost Trags, so there are less places to walk to for food.
- *Response:* Access to food is a key neighborhood serving amenity. We don't always have full influence but we do try to find ways to retain stores if there is a grocer involved, such as the Draeger's project. Access to food and healthy food is a key objective in equity priority communities.

Q15. Comments: Electrification – I went to the SIC meeting and the average cost after rebate was between \$11k-17k to electrify a home. My first comment is that communication needs to go out immediately if the city expects full electrification by 2030 if that's the cost. There are communities living paycheck to paycheck. SAMCAR did an analysis and found that the cost is 134k to electrify there is a big discrepancy. We call PGE who said even if you electrify, if you have no solar, it takes an average of 9 months to turn on electric. Do we have two systems going on at same time? How is this going to work practically? The City is quick to say that we are underserved but what are we doing to mitigate the cost?

- *Response:* On the communication piece, one of the three key themes is a comprehensive approach to comm engagement and outreach to ensure folks are aware in a way that is comprehensive so that all efforts are in a comprehensive string to get the word out and having an ongoing dialogue.
- *Response:* The meeting with SIC was the first meeting and was the conversation starter, the 2030 date is a target and is a big goal. We have yet to hear from our entire community. Once we do our outreach and report back to the SIC and City Council, there will be decisions to be made. States might influence locally which might change the community conversation. Staff did hear lots of concern with voices on both sides. We are still early, there is time to go other way. We did hear concern for expense, price being passed on to tenants, unpermitted unsafe work, advocates. There is more conversation to be had and are looking at a schedule and might slow down to hear and reach everyone. We aren't there yet and will not be on the timeline we were thinking about. For anyone who is concerned that they won't be heard, look out for notices and postings. It's important to look to staff because we are trying but might not be seen. The community should also talk to each other and point to the city.

Q16. What is the policy around timelines, such as the Block 21 delay, what is the city doing from a planning perspective? Allow a pop up or a park in those two years? What is the policy around getting projects finished? What are the rights to have things in the interim?

- *Response:* It might not be a full two-year delay. We are working actively with all job sites and how to keep going. If there is a delay, what do they need to do to improve the visuals and circulation. We are working with developers and asking what they can do to improve the site through dust control or sidewalks. Each site is unique and a former gas station and take time to remediate. In some cases, it may not be safe to have people on the site. It was one of the reasons to demolish to conduct soil testing and remediation. In most cases we do not issue a demo permit until a permit to build is approved.

Q17. On the side discussing the senior community, we're getting questions about bike lanes but seniors don't think it will help them. There are people with families needing to get people around town. I didn't see a lot of parking discussion. Are there structures planned? We realistically have needs still for parking. There are shuttles in other cities, in Denver for example.

- *Response:* We do have a new parking garage almost complete downtown. That results in over 300 spaces. There is a plan to also reimagine the Central Park Garage. There are policies planned for downtown to ensure sufficiency to enjoy downtown and get there in a variety of ways. In the Bike Master Plan, we include programmatic recommendations to have Safe Routes for Seniors program to look at how seniors get around. Some seniors

do bike but might not work for everyone. We are trying to re-envision our transportation network to envision how people get to different places in different ways.

- Q18. I have been biking around more, if I stay north of 19th I feel safe but going down 19th and going towards Hillsdale, I don't feel safe. Are there bike routes plans throughout the City?
- *Response:* There is a plan for 19th/Fashion going east to Mariner's for a class IV bike lane proposed.
- Q19. Would it be possible for the City to commission geologic study for Shoreview/Parkside area. We believe the area is sinking it would be great to get a study to understand what is going on with soils.
- *Response:* One objective is the Climate Adaptation Plan, sea level rise is a key piece. This is a factor in how we plan for resilience projects.
- Q20. On electrification, right now we have no backup. If electric goes out or if we lose power, we would need a large generator. As you plan this out, you should consider all the options for when we lose power. Electrical rates in the evening have gone up since it's on a drain on our grid.
- *Response:* We did hear that we need to do some homework and heard a lot about our grid. There are state requirements that we don't have control over.
- Q21. Is it possible PGE is trading electrical grid to not have to maintain their gas lines?
- *Response:* We don't know enough about it to answer.
- Q22. I live in Parkside, some streets have been paved. Where do I go to see the schedule for other streets?
- *Response:* We have a map on our website with our Smooth Streets program, we are working on Shoreview area so some concerns may be addressed in coming weeks.
- Q23. I want more information about small cell towers and how they work. There were Baywood residents that small cells cause radiation. Some are coming to Parkside with some signs but they are not detailed. It's not clear what the risk is and what control the cities have.
- *Response:* Search online for small cells, with what city can and cannot regulate. These facilities are regulated by the FCC.
- Q24. I fought against the Bay Meadows project and lost. SMPD reports an increase in calls for service and increase in response time. The developers made millions on this project. How much did they give SMPD to increase their staffing. They gave zero. Water tower was built on 28th, how much did these developers contribute to the new water tower? Zero. We have a new WWTP, what to developers contribute? Nothing. We now have a stress on our electrical grid. Rates go up between 4-9 pm. What do developers contribute toward improving infrastructure or do residents have to bear the price so they can make millions of dollars? Whoever negotiated the contract with developers made mistakes and did not contribute to SMPD staffing. A family member had an emergency but SMPD could not come out, it was a CSO. Why don't developers hire officers? Why does it fall on us?
- *Response:* There is a range of impact fees that goes toward infrastructure. As projects come online that is increased tax revenue that goes toward funding city services. Projects do not directly fund PD staffing.
- Q25. At Parkside Plaza, there is a coffee shop that is coming soon? What is the story there?
- *Response:* It's likely Specialty's that was closed due to the pandemic.