



## Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: October 15, 2008  
Item 6.b

- SUBJECT:** Review of the Draft General Plan
- PURPOSE:** To provide an opportunity for the Commission to review the Draft General Plan and to provide feedback.
- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Draft General Plan (previously distributed)
  2. Revised pages: Draft Subregional Planning Element
  3. Revised Figure 3-10

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### BACKGROUND

On April 15, 2003, the City Council directed staff to begin preparation of a comprehensive update of the City's General Plan which had been last updated and adopted in 1996. The first two years of this process were spent gathering community input regarding the issues to be discussed and resolved in the General Plan. During 2005 and 2006 numerous workshops with the Planning Commission and City Council were held to discuss background information on land use and circulation issues; in 2007 the City Council reached a consensus on a preferred land use map and a preferred traffic circulation network. From 2005 to 2008, the Planning Commission reviewed and commented on drafts of each General Plan Element.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Draft General Plan establishes a planning framework and policies to shape future growth and conservation through the 2025 planning horizon. When adopted, it will replace the 1996 General Plan for all elements, except the Housing Element which was adopted in 2003. The proposed General Plan includes the 11 elements included in the 1996 General Plan as well as two additional elements addressing the topics of water and energy.

Key issues addressed in the Draft General Plan include: preserving and enhancing the quality of life of the community; the concept of sustainability, including sustainable development, sustainability of natural resources, and the long-term economic and fiscal sustainability of the city; and growth management. At build-out the General Plan would accommodate 29,000 housing units and approximately 32 million square feet of commercial, industrial and office development. If "placeholder" development assumptions for East Pleasanton are included,

approximately 35 million square feet of commercial, industrial and office development could be accommodated.

## **DRAFT GENERAL PLAN**

The purpose of this item is to provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission to review the Draft General Plan and to suggest any refinements prior to formally recommending the Draft General Plan to the City Council. Planning Commission action on the Draft General Plan will not be scheduled until the Final EIR is available in January 2009. Comments and suggestions from the public will continue to be accepted and will be reviewed with the Planning Commission or the City Council depending on when they are received.

As noted above, the Planning Commission has previously reviewed and discussed all sections of the Draft General Plan other than the Introduction. Subsequent to the Planning Commission's review, the City Council provided feedback and suggested changes to the draft elements, and since that time staff has edited and in a few instances added policies and programs to address potential environmental impacts. The paragraphs below discuss the substantive changes to the Draft General Plan made since the Planning Commission last reviewed the document.

- **Introduction:** This section has not previously been reviewed by the Planning Commission. Compared to the 1996 General Plan, this version updates information from 1996, adds a section on General Plan accomplishments, adds a discussion on the General Plan vision, describes the overarching goals of the General Plan (preserving Pleasanton's character and quality of life, and encouraging sustainable development), describes sustainable development as it relates to the General Plan, adds a section on guiding objectives, describes the citizen participation process, and updates the demographics and employment numbers.
- **Land Use Element:** Changes to this element include the following: changes have been made to Table 2-2 to add in "placeholder" development assumptions for East Pleasanton; references to the Hacienda Specific Plan have been deleted to reflect the recent direction to prepare a major amendment to the Hacienda PUD rather than a new Specific Plan; Table 2-4 (employee density standards) has been updated; Table 2-5 (General Plan acreage) has been updated based on the new draft General Plan land use map; the definition of the Mixed Use land use designation was amended to include hotels and other commercial uses, to include developments on adjacent sites, and to find existing development of a single land use and future development of a single land use on a site approved as part of a Development Agreement or PUD consistent with the Mixed Use designation; and a section discussing the relationship to other elements was added. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section, the City Council removed the phrase "...may include any housing type" from both Program 10.2 and Policy 11. Regarding density, Policy 11 was amended to clarify that while mid-points and maximum densities are used to calculate holding capacity for planning purposes, these numbers are not entitlements. Policy 17 was added to clarify that in mixed use areas, the specific location of land uses

will be determined by the City Council through the PUD or Specific Plan process. Program 21.3 (relating to development of a ridgeline preservation ordinance) is added here; the same program remains in its original location in the Draft Conservation and Open Space Element.

- **Circulation Element:** Amendments to this element include: clarifying that proposed street improvements are subject to further review and approval by the City Council prior to construction; changes to Table 3-8 to identify roadway improvements related to gateway and Downtown intersections; changes to Figure 3-7 to separately identify potential improvements to Downtown and gateway intersections; additional information regarding traffic safety; and the addition of a section discussing the relationship to other elements that was missing from the previous version reviewed by the Planning Commission. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section, Program 1.6 was amended at City Council’s direction to clarify when construction of the Stoneridge Drive may be considered and that this decision is referendable; Program 1.7 related to the West Las Positas interchange has been edited from the version appearing in the 1996 General Plan to reflect the fact that the interchange is being removed from the circulation network. The program, which was amended at City Council direction, retains a process similar to the 1996 General Plan in the event that a future City Council approves a General Plan Amendment to put the interchange back in the General Plan; changes to Policy 5 and Program 5.1 clarify that improvements to gateway intersections to achieve LOS D or better will not be made unless they are determined to be consistent with maintaining visual character, landscaping and pedestrian amenities; at City Council direction, Program 7.4 was changed to “discouraging” rather than “prohibiting” new gated communities; and Program 12.3 was added relating to regulations pertaining to the parking of recreational vehicles.
- **Public Safety Element:** Since the Planning Commission last reviewed this draft element, the following changes were made: background information on flooding and inundation was moved to the Draft Water Element; additional information regarding the impacts of the failure of Del Valle Dam was added; background information on Police services has been included; and information on the relationship of the Public Safety Element to other elements was added. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: a policy and programs were added related to emergency medical response; Policy 17 and its programs were amended regarding potential releases of hazardous materials related to construction and trenching (a potential impact identified in the DEIR); Policy 21 and Program 21.1 related to air navigation hazards were added; and a policy and program related to emergency supplies at critical facilities were added.
- **Public Facilities and Community Programs Element:** Since the Planning Commission last discussed this element, the following changes were made: information and policies related to water supply, wastewater and stormwater management were moved to the Water Element; information was added regarding the City’s acquisition of the Pleasanton

Pioneer Cemetery; amendments were added reflecting the City's new goal of a 75 percent diversion rate for solid waste; information regarding the target sizes of public schools was added to Program 7.2; a program referencing development of a neighborhood park in Happy Valley was deleted; Goal 8 and a policy relating to providing additional public facilities to enhance the community were added; and Program 26.16 was added related to project waste diversion plans to be prepared for all projects of more than three units, and all non-residential projects (included to avoid a potential significant impact in the DEIR).

- **Conservation and Open Space:** Changes to the Draft Conservation and Open Space Element background section include: adding information about the BMX park; providing additional information about farming in the TriValley; and including additional information on the relationship between the Conservation and Open Space Element and other elements of the General Plan. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section the following modifications were made: the addition of a program to support the efforts of the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup; the amendment of Program 5.1 to review information regarding known archaeological finds to determine if an archaeological study is needed prior to development (included to avoid a potential significant impact in the DEIR); the addition of Program 5.3 to continue to require a standard condition of approval related to cessation of construction and grading when historic or prehistoric finds are encountered (included to avoid a potential significant impact in the DEIR); the addition of Program 5.5 to consider expanding the City's low interest Downtown commercial rehabilitation loan program; the addition of Program 7.4 to provide adequate parking and staging areas for open space access; and the addition of policies and programs related to the public use of trails in open space areas and along arroyos.
- **Water Element:** Most of the material in the Draft Water Element was previously located in the Public Facilities and Community Programs, Conservation and Open Space, and Public Safety Elements. These elements were previously reviewed by the Planning Commission. Additional material prepared by staff for this element includes: introductory text describing the purpose and scope of the Water Element; a description of the Alameda Creek Watershed; a description of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission lands in the south of the Planning Area; calculations of the buildout water demand based on the preferred land use plan; additional information regarding Zone 7's sustainable water supply based on recently available information; and the relationship of the Water Element to other elements of the General Plan. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section, the following changes were made: Goal 1 was added related to long-term sustainability, and several programs related to water conservation and recharge of groundwater were added; Goal 2 was added regarding healthy water courses and riparian functions, as well as programs related to public education about healthy arroyos, and Program 2.8 to require no net loss of wetlands; Program 3.12 was added related to the link between urban forests and filtration of water; and programs under Policy 10 were added related to minimizing impervious surfaces.

- **Air Quality Element:** In the background section: information related to particulates from fireplaces was added; bike sharing programs were mentioned as a transit demand management measure; methane was added as a greenhouse gas; and information was added on the “Rides to School” program. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: Program 4.1 related to drive-through businesses and new technologies was added, as was a note related to improving the synchronization of signals to improve traffic flow; and Program 5.3 related to the future regulation of wood burning was amended.
- **Energy Element:** In the background section information for 2025 was added to Table 10-1, Pleasanton’s Annual Energy Demand, and information regarding ICLEI was added. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: Program 1.1 was amended regarding the designation of one or more City employees to be responsible for energy conservation; several programs were consolidated in Program 1.5; Program 3.5 was amended to “establish financial incentives” rather than “consider financial incentives”; “living roofs” were eliminated from Program 4.1; Program 12.1 regarding community choice aggregation was amended; Program 12.2 was added to consider a range of municipal utility options for Pleasanton; and a reference to Air Quality programs was added since these also would result in energy conservation.
- **Noise Element:** The background section, Aircraft Noise was amended based on some additional information prepared by the City’s acoustic consultant, Illingworth & Rodkin. In brief, the consultant reports that, although State airport standards state that 65 dB is an acceptable level of noise for a reasonable person, there is evidence that a proportion of the population finds aircraft noise unacceptable at this level. For example, the 60 dB CNEL contour from Livermore Airport does not currently extend into Pleasanton. However, in 2006 Pleasanton residents lodged 1,366 noise complaints related to aircraft. Other studies have shown that people find aircraft noise more annoying than traffic noise at the same dB level. Therefore, limiting exterior noise to 60 dB for residential units affected by aircraft noise (where the standard for noise from other sources is 65dB) recognizes this annoyance factor. Additionally, the consultant recommended single-event Lmax interior thresholds in areas where the exterior Ldn is 55 dB or more to minimize the intrusiveness of the single-event levels resulting from aircraft operations. This information is reflected in the background text, policies and programs in the Noise Element. In addition, corrections were made to Table 11-4: Noise Sensitive Receptors, and an airport noise contour for 2000 was added to Figure 11-3. In the Policies and Programs section, Program 1.1 was modified according to the new information on aircraft noise.
- **Community Character:** The background section was amended as follows: information was added on the Callippe Golf Course and open space, and the trail link to Dublin under I-580; trails, bike lanes and other links were identified as aspects of community character that promote sustainability; information was added regarding trees along Stanley

Boulevard, and concerning new wineries and vineyards. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: Program 6.4 was added regarding implementation of projects in Zone 7's Stream Management Master Plan; Program 7.6 was added regarding the clean-up of freeway interchanges, Program 9.10 was added regarding the screening of regional public facilities; Programs 21.4 and 21.5 regarding showcasing public art and providing information about where it is located were added; and Program 23.4 to construct a permanent installation showcasing the work of the City's poets laureate was added.

- **Economic and Fiscal Element:** Since the Planning Commission last reviewed this element a section on "Relationship to other Elements" was added. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: Program 4.1 was added related to supporting and cultivating tourism; Policy 10 was reworded to: "Move towards cost recovery for City facilities and services"; and Program 13.9 was reworded to allow the Director of Finance to determine when a fiscal impact analysis for large developments is required.
- **Subregional Planning Element:** [Note: Attachment 2 includes pages from the Subregional Planning Element with revisions. These pages are to replace those in the Draft General Plan previously distributed. The following paragraph reflects these revisions.] Information was added regarding *Measure D*, the County Urban Growth Boundary; a section on Transportation was added; information regarding the trail connection under I-580 and subregional cooperation for the construction of a new BART station was added; information on Spare the Air Days and Alameda County's *Clear Air Plan for the Tri-Valley Area* was added in the Air Quality section. In the Goals, Policies and Programs section: the goal, policies and programs related to Transportation were updated consistent with the Circulation Element; Program 4.5 was reworded to express encouragement but not necessarily funding of subregional housing organizations; Program 8.1 related to the Tri-Valley Airport Advisory Committee was edited to remove the suggestion that this committee explore airport activities beneficial to the Tri-Valley; Program 12.2 was reworded to include a wider range of programs and plans and not only the *Working Landscape Plan*; and Program 17.1 was reworded to address a wider range of programs in support of the subregional economy.

## **PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DRAFT GENERAL PLAN**

A question has been raised regarding public review of the Draft General Plan prior to the Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council. In discussions of the General Plan Update process with the City Council in 2003 and 2005, it was anticipated that the Draft General Plan would be reviewed with City commissions and committees either prior to the release of the Draft General Plan or prior to the Planning Commission's recommendation of the General Plan to the City Council. At that time, it was anticipated that the General Plan process would take 1 to 2 years. For various reasons, the General Plan update process has taken considerably longer and has incorporated several additional workshops on land use and circulation issues, public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council level for each of the Draft Elements, and a town hall meeting to discuss the General Plan vision. Staff also

met with the Housing Commission, Library Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Civic Arts Commission, Economic Vitality Commission, Human Services Commission, and Youth Commission to discuss draft policies in their area of expertise prior to drafting the General Plan elements. At that time, staff also incorporated all relevant comments from the *Community Meetings Summary Report* into the Draft General Plan elements. In March 2008, the City Council reviewed and considered a General Plan Update status report that outlined the steps to complete the General Plan. That work plan did not include a further round of meetings with City commissions and committees.

Since publication of the Draft General Plan, notification of the availability of the General Plan and this public hearing has been provided to all members of the public who have expressed interest in the project and to all members of City commissions and committees. Notice was also provided in the City's newsletter, in display ads in the local papers, in newspaper articles, and in a press release to the local media. The Draft General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report are also available on the City's website at [www.pleasantongeneralplan.org](http://www.pleasantongeneralplan.org). Staff believes this outreach provides multiple opportunities for members of the public to comment on the General Plan and that a further round of meetings with City committees and commissions is not necessary.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

A notice of this public hearing was provided to all persons on the General Plan interest list; a notice was also published as a display ad in *The Independent*, *The Valley Times*, *The Tri-valley Herald*, and the *Pleasanton Weekly*.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Review the Draft General Plan; and
2. Provide feedback to staff regarding any refinements prior to recommending the Draft General Plan to the City Council.

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