

# GPU Town Hall Meeting Notes – District 1

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

- Q1. Is the general plan available online?
- *Response:* Yes: presentations published on strive website within 1 day
- Q2. To what extent is the General Plan legally binding?
- *Response:* The General Plan is a living document in that we have the ability to adapt/modify as city and as situations change. The General Plan provides a blueprint for the city and provides a legal basis and defensibility for decisions that the City makes.
- Q3. Why is the Housing Element separated into a different document?
- *Response:* Per the State, the Housing Element (HE) has an 8 year horizon/review cycle and unlike some other elements it needs to achieve state certification/certified by the state. The other elements in the General Plan are up to our discretion about their scope and what to include in them. However, the Housing Element has certain standards and metrics that are set by the State. That is why it is separate from the General Plan. The State is still reviewing the City's Housing Element.
- Q4. In the General Plan we can see that much new housing and other development is incorporated/concentrated by the train stations. What about older neighborhoods? Are you going to incorporate other themes/uses to enhance neighborhoods other than just adding housing -- commercial / services etc.?
- *Response:* We are trying to focus uses/amenities where it makes sense for the neighborhoods. We are focusing on tailoring individual neighborhoods to be reflective of needs of that neighborhood.
- Q5. What about the link between housing and infrastructure? How will infrastructure match/keep pace with the housing mandate and anticipated development?
- *Response:* Many of the elements such as the Circulation Element, Public services Element, Land Use Element etc. influence and speak to each other. The goal of the General Plan is that we are thoughtful and strategic about how we plan and integrate growth between the different elements. Infrastructure and public services needs etc. are addressed concurrently. The General Plan takes a holistic approach that still maintains quality of life within the City.
- Q6. Is the General Plan and policies/actions integrated with other nearby cities?
- *Response:* Each city is required to have their own General Plan. We do engage with neighboring jurisdictions and regional powers (i.e. Caltrans, Caltrain, One Shoreline). While we engage with these partners, at the end of the day it is up to the City/City Council discretion about what is adopted in the general plan. However, the City Council will be factoring in all local and regional issues etc. when they make their decision to adopt the General Plan.
- Q7. Will there be tolls into San Mateo or certain parts of the city to increase city revenue?

- *Response:* No tolling is proposed for entering into the City.
- Q8. Does the document take into account/imagine self-driving technology and other similar infrastructure?
- *Response:* We don't necessarily know what future technologies/ infrastructure will look like etc. However, the Circulation Element does have a section about future technologies, and we are open to potentially utilizing them if they benefit the residents and the city.
- Q9. Is there a provision for free public wifi as a public service?
- *Response:* This is something we would want to look into and how it could be provided as a city service. We would need to explore future opportunities and resources.
- Q10. Density and height limits under Measure Y are restrictive. How is the City will revise the General Plan or send Measure Y back to the ballot box? How can the city grow with this in place?
- *Response:* This is a key discussion point, and the City is still trying to build consensus on what the best path forward is. In certain strategic areas we can look to raising heights and densities in certain areas while maintaining low density in primary low density residential areas with a focused growth approach. However, this is still an ongoing discussion. We anticipate an update /measure ballot in 2024.
- Q11. Is there a way to put language in the general plan that infrastructure must be in place first before a property can be can developed to whatever is allowed under the land use? We have a concern that growth/planned growth is not supported by existing or planned infrastructure to the detriment of existing communities.
- *Response:* We recognize that infrastructure and services are important pieces to the city and growth. The EIR looks at resource and infrastructure availability/capacity to meet these projected needs. As the city grows, this growth also allows for more money/revenue to invest in infrastructure and service needs. These things (i.e., infrastructure and development) happen concurrently.
- Q12. I did not see any fiduciary policies or how to invest within the General Plan. How will the City ensure that the City is funded?
- *Response:* Within land use we have two sections that speak to funding and financial responsibility. The General Plan will guide/focus the City's budget/budgetary allocations and how financial decisions will be made in the future in order to achieve its goals/action items.
- Q13. Will you be building additional schools to match population growth?
- *Response:* Projects are required to pay impact fees to school districts. School districts are separate entities, and the City does not have direct authority over schools and how they plan/allocate for future growth/needs. However, the School District does reach out to the City regularly to understand future population projections as part of their planning. The impact fees paid to school districts help them to add capacity as they deem fit/ as needed.

- Q14. We keep hearing that there is a possibility that measure y will go to ballot. Instead of taking it to ballot, can we challenge the State about the Housing Element as some other cities are doing?
- *Response:* This is not something that the general plan is looking at. We currently have to plan for 7,000 units which we are doing through the General Plan (GP) update.
- Q15. Scenarios a, b, and c, for growth/housing. The City Council chose the most aggressive scenario. What is the impact on existing neighborhoods with this growth model? Disappearance of larger stores- Kmart; Fish Market.
- *Response:* Housing element and General Plan look to establish capacity. This does not translate to direct growth but allows property owners options for how they want to move forward. The goal is that we build in sufficient capacity into our land uses so that the next time the housing element comes back that growth has already been built into our land uses and we don't have to amend the general plan to achieve the housing required by the State. This is looking for the best way to plan for growth. The goal is to try to find a balanced and comprehensive way to maintain quality of life etc.
- Q16. How can citizens see results of comments and questions in the General Plan similar to what is required with the EIR where there has to be a response to each comment?
- *Response:* We have a log of all comments received at the website. At each phase we try to pull together and synthesize comments/questions when we go to PC and CC and how those comments and themes translate into policies goals etc. You can see how the document has grown in response to community input but there is no one list with every comment and every response per each comment.
- Q17. Can residents see a summary of current heights of each block? Colored map for the whole city is hard to read.
- *Response:* There is a city wide map about heights. Heights is a unique feature to our General Plan. We are looking at having story ranges rather than specific heights in the General Plan. The current general plan does not have a numeric specificity for heights, the Zoning code will set specific height limits.
- Q18. One objective that is missing is fiduciary responsibility/ compliance. How is San Mateo securing its financial future? Prop 89 will impact property taxes etc. How does the GP growth impact provisions of services. How much money will be produced with 5 stories vs. 10 stories? Is the current zoning going to produce the tax money necessary to pay for growth and city services?
- *Response:* There were economic analyses that were done in the scenario options. In all three scenarios it was found that there would be a cash positive outcome for each of them. The GP is somewhat limited as a budgetary tool. For the more fine-tuned budget look towards biannual budget adoptions.
- Q19. Climate impact concerns. What about low density areas outside of the study areas? Will there be improvements in those areas to reduce GHGs etc.?
- *Response:* Policies in circulation elements are city wide not just in areas that will be redeveloped or where growth is focused. We are working to get to a net positive for climate goals. We have a Citywide complete streets plan that is implementing the

policies, goals, etc. of draft element and looks towards how to make roadways throughout whole city more multimodal.

- Q20. Do you consider why someone would want to walk? What if there is nothing to walk to?
- *Response:* We do keep in mind key destinations, jobs, businesses when creating plans. We are working to make all destinations by all modes of transportation better/safer/more efficient.
- Q21. Transit really only works for higher density areas. Are you looking at increasing missing middle housing to increase densities to make public transit more feasible in lower density areas?
- *Response:* Growth and development throughout the City can support the expansion of transit for city as a whole as well. The goal is that we are helping to move the bar in all areas not just where there is highest density.
- Q22. Downtown pedestrian traffic has increased. Which is good for business but has more attention been given to the car vs. pedestrian interactions etc.?
- *Response:* We adopted TOD ped access plans. They look at areas that are close to transit and how to make pedestrian paths of travel more comfortable and safer. This did identify specific improvements. We do have funding in this year's CIP budget to start a downtown circulation study for the whole downtown. This will look at the interactions of pedestrians, cars, bikes, loading zones etc. and will help set a plan on how to best use roadways downtown.
- Q23. Most of the housing is just rental. Will there be a purchase requirement for high density buildings?
- *Response:* The provision for all types of housing is addressed in the Housing Element. The City cannot require a development to be for sale or rent but we can set incentives. These include looking at different affordability levels and having a certain mix of unit types (i.e., 1 vs. 2 vs. 3+ bedrooms). The private market will drive the type of unit that will be built (rental v. for sale). We can set a framework for both housing types.
- Q24. Bike and Ped master plans seem to be unfunded. Why include them in the GP when they are unfunded, and we don't know the cost to complete them?
- *Response:* This does highlight the challenge of both building and maintaining infrastructure. The Ped/Bike Plans lay the groundwork for future projects while funding is what makes these projects a reality. Where possible the City looks to combine other public works and repaving projects with the projects identified in the Ped/Bike master plan. The City is also always looking for grant funding to supplement the local budget. The Master plans are important to help us focus on where we need our funding and lay the groundwork. It also provides the City Council with guidance on how funding is/should be allocated.
- Q25. There is a push for electrification from gas to electric for existing homes and homeowners are being asked in many to make changes. Is that also something that big corps are also being asked to do?
- *Response:* To the degree that the local level can set policies about energy we do it equably. Some things go beyond the power of local level to control/regulate but we do look for equal support/compliance.

- Q26. Is it possible to find a map with proposed project information?
- *Response:* Yes. We have a What's Happening Page that shows all active projects. If a project does not have an application, we won't have information on it.
- Q27. A lot of young people commute to other cities for work. We would like to see more offices in the city so people can live and work here.
- *Response:* We need/aim for a balance of jobs and housing. The goal is to always provide opportunities for jobs/ housing/commerce within the City. We do currently have an approximately 1:1 ration of jobs and housing but still most people are commuting in and out of the City for work/housing.
- Q28. There is a lot of growth along and planned for ECR. To what extent does San Mateo have a say about how ECR being maintained etc.? Is there any component about requiring undergrounding etc.?
- *Response:* ECR is maintained by the State. Improvements need Caltrans' approval. The City can propose changes/improvements to Caltrans, but Caltrans can approve or deny the request. PG&E is its own entity that the City does not have direct authority over. They are regulated by the State Public Utility Commission. There are initiatives to underground etc., and the City does support undergrounding for new development. However, it is expensive. There was past funding sources to match \$\$ to help undergrounding but those are going away. We need to look for other help/incentives for undergrounding.