

GPU Town Hall Meeting Notes – District 2

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

- Q1. What does urban forest mean?
- *Response:* It is the street tree canopy that you see going down roads and along sidewalks.
- Q2. Are we voting on something? What is the end-game of the General Plan process?
- *Response:* The General Plan provides a 20 year blueprint for the City. This document is based on community input and comments which strengthen the document and help guide the City's growth. The City Council will approve the General Plan.
 - *Response:* Measure Y, which is a current voter approved height and density cap measure would need to go back to the voters.
- Q3. The plan talks about improving livability of neighborhood, but current development is reducing tree cover. The density of relative to tree cover is reduced to enable larger developments.
- *Response:* All policies in the General Plan are meant to overlap and guide decision making. The City now and in the future is trying to replace and replenish trees and grow our street tree canopy. New development and growing our urban forests do not exclude each other. The General Plan seeks to meet the objective of enhancing our urban forest while we grow and change as well.
- Q4. Seems like increased density in downtown is better and have lower density in housing areas
- *Response:* This is a theme of the General Plan. We are seeking to grow density along El Camino and transit hubs while maintaining the lower density nature of our single-family neighborhoods.
- Q5. Collaboration with other cities and counties in health equity area when focusing on same issues is beneficial. Is there some desire to do any collaboration?
- *Response:* Yes, we are actively collaborating. With services, sometimes it is the City or County that is the direct service provider. Collaboration regionally with other jurisdictions and with the State is part of addressing larger regional needs.
 - *Response:* We know that the County just came out with 2023 health assessment that the City is looking to when creaking our goals and policies. The City always looks for opportunities to partner with the County or other jurisdictions where appropriate.
- Q6. How will the concerns and suggestions that are brought up here be folded into the document?
- *Response:* We are listening and taking all notes and comments. They are feeding into notes and recommendations we give to the City Council and Planning Commission. Where we see consensus, we make a recommendation to Council. Where there is no consensus we tee-up questions for our decision makers to focus on.
 - *Response:* We are posting presentations and notes, and meeting summary on the strive website. Larger summaries are included which include town halls, workshops, written comments, etc. that will be summarized in report outs to Council.

- Q7. There is a lot of assumption that people will want to move where they work. Where is the data for this? Or the concept that people want to walk everywhere?
- *Response:* Through the General Plan process we are trying to ensure that we have a range of housing types that people at all income levels can afford. Ultimately, we want to make sure that there are opportunities in our City for a range of households and lifestyles. We have a relatively balanced jobs and housing ratio, however, people who live here don't work here and vice versa. The goal is that we provide the opportunity, and we will see more people choosing to live and work in San Mateo. We know that there is demand to live in San Mateo, we have thousands of people who are on waitlists for affordable housing units. There is interest in living closer if there are available units.
- Q8. Keeping resident-serving businesses and small business is important/vital. How does this relate to the upzoning of B St. which is important small business area and upzoning the Safeway? We've already lost grocery stores (Draeger's) in the city. When an area is upzoned we give enormous gift to property owners and new construction. New construction does not allow for affordable rents (commercial and residential both). How do we keep our small businesses.
- *Response:* This illustrates the challenges of how to plan for growth and change and protect businesses. For example, for Dreager's, the goal was that the grocery store stays in the building - which it will be. For Concar Passage they provided community benefits to the existing tenants to help them stay in their spaces. We as a City need to be thoughtful and look to site specific conditions and if there are opportunities to preserve businesses that serve the neighborhood are retained.
- Q9. The Brickline Flats project seems like it was built for techies. Has the pandemic changed what is desirable to build? They are so small and very expensive.
- *Response:* We do have policies in diversity of housing types sizes and rental/to buy units. There are a number of policy initiatives setting minimum sizes of units and number of bedrooms. The key is that we need housing types that serve households across the board. Otherwise, there will be residents that will leave the community.
- Q10. Is reducing carbon footprint a fancy way of saying you will take away our gas stove/furnace?
- *Response:* We are looking at transition to electric appliances for a number of reasons for health and safety (fires and earthquakes) and to also align with State rules and regulations.
- Q11. We have heard that we plan to increase our urban forest. The existing trees planted on my block are not maintained now. Street sweepers do not clean the side where there are trees because they cannot get close to sidewalk. Parking on Humboldt - took away parking on the opposite side of the street. My street seems to be the same size as Howard Street in Burlingame. Burlingame seems to be able accommodate parking and a bike lane on both sides of the street. But on my block, they took away the parking. Just before they took away the parking, my house was appraised at \$2mil. I doubt can get that if there is no parking for visitors. Removing parking creates safety risks when I have to park blocks away from my residence and walk home in the dark alone.
- *Response:* This illustrates that every neighborhood needs to have neighborhood specific solutions. This is where community engagement is important. What might work for one

park of San Mateo might not be appropriate for another part. This is where community input is important to help us further guide/refine our goals and policies.

- Q12. For Humboldt St., would the City reconsider adding back parking. Not many bikes use the bike line. It does not help anything but impact parking. There needs to be a community survey/buy-in before actions are taken.
- *Response:* For a more neighborhood directed approach the City Council has confirmed to allow dual analysis for North Central (neighborhood specific) for complete streets and the bicycle master plan. This will hopefully lead to a more comprehensive/global perception on circulation in North Central and solutions that might not have been considered before. This is underway. There are no solutions at this moment b/c we don't know what the analysis will bear but we hope to set the bar for more innovative thinking when looking at the neighborhood through comprehensive lens.
 - *Response:* With the original ped/bike master plans there was maybe not as much focus on looking at neighborhood trade-offs. We support hot mapping to get clearer understanding about how resources are being allocated throughout the city. Having more accountability systematically through better data and accountably is a better way to change this dynamic. This happens through policies priorities.
- Q13. For required electrification, how is that equitable? It is a huge cost, and many will have to upgrade panels etc. to go electric. This increased cost will cause some people to sell or rents to be raised.
- *Response:* A part of the strategy for electrifying the City is how to support homeowners financially for this transition.
- Q14. There were promised sidewalk fixes and lights when parking was removed, and we haven't seen that happen.
- Q15. The speed of travel in North Central needs to be addressed. It's too fast. Other cities have speed bumps and/or signage to control this issue. What do we need to do to get attention?
- *Response:* Speeding is a challenge we are working through as a City. We have lowered the school zone to 15mph and are looking at other ways to lower limits around the city where we are allowed to do so. However, we have to follow State code in order for speed limits to be enforceable. We have to design roadways for the speed that you want and have other elements for people to feel like they cannot drive fast on roadways. There is an effort to look at roadways in North Central in a comprehensive manner. North Central complete streets plan is an opportunity for the community to say what they want to see. They are currently working on this plan with the next phase of outreach starting soon. Outreach efforts will be at music at park events (this is just one of first events) with eventual open forum and neighborhood notification.
- Q16. We are concerned about the flood zones. Some of us in North Central are paying high flood tax. How far are we getting with levees etc.?
- *Response:* There is an area covered in terms of flood insurance. The City has upgraded pump stations and levees and submitted documentation to FEMA. We received a response yesterday that they will hopefully update the flood map to get those houses outside of the flood zone soon.

Q17. Follow up on two comments:

- *Response:* Along my street for the longest time the street sweeper would only go down the center because of parked cars. Then parking restrictions were enforced. As far as speeding is concerned enforcement is what works.
- *Response:* Mom and pop shops in neighborhood. The City should be thinking about the neighborhood and not the developers and require that existing business be retained with affordable rents/rates.
- *Response:* There was a lot of talk about equity but all that we see is that all of the density and impacts associated with that is/will be focused around lower equity neighborhoods
- *Response:* The lands use scenarios are focused within study areas and other corridors and is not neighborhood focused. The City is trying to accommodate mandated/expected growth while still maintain existing heights and densities in neighborhoods in an equitable manner.

Q18. We have asked for speed bumps and stop signs etc. We wonder if the City can plan a meeting with North Central and explain the reason that requests cannot be accommodated. We need more community engagement.

- *Response:* The challenge with stop signs is that there is a requirement at state level that they can only be installed where certain volume and speed thresholds are tripped. A number of analyses have been done in the city. A lot of locations in neighborhoods do not meet the state required thresholds. Speed bumps-neighborhood street calming effort. Cannot be on request basis. We have a certain threshold for the amount of speeding needs to meet in order to qualify for speed bumps. What we are seeing is that we need to see a certain amount and at certain speeds in order to qualify for these things. Many do not meet thresholds.
- *Response:* NC complete streets plan will be an opportunity to talk about these specific issues. Other opportunities may exist at the state is providing to lower speeds. We are working on how to identify and use those new tools so that we can lower speeds.

Q19. Where are the NC residents can speak up and share concerns etc.

- *Response:* There will be a meeting on Sept 21 at 7pm to discuss more (talk to Somer)
- *Response:* The complete streets programs project is in response to community's desires. We encourage continued participation in this which will be informing the general plan.