



DATE: October 19, 2020 AGENDA ITEM NO.

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Christina Paul

SUBJECT: Receive summary of initial outreach efforts and provide feedback on the Draft General Plan Request for Proposals, the consultant selection process, and methodology for formation of the General Plan Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council receive a summary of initial outreach efforts and provide feedback on the draft Request of Proposals (Attachment 2), the consultant selection process, and the methodology for formation of the General Plan Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND

General Plan Process

On July 6, 2020, the City Council directed staff to prepare the Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit proposals from qualified consultants to update the City's General Plan, including the Housing Element, and all associated environmental work. At their July 6th meeting the City Council also considered a draft schedule and initial outreach effort to guide the preparation of the RFP.

The schedule below includes completing the General Plan, Housing Element, and associated environmental documents by January 2023 to coincide with statutory requirements for submitting Petaluma's 6th cycle Housing Element to the Department of Housing and Community Development. A subsequent comprehensive Zoning Code Update to implement both the General Plan and Housing Element is anticipated in 2023/2024.

Adoption of the General Plan and supporting documents could be followed by Specific Plans for the Corona Road and Downtown SMART Station Priority Development Areas, which the City may be able to fund through future planning grants from The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The land use designation for these areas would be determined as part of the General Plan update, while development of Specific Plans would allow for additional granularity in urban design and development guidelines. The General Plan may also be conducted alongside or be followed by plans for specific topic areas, such as an updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, River Plan, Fairgrounds Plan, or similar documents.

The proposed General Plan and Housing Element update process is diagrammed in Attachment 1: General Plan and Housing Element Process Graphic and displayed below in simplified form in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Simplified Process Diagram



According to this schedule, Council will review the consultant contract in February 2021. There are several key dates leading up to consultant onboarding and the formal launch of the General Plan and Housing Element update:

- *September 22: Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI TAP) Presentation*
- *October 2: Open Staff Survey to inform the General Plan RFP*
- *October 5: Open Community Survey to inform the General Plan RFP*
- **October 19:** Council Review of Community Outreach summary, General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) selection methodology, consultant selection approach, and draft General Plan RFP
- **October 30:** Publish GPAC Application
- **November 2:** Close staff and public surveys
- **November 5:** Publish General Plan RFP
- **November 16:** GPAC applications due
- **December 7:** Council appointment of GPAC, selection of Council members to participate in consultant selection
- **December 11:** General Plan proposals due to City
- **December 18:** Proposal review and selection of shortlist of consultants to interview
- **Week of January 11:** Consultant Interviews
- **February 1 or February 15:** General Plan contract to Council

Initial Outreach Summary

Following the July 6, 2020 City Council meeting, staff began initial outreach efforts to create a robust RFP for the General Plan Update that includes reference to key overarching priorities that Petaluma wants interested consultants to incorporate into a tailored proposal. This initial outreach effort included staff facilitated discussion with various commissions, committees, City

departments, and individual stakeholders to identify topics to be addressed in the General Plan. These discussions involved identifying existing challenges in the City, areas seen as priorities, and discussions on what the City will look like over the next 20 years. The following summarizes the outreach efforts that took place between July and October to inform the draft RFP (Attachment 2), including identification of which stakeholders were engaged through this effort and a summary of the input received.

Committees and Commissions

City staff met with several Petaluma committees and commissions as part of the initial outreach effort. The intent of the outreach to existing committees/commissions was to engage in topic-specific discussions to gain informed feedback to include in the RFP. Members of each committee/commission were provided with a report discussing the overall General Plan and Housing Element update process as well as a summary of the existing framework related to individual topic areas. Members of the different committees/commissions were asked to provide feedback and engage in discussions about challenges, opportunities, and provide feedback on key issues important to the General Plan update process.

Staff met with the following committees/commissions:

- Airport Commission
- Climate Action Commission
- Historic and Cultural Preservation Committee
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Planning Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission
- Senior Advisory Committee
- Transit Advisory Committee
- Technology Advisory Committee
- Youth Commission

City Council

Staff held briefings on the General Plan process and outlined options for the structure and focus of that process with individual Council members. City Staff also briefed Councilmembers on the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel effort.

Community Stakeholders

Staff is working to undertake a comprehensive community stakeholder engagement process to inform the community of the General Plan process and gather preliminary input into key topics to cover. This work includes assembling a list of over 100 community groups to engage. The list of community stakeholders was created through existing city contact information and through specific discussion at each committee, commission and community group meeting. This work is ongoing. To date, staff has met with several community groups to augment outreach with city appointed stakeholders as discussed above. Meetings with these groups were in addition to seeking individual community member input through the interactive website and the public survey recently

published. In order to reach under-represented groups, staff is reaching out to social service and community advocacy organizations and working to distribute information through schools.

The General Plan website has a translation feature that dynamically translates the site into Spanish. The translation has been reviewed by City staff for accuracy and adopted because it accounts for the changing nature of the website.

City Departments

The initial outreach also includes targeted outreach to individual city department to solicit feedback on how issues and opportunities specific to each department can be addressed through the General Plan update process, and to coordinate on plan development. To date, meetings have been held with the following divisions/departments:

- Fire Prevention
- Police Department
- Housing Division
- Development Engineering
- Information Technology
- Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Finance Department
- City Attorney Office
- City Manager Office
- Public Works Department

In addition to these individual department meetings, staff has prepared a matrix of all goals and policies from General Plan 2025 that is being circulated for staff input on the status of each goal/policy and input on the continued relevance, challenges in achieving, etc. This comprehensive report card of the existing General Plan will be used as a starting point for the selected consultant to work from in understanding the opportunities and challenges of the previous document.

Surveys

Two surveys are currently published to further inform the development of the RFP. The first survey is a map-based survey for the community at large, ensuring that every community member has the opportunity to provide input at this stage of the planning process. The community survey focused on identifying key themes and geographic areas for improvement and protection. The survey was designed to be interactive and was delivered using Maptionnaire, an easy to use and graphically engaging map-based survey platform. To obtain a broad community response, staff distributed invitations to participate in the survey via social media, the City's newsletter, a press release, the one-page informational handout, and the General Plan website. The community survey will be open through the month of October.

The second survey was developed to engage city staff and is focused on how the General Plan impacts city employees' work. This survey was distributed via email to all city employees. The

staff survey also included an invitation to participate in the public survey given the different focus of the two surveys.

The results of both the community and staff surveys will be summarized and provided to the selected consultant following the RFP process. An aggregate of the survey data collected will be available on the General Plan website after the surveys close.

General Plan Website

The City's General Plan website has been published and is now available to the public at planpetaluma.org. The site is a dynamic and interactive resource for individuals wishing to participate in the update process. The site contains comprehensive information about the General Plan and provides many opportunities to contribute and get involved. Highlights of the site include a thought leadership section where community members can read current articles that pertain to General Plan topics and contribute ideas for other articles to post, a general comments area, an e-mail list sign up, and a map set that visualizes a wide range of geographic data. The website is linked to and from the City website to allow easy access between the two sites. Following the selection of a consultant to lead the General Plan update, staff will turn over the website to the consultant for management while maintaining City access.

Outreach Results by General Plan Element

Individual jurisdictions have significant flexibility in meeting the State of California's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan requirements. OPR establishes and oversees the General Plan requirements for all cities. General Plans are broken into Elements or sections that focus on specific planning areas for the City. For instance, the Housing Element outlines goals and policies for developing housing in the City. Required elements may be combined or renamed, and cities can also adopt optional elements. Upon adoption of the current General Plan in 2008, OPR had eight required General Plan Elements. As of 2017, OPR included one additional required element for a total of nine elements, including Land Use, Conservation, Noise, Environmental Justice, Circulation, Open Space, Safety, Air Quality, and Housing. Optional elements included in the OPR General Plan Guidelines include Equitable and Resilient Communities, Healthy Communities, Economic Development, and Climate Change. While there will be flexibility during the General Plan process for the City to define how to organize and identify the element topics, feedback received as part of the initial outreach effort is summarized and categorized under OPR's required and optional element titles below.

Land Use

Many of the committees discussed the need to consider increased residential densities (more units per acre) because of the region's need for more housing, the importance of transportation that relies on more people in a smaller area, and the lack of available land inside Petaluma's Urban Growth Boundary for new development. While higher density was cited as an opportunity and priority, several challenges posed by high density development were also identified, such as the historical pattern of low-density development in Petaluma, the built-out nature of the City, public perception and opposition to higher density developments, and inconsistencies between existing General Plan densities and established residential neighborhoods.

Other priorities related to land use include focusing on more home-based industries, importance of providing opportunities for different uses into predominantly residential neighborhoods to allow for small community hubs and decrease vehicle miles traveled, preserving commercial and retail spaces, establishing more river orientated uses, updating policy and implementation documents to define mixed-use and transit-oriented development, and focusing on attracting jobs that allow more people to both live and work in the City.

Conservation and Open Space

A major topic related to open space and conservation discussed during the outreach process was maintenance and improvement of existing facilities throughout the City. Input received also indicated a desire for greater diversity in the quantity and type of recreation facilities provided in the City, such as dog parks, pocket parks, and separated paths and trails.

Many participants noted the importance of the Petaluma River and riparian area throughout the city as crucial for recreation and conservation.

Environmental Justice and Equitable and Resilient Communities

Environmental Justice is the newest element in OPR's General Plan requirements. This element requires local jurisdictions to address pollution, service access, and climate change's effects on health and public safety, and where disadvantaged communities may be disproportionately impacted. The importance of addressing equity and social justice through the updated General Plan, calling for the need to plan for all community members and their different needs, was a reoccurring theme in outreach discussions. Additionally, the parallel between environmental justice and social justice was emphasized. The community emphasized the need to provide broadband access to all community members and bridge the digital divide.

Circulation

Transportation/circulation challenges, including the lack of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, challenges of safely accommodating bicyclists on shared roadways, the car-centric design of the City (specifically on the east side), the impact of traffic on the reliability of transit services, and the difficulty in expanding transit services in a distributed, low-density urban condition, were priorities identified for the General Plan update. Additional priorities identified include increasing safety of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, network improvements that account for a multi-modal system, cross-agency coordination, bridging last-mile transportation gaps, increasing safety on urban trails, and increased multi-modal east-west access and access to amenities throughout the City.

Safety, Noise, and Air Quality

Major themes around safety in the community include wildfire prevention and concerns surrounding development in the floodplain. More efficient and effective disaster preparedness was also identified as a priority for the General Plan. Staff recognized the recent development of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. In addition, pedestrian and bicycle safety focusing on the lack of adequate lighting on Lynch Creek Trail and streets in general were identified as a priority for the community.

Housing

Petaluma, as with many communities in California, is experiencing a housing crisis. Housing priorities identified through the outreach process include the development of affordable housing, increasing the diversity of housing types including housing affordable to middle-income households, congregate care for the elderly population, and support for the homeless population. Significant challenges facing the development of housing in the City include the difficulty of securing financing by developers and the City, difficulty balancing environmental protection and climate change mitigation and the need for increased housing density, and concerns over increased traffic.

Healthy Communities

Several of the committee and commission members identified public health as a priority for the General Plan. Specific comments included needs for healthy food systems, locally sourced food, teen support groups (especially related to identity, mental and emotional health), more community events that are not grounded in the sale of alcohol, more senior health and wellness programs that focus on promoting independence, and providing preventative care that reduces the need for emergency medical services.

Economic Development

We learned that there is a tension between the goal of keeping an active downtown with changing retail models that rely on internet shopping. Maintaining commercial and retail spaces in Petaluma was cited as a priority so as not to remove these activities and associated jobs from the City. Multiple stakeholders suggested that they would like to see flexible options so they can adapt as businesses change the ways they use brick and mortar spaces. Additionally, residents would like to see the Plan consider more options for working at home.

Climate Change

Outreach participants were especially concerned about how climate change will affect Petaluma – especially in relation to flooding and wildfire risks. They acknowledged that climate change is a broad topic and that the City’s sphere of influence is sometimes limited. They also realize that it will be difficult to balance environmental impacts with the need to accommodate our growing community. Participants suggested that we look at different ways to assess how sea level rise will affect future development, we further prohibit development in the floodplain and that we include a climate action plan into the General Plan. Climate change and associated environmental policy was one of the most common themes throughout the initial outreach effort. Climate change challenges specific to Petaluma include increased risk and number of flood events and increased risk of wildfire. Petaluma is dedicated to addressing climate change. Stakeholders acknowledged existing challenges to combating climate change such as existing floodplain-related policies, limited purview to deny projects based on environmental concerns, and the rapid nature of climate change paired with the need to balance development and decreasing climate impact. Priorities identified in the outreach process include developing a different methodology for assessing sea-level rise and flooding impacts, prohibiting development in the floodplain, and incorporating the Climate Action Plan as part of the General Plan.

Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel

Another component of the initial outreach effort was the City’s engagement with the San Francisco

Chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) focusing on potential housing development strategies in Petaluma. Every year, ULI conducts TAP programs throughout the Bay Area studying difficult local issues and recommending potential strategies to resolve them. In 2019, ULI TAP programs in Napa, Vallejo, and Stockton investigated waterfront neighborhoods. The Petaluma TAP program was unique in that it focused primarily on housing development, not office, industrial, or retail uses.

In August and September, staff worked with the ULI Technical Advisory Committee to provide recommendations to Petaluma on potential housing development strategies. The seven-person TAP took a virtual tour of nearly 20 potential housing sites in the City, and after a multi-day workshop presented their findings to a joint meeting of the City Council/Planning Commission on September 22, 2020. A written report by ULI discussing their findings will be published in late 2020.

The TAP looked broadly at three questions: what are the most promising housing typologies for Petaluma; how might the City incentivize the proper type of development; and how might the City mitigate negative impacts, particularly regarding flooding and the effects of climate change.

The Panel identified three districts that would attract the best development partners and give Petaluma a path to climate leadership: Downtown, East Washington, and the area around the planned Corona SMART Station. While noting that Petaluma is hindered by the high construction costs that affect the entire region, the panel suggested Petaluma consider allowing more flexibility in zoning and more inclusionary housing options as the City begins its new Housing Element.

In Downtown, TAP considered embracing Petaluma River as the “front door” to the community along with a topography that recovers the original tidal estuary. As alluded to in the current SMART Station Area Plan, this might include envisioning the Turning Basin as a focal point for the community with mixed-use developments that have strong multi-modal connectivity with the river, the historic downtown, and the Petaluma Downtown SMART Station. Zoning that allows live/work flex space (tenant space that could be converted between residential and commercial use with relatively little expense) could help support development of the area.

In East Washington, TAP envisioned a vibrant, walkable, neighborhood close to transit. Recommendations included implementing a specific planning process to improve connectivity and spur a gentle housing density gradient. The TAP also recommended consideration of a natural system connectivity, using a public process to consider Fairgrounds redevelopment to retain the area’s role while creating a model of sustainable neighborhood design with affordable housing, innovative parking strategies, and potentially relocating/collocating existing uses.

For the Corona SMART Station Area, the TAP recommended incorporating Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) best practices, including land uses and use densities that support transit ridership, affordable housing, and travel demand management. A public gathering space and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods would support SMART rail use and viable development.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the summary of the initial outreach effort, staff is seeking discussion and feedback from the City Council on the draft General Plan RFP (Attachment 2), the consultant selection process, and the formation of the General Plan Advisory Committee as outlined below. There is no action item before the Council.

General Plan RFP

A draft RFP (Attachment 2) was developed to include not only the standard submittal requirements, budget, timeline, etc. but also to set the stage by outlining the results of the extensive initial outreach effort and identification of the key themes important to shape a successful proposal. The outreach effort also shaped the requirements outlined in the RFP for items such as a Climate Action Plan, Floodplain Model, and focus on innovation.

It is anticipated that the General Plan RFP will be released on November 5th with proposals being due by December 11, 2020. Staff will hold a pre-bid meeting and have welcomed questions in advance of the proposal due date for interested consultants.

The release of both the public and staff surveys were delayed due to the Glass Fire Incident. Therefore, the input from those surveys will be added to the RFP prior to formal release. Staff is requesting feedback from the City Council to be incorporated in advance of the November 5th release.

General Plan Consultant Selection

The following are key dates associated with the review and selection of a consultant team, finalizing a contract, and kicking off the General Plan Update process.

Publish General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Application	Friday, October 30, 2020
Publish RFP	Thursday, November 5, 2020
Optional Pre-Submittal Conference, Close GPAC Applications	Monday, November 16, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.
Questions Due	Monday, November 30, 2020, at noon.
Select GPAC Members, Select City Council Members to sit on the General Plan Consultant Selection Committee	Monday, December 7, 2020
Proposal Due	Friday, December 11, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.
Interviews	Monday, January 11 and Tuesday, January 12, 2021
Contract Awarded	Monday, February 1, 2021 (City Council consideration)

Staff is recommending that two Councilmembers be appointed to meet with staff and participate in the review of the proposals, interviews, and ultimate selection of the consultant team. The appointed councilmembers would meet with city staff and an ABAG representative with technical expertise relevant to the General Plan. This will allow for a thorough and technically adequate review of consultant qualifications that emphasizes fit with City needs. The two City Councilmember representatives would represent the community and provide their own insights. The RFP panel that would take part in the proposal review include:

- City Manager: Peggy Flynn
- Public Works Director or Deputy Director: Jason Beatty or Gina Benedetti Petnic
- Director of Economic Development and Open Government: Ingrid Alverde
- Planning Manager: Heather Hines
- Policy Planner/General Plan Update Project Manager: Christina Paul
- Principal Environmental Planner: Olivia Ervin
- Housing Expert: Ada Chan, ABAG
- Two Councilmembers to be appointed at the 12/7 regular meeting of the Council

The two Councilmembers will be appointed at the December 7 Council meeting, along with members of the General Plan Advisory Committee. The process is outlined below.

General Plan Advisory Committee

In preparation for the consultant-led planning effort, staff is proposing to convene a Council-appointed General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), which will provide guidance and review of draft planning documents. The GPAC will provide feedback to staff and the consultant team, but will not have decision-making authority or recommend decisions to City Council. The GPAC will be demographically representative of the residents of Petaluma, and will include members who live throughout the city as well as people who represent major areas of interest in the community. The GPAC will work with staff and the consultant throughout the planning process throughout 2021 and 2022, then will disband. GPAC members will be expected to attend meetings approximately once a month. The General Plan project manager will be the staff liaison to the GPAC.

Staff recommends that the appointment process for the GPAC be similar to the process for appointment on City commissions and committees. City Council request applications for participation from the community, to be returned to Council in the late fall of 2020, and appoint the GPAC on December 7, 2020, prior to the consultant kick off. Staff further recommends that the GPAC consist of approximately 12 members to ensure it is an efficient working group.

Online applications for prospective GPAC members will be published on October 30, 2020 and will close on November 16, 2020. Applications will be available and accepted by the City Clerk. The application will include supplemental questions related directly to the GPAC and specific areas of interest to ensure that the Council has information to appoint a broad range of expertise from the community. Supplemental questions will assist staff and City Council in ensuring that the GPAC comprises a broad representation of the community, and that members live in a range of neighborhoods throughout the City, and have a variety of expertise and interests that will be

additive to the General Plan process. Staff recommends a relatively small group to enable efficient discussions and decision or recommendation making. A [2010 study](#) by well-respected management consultants Bain and Company found that for every additional member of a decision making group over seven people reduces decision effectiveness by 10%. While the GPAC will not be responsible for formal decisions, staff recommends that the Committee not have more than 15 members so that meaningful discussion is possible in GPAC meetings.

The application will be publicized via the City's newsletter; the General Plan email list (a comprehensive list that includes contact information from City Staff, the Communications Department, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Association, and Daily Acts; emails to City Commissions and Committees), and a press release to local newspapers and Petaluma360.com.

City staff will review applications and provide them along with a summary of the applicant pool to City Council, who will make the final selection. Selected GPAC members will be appointed on December 7, 2020, and the committee will convene one time before the General Plan consultant kickoff meeting.

Staff would like to invite City Council discussion on the following questions:

- How many members should the General Plan Advisory Committee have? Staff recommends approximately 12.
- Should there be direct appointments from City Commissions or Committees to the GPAC?
- Should GPAC members be Petaluma residents? What about residents that live in unincorporated Petaluma or subject-matter experts?
- Are there particular interest areas or areas of expertise GPAC applicants should be asked to identify?

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The current discussion of developing a General Plan and Housing Element update is not a project under CEQA. No discretionary action is being requested. Staff anticipates that the General Plan Update, including the Housing Element will culminate in an EIR and will be led by the selected consultant team to ensure consistency with all CEQA requirements.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

For the past four months, staff has worked on a multifaceted public outreach effort that includes engagement with the City Council and City Commissions and Committees. Additionally, virtual meetings with stakeholder groups and a public survey allows the public to give broad input that informs the RFP. This campaign has been supported by newsletter updates, a printable flyer with an informational overview of the General Plan update process, press releases, social media posts, emails, and the planpetaluma.org website.

The outreach campaign served to identify overarching topics important to the community that informed the development of a comprehensive RFP for a planning consultant for the General Plan update. The staff-led outreach process will transition to a consultant-led process when the General Plan consultants begin work, which will be defined and refined through the proposal and selection process. There will be a comprehensive outreach strategy required as part of the consultant proposals that will run through the General Plan process and include the preparation of the Housing Element. The more comprehensive public outreach strategy during the plan development will be shaped by the consultant's recommendations and creativity and will be a significant aspect of the consultant selection process.

The outreach efforts outlined in this report represent a preliminary effort to develop the scope of work for the consultant and does not include the significant and comprehensive outreach process that will follow with the kick-off of the actual update process.

CITYWIDE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The General Plan will allow the City to further all of the goals in the Goals and Priorities document by enabling the community and decision makers to think about how to accomplish the goals in the most impactful and efficient way possible over the long term, then establishing the overarching framework to facilitate appropriate actions. Workplan item 126 specifically reads "Begin planning for update of the City's General Plan 2025."

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

There was a significant amount of input during the City Goals and Priorities outreach effort associated with a need to respond to the climate emergency and to protect the natural environment. These themes were echoed in the General Plan outreach efforts and are primary principles that will be carried forward during the planning process. This focus and priority is clearly stated in the Draft RFP, which includes an acknowledgement of the importance of these issues and calls for the integration of a Climate Action Plan (or equivalent policies) into the General Plan work. Updating the General Plan will allow the City to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing the climate emergency by planning for transportation infrastructure for all modes, the location and density or intensity of future land uses, influencing travel patterns, and can also provide guidance on building efficiency and overarching sustainability.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

A General Plan implementation fee is charged on all building permits and there is a current balance of approximately \$1.7 million committed to a General Plan Update. Of the available funds, \$1,000,000 has been allocated to the General Plan Update project in the City's recently adopted 2020/2021 budget. The City was awarded \$275,000 in Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant funds to assist with the Housing Element and associated environmental analysis. As the scope of the General Plan update expands to include specific areas of focus or study, such as a Climate Action Plan, the budget will increase.

ATTACHMENTS

1. General Plan and Housing Element Process Graphic
2. Draft Request for Proposals