

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

Item #12: Resolution Adopting the Blueprint for Climate Action and Make Findings for Categorical Exemptions (Class 7 and Class 8) Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act

- **Question:** Is the blueprint to be added to the General Plan? Climate ready goal 2030 and next 25 years with new GP?
 - **Response:** There are overlapping General Plan and Blueprint goals, but the Blueprint is a near term action-oriented document whereas the General Plan is a broader long-range policy document. We will be reconciling the General Plan and Blueprint to be consistent. The General Plan will reinforce the Blueprint and set long term climate action goals and policies. Additionally, the Blueprint will be part of the environmental analysis for the General Plan and any necessary modifications so that the Blueprint can be a certified Climate Action Plan for the City.
- **Question:** Adding more Senior and disabled Mobility Services with more ADA parking? More than the state requirement?
 - **Response:** An action to increase required ADA parking above state requirements would be more in line with something that would be included in the General Plan. The Blueprint actions are around mobility for *everyone*.

Buildings:

- **Question:** Not much mention of equity in existing buildings and it is the greatest equity risk. What equity concerns were considered?
 - **Response:** The Existing Building Action Plan aims to enable retrofitting of existing homes and businesses in Petaluma to achieve energy savings and more efficient operations. The implementation of energy efficiency measures has positive equity impacts because more energy efficient homes and businesses improve indoor air quality, reduce energy use, and lower energy bills. Disadvantaged residents and businesses benefit from improvements to existing buildings, particularly those with increased risks from poor indoor air quality including residents with pre-existing medical and respiratory conditions. Improving existing buildings in Petaluma focuses on equitable decarbonization and promoting existing energy efficiency programs offered by BayREN, PG&E, and Sonoma Clean Power. Equitable electrification achieves decarbonization of building operations, equal access to health and safety benefits, economic benefits, and maximizes the ease of installation for everyone, but focuses resources for underserved communities. The City has an existing Tenant Ordinance to mitigate displacement risk that strengthens tenant protections, including “relocation assistance’ and ‘right of return’ for tenants temporarily displaced by housing retrofits. Additionally, the City can consider methods such

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

as a 'green lease' to address the 'split incentive' issue, and to prevent tenants paying for property improvements. Split incentives occur when the person paying for the upgrade, the building owner/manager, does not directly benefit from the improvement. Rather, the cost benefit goes to the utility bill payer, who is using less energy so saving money. In market rate housing, the green features in a building can also increase the amount rent that a building can ask for to account for the amenities that are included.

- **Question:** This is a rapidly evolving area. How prepared are we to evolve and remain at the forefront of the transition?
 - **Response:** As discussed in the staff report, it will take a commitment and financial investment for the City to implement the Blueprint in a meaningful way. Specific to building electrification, staff continues to look at a variety of tools to undertake this critical shift to address our building stock as one of the biggest contributors to the City's greenhouse gas emissions. While the recent 9th Circuit Court decision has required reconsideration of some of the City's approach to electrification, we are also seeking new ways to further the City's commitment to carbon neutrality and all available resources to continue to evolve in that direction.
- **Question:** No mention of a tenant strategy. How will tenant and owner occupied strategies differ?
 - **Response:** See above response.
- **Question:** Timing feels off. Adopt strategy by 2028 and complete the transition by 2030. Do we want to reset this to be realistic?
 - **Response:** By 2028 does not mean it won't happen until 2028, but a finish by date. While we know that the actions in the Blueprint alone will not get the City to carbon neutrality by 2030, we also know that the City remains committed to doing all that we can to move toward that critical goal and the anticipated timelines included in the Blueprint have done best to move in that direction. All actions in the Blueprint will require continued prioritization and allocation of resources by the City Council to move forward. Additionally, we know that it is important for the City to remain nimble to pivot as new funding sources are identified and new technologies are available.
- **Question:** No mention of decommissioning the gas system. Was this considered?
 - **Response:** Under EBEE-5 action a: By 2030, work with PG&E to identify opportunities for natural gas infrastructure pruning to reduce the chance of stranded assets, provide potential funding, and establish an efficient transition to carbon neutral buildings.

Land Use:

Sent to Council 11/04/2024 at 2:55 PM

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

- **Question:** We currently do not have 15 minute headways on our corridors, so “locate transit and jobs near high quality transit corridors” is moot. Should this read “intensify the housing and jobs along corridors to enable high quality transit.”?
 - **Response:** The State just revised this definition to 20 minutes because very few transit entities have 15-minute headways. There is a lot of overlap here with the General Plan Land Use Framework which the Council recently reviewed. The key is that we want to do both and it becomes a challenge to determine what should happen first. It is still feasible that we can have both by 2030.
 - Petaluma Transit currently has two bus routes 11 (Washington St) and 2 (N. McDowell Blvd) that have 20 minute peak-time headways. Both routes are intended to enhance to 15 minute headways in 2025.
- **Question:** What density would be needed to offer high quality transit on our major corridors?
 - **Response:** As part of the General Plan Update we will be looking to focus needed density along major corridors to support enhanced transit opportunities. Additionally, we will be looking to Transit Oriented Communities standards from MTC/ABAG to meet minimum standards in key areas to best support the connection between land use and transit.
- **Question:** Right now we are capturing community feedback on our land use framework. I was expecting this blueprint to ground our land use framework in metrics/targets that need to be met for climate and equity, but I see no metrics/targets. How will this help inform our land use decisions and educate land use community about tradeoffs.
 - **Response:** There are multiple targets and metrics built into the plan, the most prominent being carbon neutrality which is detailed in Chapter 5 on page 41. Each Action Plan in Chapter 5 includes performance and equity metrics in the introduction to the action plan. Where appropriate, targets are built into the actions. For example: EBEE-1: Electrification and Efficiency Strategy. By 2028, develop a phased-in Existing Building Efficiency and Electrification strategy to retrofit 85% of existing homes and businesses to all-electric by 2030.
- **Question:** It feels like we are saying “implement our housing element and GP” to achieve carbon neutrality, but this is the document that is supposed to inform those docs. Correct?
 - **Response:** Upon adoption of the Blueprint, we will be ensuring that the long term policies in the General Plan are consistent with the Blueprint. Both documents have to work together and have parallel strategies and policies. Many of the items in our land use framework call for changes in the City’s regulations to reduce parking, increase density, etc. That reinforce the direction of the Blueprint.

TDM:

Sent to Council 11/04/2024 at 2:55 PM

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

- **Question:** Why is free/subsidized important for transit trips?
 - **Response:** As we transition to having higher quality transit, we will have to encourage the public to make the behavioral change to actually use the transit system. Sometimes this is a challenge because of the logistical convenience of a vehicle and the emotional attachment many have to their vehicle. It is exceptionally difficult for transit to be self-supporting, particularly in the transitional phase, when the program is attempting to increase ridership. Transportation and housing are the two highest expenses for Petaluma residents. Providing free transit helps to address the transportation element and allow residents to put cost savings into other expenses such as housing.
- **Question:** Why isn't bus headway a metric? We don't have high quality transit now, so shouldn't that be a goal?
 - **Response:** Transit service frequency (e.g. bus headway) is a performance equity metric identified on page 68 of the Blueprint
- **Question:** Why isn't density along transit corridors a metric? Isn't that critical for offering high quality transit?
 - **Response:** There is a metric for "Number of housing units near high-quality transit," at the direction of Council metrics could be amended to add "increased density along transit corridors or major bus routes.
- **Question:** This feels onerous to implement and like an outcome of good land use and transportation planning vs an independent effort.
 - **Response:** The Blueprint and the General Plan Update are happening at the same time, and well integrated. The Blueprint is intended to help the City reach its short-term goals and the General Plan will address long-term changes. While they are different documents (one short term and one long term) the GPU team is working to ensure that there is alignment in the efforts.

Parking:

- **Question:** This keeps talking about high quality transit like we have it. How does this blueprint function in the current conditions where we do not have high quality transit?
 - **Response:** The City of Petaluma has multiple corridors (Washington St and N. McDowell Blvd) that fulfill the definition of high-quality transit. In addition to improved transit headways, other components of "high-quality transit" that will be implemented in TOD locations are addressed in the blueprint including having affordable housing, improved mobility options, community services and amenities located nearby. Improvements in these areas will be implemented concurrently with enhanced transit services as is outlined in the Blueprint.

Transit:

Sent to Council 11/04/2024 at 2:55 PM

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

- **Question:** This section mentions nothing about the number of people that need to live within 1/4 mile of a bus stop to enable high quality transit. What is that number?
 - **Response:** 3,000 people per square mile is considered the minimum threshold for fixed route bus service, 5,000 per square mile for more frequent transit service up to 10,000+ per sq mile for BRT/light rail service.
- **Question:** What is needed to offer high quality transit from 6am to 10pm?
 - **Response:** Washington Street and N. McDowell Blvd currently fulfill the definition of high-quality transit during peak times. Several components would need to be implemented in order to provide high quality transit along all major corridors throughout the City from 6am to 10pm, including: additional buses, drivers, operations funding and additional transit facility improvements to allow for storage and maintenance of the expanded bus fleet.
- **Question:** Why aren't the Planning and Climate recommendations included in the Blueprint? Do Climate and Planning each agree with all the revisions proposed?
 - **Response:** The adoption resolution in the City Council's packet includes all recommendations from both the Climate Action Commission and the Planning Commission. Upon adoption, those changes will be incorporated into the final version of the Blueprint.
- **Question:** What are the following suffixes: UF-1c, TLUC-1e, AT-1g, OSS-2c?
 - **Response:** Each of those are references to a specific implementation action in one of the topic specific action plans. UF stands for Urban Forestry. TLUC stands for Transportation and Land Use Coordination. AT stands for Active Transportation. OSS stands for Organizational Structure and Staffing.
 - More specifically, UF-1 refers to the Urban Forestry Management Plan, specifically establishing minimum tree canopy goals for specific land use types and scales (page 87 of the Blueprint)
 - TLUC-1e refers to the General Plan Update, specifically examining rezoning to allow for light-touch, missing middle housing up to 10 units per acre (page 60)
 - AT-1g refers to Active Transportation and complete streets improvements, specifically updating the City's Complete Streets Policy to align with MTC's revised 2022 Complete Streets Policy (page 67)
 - OSS-2c refers to establishing a City Climate Team and Blueprint Coordinators, specifically at the end of each year, convening a meeting with the Climate Team, department heads, and departmental CAP Coordinators to discuss the upcoming year's priorities for Blueprint implementation.
- **Question:** Does the City currently have a EV charging infrastructure master plan? Is it public and are there metrics?
 - **Response:** The City is currently under contract with NV5 to design and assist with the construction of EV charging infrastructure at six facilities (City Hall, Community Center, Corporation Yard, Ellis Creek, Police Department, and the

Sent to Council 11/04/2024 at 2:55 PM

Responses to Council Questions and Comments

11/04/2024

Water Field Office. The designs are not yet complete. Staff expects the designs will be completed and to have a funding strategy (e.g. grants, financing, etc.) before the end of the year. Next steps would be applying for permits and implementing the funding plan.

The Vehicle Electrification and Electric Mobility Strategy section of the Blueprint lists public charging facilities as a performance and equity metric. The Community Center chargers would be available to the public as well as the City fleet. Another metric for City fleet charging facilities could be added, if Council wishes to emphasize that aspect.