

MEMORANDUM

To: Heather Hines and Andrew Trippel
From: Brent Newell
Re: Draft Land Use Policy Framework
Date: September 2, 2024

Chapter 1

1. Comment: new area zoning redesignations should implement LU 3.2 (facilitate higher density development). I favor alternatives that adjust zoning designations to facilitate higher density development.
 - a. Upstream River-Adjacent page 39: favor alternative 2 deintensification of land use for parks and open space.
 - b. Downtown Smart page 44: zoning should include T8 near the SMART station but T5/T6 at River Front Plaza. This more fully implements policy LU-4 (development near transit).
 - c. River Park page 45: favor alternative 2.
 - d. Pet. Blvd. North page 48: favor alternative 1 light feathering.
 - e. Pet. Blvd. South page 49: favor alternative 3 feathering.
 - f. East Washington page 50: favor alternative 1 to be consistent with Pet. Blvd zoning.
 - g. Bowling Alley/Vets Hall page 51: favor alternative 2 to be consistent with Pet Blvd zoning.
 - h. Western/Baker page 52: favor alternative 2.
 - i. Casa Grande school property page 53: Casa Grande property owned by Petaluma City Schools should be developed for teacher housing and zoned in collaboration with the District. This is a prime opportunity to support the housing goal and the medium and long-term viability of the city's schools.
 - j. Leghorn p. 54: Alternative 2 would encourage housing consistent with a town center and diversity of housing in that area of Petaluma.
 - k. Washington Square/Plaza Center p. 56: this neighborhood center needs a creative and equitable vision to support neighborhoods on both sides of highway 101, including access across 101 and North and South McDowell. In my view, this is the one proposed neighborhood center/town center that needs an equity lens the most because it serves East Petaluma and residents living in the highway 101 corridor and Payran neighborhoods.

Chapter 2

1. Comment: Remove the Casa Grande school property from the 15-minute neighborhood list. Identify the shopping center at McDowell/Casa Grande Road as a neighborhood center.
2. Comment: add additional policy goal to LU-6 to integrate equity into 15-minute centers. Draft language “LU-6.6 Ensure town centers and neighborhood centers promote equity and access among Petaluma neighborhoods.”

Chapter 3

1. Comment: add McDowell Blvd (North and South) to Action LU 9.3.1 to provide equity among town centers and promote connectivity across McDowell.
2. Comment: add Clover Creamery property to Policy LU-10.2.

MEMO

09/03/24

To:

Andrew Trippel

Heather Hines

From:

Roger McErlane

Re: Comments related to the Draft Land Use Policy Framework- August 22,2024
as presented at PC on 8/27/24.

My primary (and still unanswered question), is related to the existing conditions statement which says - "higher density housing, above 4 stories, is currently not financially feasible in Petaluma". Given this statement, why are we then suggesting higher density residential with 60 to 70 foot building heights in so many locations throughout the City? Something is missing in the logic and needs further explanation.

I am assuming that the reason for this financial infeasibility is due to the increased construction costs of a 60' or 70' tall building and added cost related to structured parking, fire safety, structural and elevator systems and on site 24 hour HOA management/security is too much of a financial burden. The overall construction cost per square footage is not balanced with adequate rents or sales prices to justify the investment. The return on investment may work in higher cost areas like in Berkeley or Albany but does not work in Petaluma because we cannot charge rents or sales prices sufficient to make the investment return positive.

I understand that this is a land use planning document, but some discussion of why it makes better economic sense and why such a proposed increase of height and bulk and density will attract investors who want to build such projects? If the higher density residential projects of 60 to 70 feet height- 50 to 60 dwelling units per acre do not work in Petaluma from a financial basis, why are we recommending it in so many locations?

My question remains, do 4 story housing projects still work economically in Petaluma? Do projects such as what exists in the 4-story theater district and the river front housing development still work? If they do, why are we not proposing more of this? If they do not work, it should be stated clearly what does not work and why.

I am suggesting that we need to do more analysis (and make it public) of what is feasible and what has the market demand that will attract investors and users. What seems to be suggested now with the Draft Framework Document emphasis on higher density residential, seems to be way beyond economic reality or market demand

On page 43, Figure 11. Downtown Land Use Alternatives. In order to make an intelligent decision related to the land use alternatives suggested, we need to have some understanding of what we gain and what we lose with each alternative. Each of these alternative choices has significant economic market and investment ramifications not to mention physical and visual impacts. We need more discussion and rational as to what locations of higher density residential should have priority and contribute the most positive results.

As I mentioned at the PC meeting last week, building out one district or neighborhood of higher density residential as a cohesive and complete neighborhood would be more successful than having one independent project completed but isolated from others. The results of building five projects in five isolated locations, versus building five projects all in a focused area that would help to complete an attractive neighborhood or district, should seem obvious and encouraged.

In both Alternatives 1 and 2, you are suggesting allowing 6 story height limitations. I am not clear why this is suggested when you have previously said that anything over 4 stories does not work financially. In order for a residential housing project of 60 or 70 feet in height to be financially feasible, first we need to have a market demand that justifies such a project. A residential project that utilizes the 60 or 70 foot height needs to generate between 300 and 400 units to be financially attractive to an investor/developer. This range of units is what is needed to spread the additional cost over enough units and carry some of the burden of the 20% affordable units as well.

I don't think we are being realistic about how to approach such a high density. A project of this magnitude (300 to 400 units) requires 4 to 5 acres of land and is typically a very large single building or a series of large attached single buildings, the basic shape driven by structured parking. To accomplish such a project the developer will need to assemble multiple land parcels from multiple landowners to achieve a total of 4 to 5 acres of land. This is extremely difficult to do with multiple ownerships of smaller parcels and will hinder an investor's interest and ability to accomplish such high density projects. The City should evaluate how they can play a role in helping the investor go through this process or it will most likely not happen.

The physical reality and scale of a 4 to 5 acre, 60 to 70 foot tall building mass placed in the downtown context needs to be addressed. It is equivalent to parking an aircraft carrier size building volume and mass into a historic fabric of smaller parcels and existing buildings. At present we have nothing suitable in terms of Design Guidelines, Form Based Zoning Codes, Urban Design Guidelines or Sense of Place goals that are established or approved to guide this process. The practical reality and the financial infeasibility of such a project also raises the question of why we are establishing Overlay Zoning land use goals to allow it?

Given the lack of staff expertise or prior experience with the nature of such large projects we really have no idea of what we might get. Once it is built, we will have to live with it. The old saying of “measure twice and cut once” seems worth remembering. Somewhere in the evaluation process we also need to prepare conceptual plans for priority projects in important locations to serve as guidelines to potential investors of what we are expecting.

On page 49 , Figure 15: Petaluma Blvd. South, Alternatives 1,2 and 3.

Petaluma Blvd. is a heavily traveled, very important street corridor that links to the downtown and forms the image and entrance to downtown Petaluma. Design of projects along this corridor have an important role to play in creating the image and sense of place that represents Petaluma.

Presently on Petaluma Blvd. there is a 14 foot, asphalt paved and painted median that provides direct left turn access in to every individual parcel. As the Blvd. has evolved over time into a major traffic carrying street and more of a through traffic function instead of a local access street, this paved continuous left turn median does not seem needed and is hard to justify. It's a non-permeable paved heat island, increases stormwater runoff and serves very little purpose except to allow each parcel and property to have a direct left turn vehicular access, needed or not. This 14 feet of paved asphalt surface space could be used to transfer space to the edges of the Blvd and improve the comfort for pedestrian shaded walking, bicycle lanes and add the much needed shade trees. The median could be retained at key intersections to be used for U turns to gain access to the other side of the street for opposite travel direction.

All development parcels on Petaluma Blvd. should be encouraged to have direct access from side or rear streets and not directly from the Blvd. frontage itself. Increasing access to parcels from the Blvd. will exasperate traffic conflicts, bicycle and pedestrian conflicts and add to congestion issues.

Each of the four alternatives for Petaluma Blvd. South that are suggested in the document, need to consider Petaluma Blvd. as a cohesive corridor and include guidelines that establish design rules for the entire public right of way (from face of building on one side of the street to the face of building on the other side of the street) in other words, the whole public corridor including both the width and entire length of it.. Accomplishing piecemeal development projects along Petaluma Blvd. that don't result in a cohesive corridor and an attractive district that creates a desired sense of place, do not seem to be incorporating good planning principals.

Figure 22. Washington Square and Plaza Center.

Adding residential use to this urban center could be done very successfully, but it needs to be a by-product of an overall master plan which considers pedestrian movement, parks or parklets for children, parking lot landscape and overall site improvements which would make the Center more attractive to live in. Stacked housing over commercial is also worth considering but will require a developer who can deal in both residential and commercial leasing, one on top of the other. This type of developer/investor is not easy to find and the stacked land use condition seems to be avoided due to a number of issues.

Given the unique presence of the Petaluma River, I think more attention needs to be given to how do we revitalize parcels that have the ability to energize the neighborhoods around the Petaluma River particularly in the central downtown area. One of the most attractive areas that has evolved in the last 30 years is the area next to the River. 1st and 2nd street with the shed buildings and warehouse character. It has a unique sense of place that could easily be expanded in the downtown area and build on what is already successful.

In closing I find the Draft Land Use Framework document lacking in its economic foundation and needs clarification as to what is driving the land use policies of higher density emphasis at so many locations through the city.

The Land Use Framework recommendations are lacking any real Urban Design or Public Corridor "Framework" suggestions that would create and reinforce an attractive sense of place. "Sense of Place" is supposed to be part of the General Plan and I was told in past discussions at previous Planning Commission meetings that the Land Use Element would address "Sense of Place". So far it has not even mentioned it.

If I was looking for a town for my family to live in or even if I was a tourist just looking for a place to eat or do other activities, the top of my list would be what kind of place is physically attractive to me and has a special sense of place. Petaluma has lived off its charm for many years and has largely preserved the unique history of the downtown, and presence of the river.

The Draft Land Use Framework is supposed to reinforce the ingredients that create a special sense of place as part of its mission. This goal is not addressed in this document. This is an opportunity to further protect our strongest resources and refine the town of Petaluma into a unique and attractive place. I am concerned that if we don't address it soon, we will start losing what we have.

My last comment is related to the graphics. This document will be read by many people who do not have the map reading skills of the author.

It's important to make sure all of whom will review and comment on this Land Use Policy Framework- Draft for Public Review are able to have a clear understanding of the maps and alternative plan illustrations, all maps should have key streets labeled. There are several planning alternative maps where it is difficult to understand the street identification, or the street name is cut off due to using a base map from another digital source. It needs to be better crafted.

Land Use Framework Comments/Questions/Suggestions - Nickola Frye

General:

Under the Transportation(VMT), Transportation Network and Land Use, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions the effect of Highway 101 is missing and not included. Also on Figure 4 - Draft Active Transportation Network - 101 is not on this map. I understand that it was specifically about bicycle travel, but the highway significantly affects travel in and around Petaluma for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Overview of Land Use Direction - Integrate land use and mobility strategies to prioritize pedestrian-oriented, bicycle- and transit-friendly travel. - there is not a single mention regarding accessibility for others ie: disabled, young people, seniors, those who cannot afford cars or gas, etc. There is a serious need to take into account those who for whatever reason do not utilize a car.

Maps and Illustrations - when viewed in printed form or on computer screen - many are not readable or cut in such a way as it was difficult to determine which street or area they were representing. Many are without street names. I am very unsure if most of the maps and illustrations are helpful to residents who are trying to understand this document.

Table 1: Existing and Proposed Land Use Designation Standards

- Why the new category of Urban Density Residential - when it is stated elsewhere that above 4 stories does not pencil out in Petaluma. Cost of construction does not appear to be going down, so what is the justification to add this category. Also applies to Urban Corridor Mixed Use, Station Mixed Use and Flex (?). Seems that there is already sufficient code specifics available. Seems that these new categories have been added to justify taller buildings, not to facilitate possible development and construction.

Land Use Maps

- Small cut out maps are lacking in clarification and readability.
- Upstream River Adjacent - Alternative 2 - needs to include medium residential and/or maker/microbusiness in place of the upper light green colored parcel.
- Downtown River Adjacent - should remain mixed use 1, neighborhood commercial
- Downtown Land Use Alternatives - No change - given that most infill lots are limited in size, a developer would have to work with several land owners, therefore this increase to 6 stories seems unnecessary.
- Downtown Smart Station Area - Why is there only one alternative. How about only the two areas closest to Lakeville St becoming T6 wholly, while the other area remains no Change.
- River Park - love the idea of Flex/Maker by Hopper, and unsure about the other choices. Would like to see most of the land remain open space or park land.
- Petaluma Blvd. North - either no change or alternative 1 - maps are difficult to use

- Petaluma Blvd. South - Alternative 1, consistent step back allows for a unified and dignified look to this corridor.
- East Washington - not happy with alternative 1 or 2 - either would create a wall of buildings on land that is not deep, both alternatives ignore the fact that this is a major corridor to the city and should look like it.
- Bowling Alley Land Use - while I would like to see this area developed and create a more unified look to this corridor to the city, I feel that the area should be more diverse, perhaps some public space in addition to 2-4 story mixed use housing.
- Western and Baker - a combination of 2 and 3 and 4 story mixed use would work in this area.
- Casa Grande Center - do not feel that any of the suggested alternatives would be viable in this heavily traveled area. The high school and completed, and proposed across the street are components that need to be fully included in any alternative.
- Leghorn Market - would like an alternative that allows for neighborhood commercial and neighborhood mixed use.
- The Outlets - a combination of no change, and alternative 1 and 2 would make an interesting and unique area for the city.
- Washington Square and Plaza Center - Alternative 1

Urban Growth Boundary - in full agreement with Measure Y

Development near transit - in support of development near both SMART stations. Specific plans should be developed and implemented to allow for higher density housing while maintaining flex components for utilization of land for commercial, maker, and flex alternatives.

Land uses along Petaluma River - preservation of the river and its tributaries should be the guiding principles of and any change in development. Downzoning of the vacant land to maintain our unique river, while opening some of the adjacent lands for open space is important.

15 minute city - while this concept is a great idea the practicality of making this a city priority is of great concern. Some areas of Petaluma are already working as 15 minute centers, while others are near to being 15 minute centers, there is a majority of the proposed 15 minute city designated areas that are not and probably will never meet this designation. Petaluma was built with track housing, single family units and with the idea of vehicle transportation. The general description of a 15 minute activity center defines it as being with a 15 minute walk that meets one or more of daily needs like groceries, services, recreation, and gathering places. This very limiting description excludes an activity (walking) that is not available for many disabled and for most seniors. I have to take exception to this very limiting and exclusionary definition of what constitutes a neighborhood.

I personally live in TC-#6 NorthPetaluma SMART Station and do not see how this area can be designated A "Town Center". Perhaps 10 or more years in the future, but currently and in the near future most of the destinations listed that should serve the whole city are just not available. While we will be getting the SMART train, we have limited city transit, limited housing (mobile

home parks dominate), limited retail (commercial only, no banks, grocery stores, public services, etc.), some employment, and no large-scale mixed use housing. There are no public gathering spaces, no multi-family housing, no regional services (except USPS), and only limited regional retail. While there are some business offices and medical offices we have only limited middle housing.

A review of some of the other designated 15 minute neighborhoods also show that they seem to be designated on the map, but that they do not take into account the actual areas nor do they align with how the residents who live in the area or adjacent to the area utilize their neighborhood.

FW: PC 09/10/24: General Plan Land Use Alternatives: Community Outreach & Engagement Extension

Daibel Fernandez Bolt <dfernandez_bolt@cityofpetaluma.org>

Tue 9/10/2024 12:33 PM

To: Orozco, Uriel <uorozco@cityofpetaluma.org>

Cc: Greg Powell <GPOWELL@cityofpetaluma.org>; -- City Clerk <CityClerk@cityofpetaluma.org>

Good morning Uriel,

A public comment for your meeting.

Thank you,
Daibel

Daibel Fernandez-Bolt

Administrative Assistant

City of Petaluma | City Clerk

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From: Veronica Olsen [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 11:05 AM

To: Hooper, Blake <Bmhooper1@gmail.com>; jessicamoz@gmail.com; Janice Cader-Thompson <jcaderthompson@cityofpetaluma.org>; Darren Racusen <darrenracusen@gmail.com>; brentjnewell@outlook.com; Nickola Frye <nfrye46@gmail.com>; roger mcerlane <rogermcerlane@mac.com>; -- City Clerk <cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org>

Subject: PC 09/10/24: General Plan Land Use Alternatives: Community Outreach & Engagement Extension

---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am reaching out to express my concerns regarding the proposed **timeline for the General Plan Land Use Alternatives** and its potential implications for our community. Over the past four years, the Planning Department and General Plan Team have dedicated significant effort to preparing land use alternatives. However, I have observed that the process for public review of the General Plan Land Use section is constrained, which I believe warrants attention.

The upcoming agendas for September and October contain a multitude of critical land use issues, including a rezoning of Petaluma's downtown, as well as substantial General Plan zoning and building height changes. It is disconcerting that, after years of careful preparation

and discussion of the General Plan, the **community has been allotted only one month (September 2024) to review such impactful land use proposals.** Given the substantial nature of these changes and their potential effects on our neighborhoods, I believe it would be beneficial to extend the review period to enable residents to fully understand, analyze, and provide informed feedback.

It is important to provide the community with ample time to engage with these documents, particularly considering the significant changes proposed, such as adjustments to zoning regulations and alterations to building height restrictions. I believe the current review timeline may hinder meaningful participation in the public process.

To address these concerns, I kindly request the following actions:

- 1. Extension of the Review Period:** I suggest allowing additional time for the community to review the proposed land use alternatives. A more extended review period would enable residents to comprehensively grasp the implications of the proposed changes and contribute valuable input.
- 2. Enhanced Communication:** Increasing efforts to inform residents about the nature and significance of the proposed changes would be highly beneficial. This could include more detailed briefings, public workshops, and accessible resources that explain the potential impacts of the proposed land use alternatives.
- 3. Opportunities for Dialogue:** I propose facilitating additional forums for community engagement, such as town hall meetings or online discussions, to allow residents to ask questions and express their concerns in a more interactive setting.

I believe that these steps would lead to a more transparent and inclusive process, ultimately resulting in better-informed decisions that reflect the interests and needs of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and recommendations.

Best regards,

Veronica Olsen