



DATE: May 1, 2024

TO: Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee

FROM: Heather Gurewitz, Senior Planner
Heather Hines, Project Manager
Christina Paul, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: Receive a presentation and provide feedback related to the Draft Transportation Policy Framework as part of foundational work on the General Plan Update.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that at their joint meeting the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Transit Advisory Committee receive a presentation from staff and the consultant team on the draft Transportation Policy Framework and provide feedback to inform revisions to the Framework as part of foundational work on the General Plan Update. Requested feedback has been framed by the following questions for the Committees to consider:

- What do you see as the most important policies in this framework?
- What concerns do you have about the policies in this framework? For example, are they unclear? Should they be softened or strengthened? Do you disagree with the policy direction?
- Does the framework establish a clear path to transforming the City's transportation system, reducing VMT, and removing barriers to safe walking, biking, and transit use?
- The framework establishes a modal hierarchy (Policy 1.1), includes actions related to developing complete and green streets (Actions 1.1.2 and 1.2.1), and includes a draft street typology framework in Appendix A. Does this approach appropriately reflect the community's transportation priorities, when taking into account more specific plans such as the draft Active Transportation Plan?

No action is being requested at the meeting, rather this meeting is an opportunity for committee members to provide feedback on the draft policy framework to inform additional refinement.

BACKGROUND

General Plan Update

The City is currently operating under the City of Petaluma: General Plan 2025, which was

written in 2006-2007, adopted in 2008. The City is preparing a General Plan Update that is anticipated to be before the City Council for adoption in late 2025. The General Plan is a guiding document, providing policies and implementation programs to achieve the City's goals, and generally has a planning horizon of around 20 years. The General Plan also serves as the City's foundation for regulating Land Use. Eight mandatory topical areas, or Elements, must be included in a General Plan pursuant to California State Law, including Land Use, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Circulation, Noise, Safety, and Environmental Justice. Unlike other elements, the Housing Element is required by State regulations to be updated every eight years. Petaluma's Housing Element was adopted by City Council and certified by the State of California in March 2023.

The General Plan update process kicked off in 2020 with an extensive public engagement process designed to identify community and decision-maker priorities for the General Plan. This effort resulted in a Request for Proposals for consultant teams to assist the City in developing its General Plan, and in April 2021, the City entered into a contract with Raimi + Associates. The Raimi team includes a suite of subconsultants with expertise in a variety of areas to support the development of a robust and comprehensive General Plan for the City.

In early 2021, the City also assembled a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to provide insight and recommendations throughout the General Plan Update process. The committee comprises a diverse group of residents, business owners, educators, and other members of the Petaluma community who serve as advisors and project ambassadors. The GPAC works collaboratively with the consultant team, led by Raimi + Associates, and City staff, to provide input on General Plan issues and offer feedback on draft materials. Further information on the GPAC, including meeting materials, can be found here: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/gpac-page>.

Existing Conditions: Transportation

Following an initial period of data gathering in 2021, the consultant team completed numerous Existing Conditions Reports, which establish baseline conditions for key policy areas including Transportation. Key findings and opportunities from the 2022 Existing Conditions report for Transportation include the following are excerpted below:

- SB 743 directed changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for assessing transportation impacts, shifting the metric from vehicle delay to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which encourages infill development and travel by more sustainable modes like walking, biking, and public transit. The City's SB 743 Implementation Program has recently set ambitious VMT thresholds so that future growth supports the City's climate and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals.
- Petaluma's downtown and historic districts are enjoyable places for people to walk and the City benefits from having its own transit service, Petaluma Transit.

- Most trips in Petaluma are made by private vehicle, reflecting the suburban nature of the city and the distance between Petaluma and major job centers. Approximately 73 percent of Petaluma residents drive to work alone compared to 77 percent in Sonoma County and 64 percent for the entire Bay Area.
- Within Petaluma, physical barriers such as the Petaluma River, the SMART right-of-way, and U.S. 101 constrain crosstown travel for all modes, and result in higher levels of vehicle congestion on key roadways that provide access to and through downtown such as East Washington Street, Lakeville Street, and East D Street. These barriers are particularly acute for people walking and biking and the existing gaps in bike and pedestrian networks in Petaluma inhibit the use of multimodal transportation, particularly for less experienced cyclists.
- The U.S. 101 through Petaluma is currently being widened from four to six lanes [complete], travel through Petaluma has historically been constrained by the narrowing of U.S. 101 from six to four lanes through Petaluma, with extensive congestion during peak commute hours and on weekends. However, several opportunities exist to encourage greater use of sustainable modes like walking, biking, and public transit in Petaluma to help achieve the City’s climate goals.
- Petaluma is currently served by the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) commuter rail service at the Downtown Petaluma station and will be served in the future at the planned Petaluma North/Corona Station. Petaluma is also served by Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit, which provide inter-city and regional connectivity, with a hub at the Copeland Street Transit Mall adjacent to the Downtown Petaluma station.
- The Marin-Sonoma Bikeshare Pilot Program will provide shared electric bikes around the Downtown Petaluma station and in Downtown Petaluma to support last-mile connectivity. Focusing future growth around the regional transit hubs and improving connections for people walking and biking to transit, schools, and key destinations like Downtown Petaluma and shopping centers could encourage use of sustainable modes for existing and future residents and reduce VMT.
- The General Plan Update will leverage the findings of several ongoing efforts to improve walking and biking in Petaluma, such as Sonoma County’s Vision Zero effort and Petaluma’s Local Roadway Safety Plan and Active Transportation Plan update.
- The City of Petaluma will also need to consider and adapt to emerging transportation technologies (e.g., bikeshare, micromobility, electric vehicles, ride hailing, autonomous vehicles) and potential transportation network disruptions, including the increased frequency and severity of hazardous events like wildfires and flooding associated with climate change.

Vision Pillars, and Guiding Principles

Simultaneously to the existing conditions effort, the consultant team and staff engaged in a robust public engagement process that included public surveys, listening sessions, geographical

area meetings, pop-up workshops, focus groups, and engagement with the General Plan Advisory Committee. This work informed the Existing Conditions Reports as well as a Vision Statement, Pillars, Guiding Principles, and Supporting Concepts document that was developed and unanimously recommended by GPAC to the City Council on February 17, 2022. The document was accepted by the City Council on March 21, 2022 (<https://www.planpetaluma.org/documents#gpuvision>).

The Vision Statement describes the desired future conditions and characteristics of the city. The Pillars are the core community values. The Guiding Principles and Supporting Concepts provide broad direction and pathways to achieve the vision and honor community values, focusing on the community's specific challenges and opportunities. The complete Vision, Pillars, and Guiding Principles are on the PlanPetaluma website (planpetaluma.org).

The Following Vision, Pillars, and Guiding Principles were identified as being specifically applicable to the Transportation Draft Policy Framework and may be helpful to the Committee discussion:

Vision

- We are prosperous. Our city infrastructure and facilities are sustainably financed, resilient, and well-maintained.
- We relish our spirited, distinctive neighborhoods where we live, work, and play. Our friendly, beautiful, and nature-filled streets, parks, urban forest, and accessible river, bike lanes and trails, and walking paths connect people and help keep residents healthy. It is safe, easy, and enjoyable to travel across and around town and to neighboring communities with human, electric, and hybrid transport.
- We are forward-thinking leaders. By achieving carbon neutrality in 2030, we demonstrate that equitable, carbon-neutral, regenerative communities and economies are possible through action and collaboration with other cities, communities, and our region. We have adapted to climate change with a community-driven, whole systems, and nature-based approach to development.

Pillars

- Climate Action, Resilience, and Sustainability. Petaluma is committed to bold action to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The General Plan must build climate-ready communities using science, technology, and bold ways of thinking to advance change in our relationship with the natural environment and to plan for current and future impacts.
- Equity, Justice, and Demographic Changes. Petaluma has committed to advancing social and economic justice to create an inclusive and equitable City in which all can thrive. The General Plan must prioritize supporting those who have been most affected by injustice and inequity and advance bold action in terms of housing, transportation, public spaces,

and intergenerational and multicultural programs in order to take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges as they arise.

Guiding Principles Related to Transportation

1. Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and equitably foster a sustainable and resilient community in which today's needs do not compromise the ability of the community to meet its future needs.
4. Promote social and economic justice to address structural social and economic inequities and racism.
6. Physically and psychologically integrate and connect the East and West sides of town.
7. Create a welcoming, affordable, accessible, and age- and family-friendly city.
10. Enhance Petaluma's historic downtown by preserving its historic character, expanding pedestrian and bicycle access and safety, providing public gathering spaces, and promoting a diverse mix of uses.
12. Prioritize cycling, walking, transit, and other transportation alternatives over automobiles.
13. Ensure infrastructure supports infill development and addresses the impacts of climate change.
16. Be a leader in advancing these guiding principles within the region and beyond.

Policy Frameworks

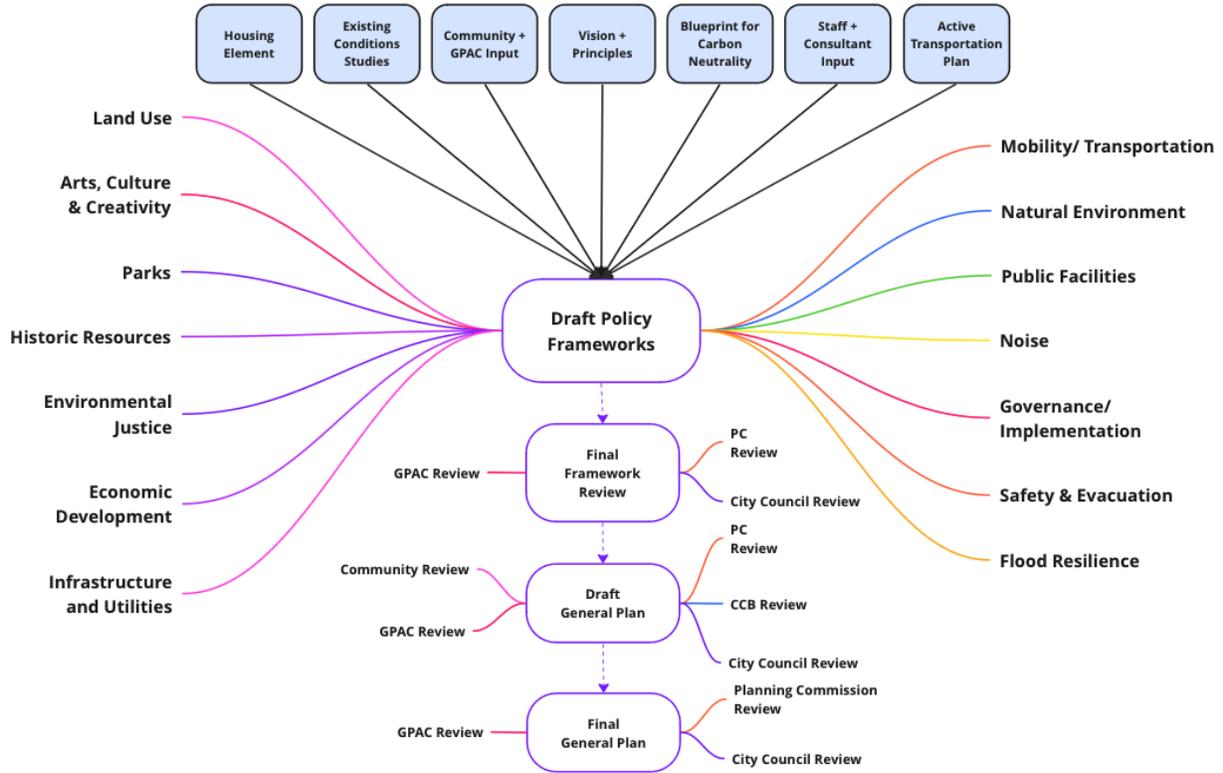
Context and Foundation

The General Plan is made up of both the Land Use Map, which displays General Plan Land Uses, and policies that relate to a wide range of topics. At present, the draft General Plan policies are contained in Policy Frameworks, which will ultimately inform the development of Elements in the Draft General Plan. These frameworks were developed based on a series of inputs, including much of the work that has been done to date as part of the General Plan Update, such as the Existing Conditions Report, Vision and Guiding Principles, the Blueprint and Carbon Neutrality, and the Housing Element. The Transportation Framework was also informed by the development of the City's Active Transportation Plan. Additionally, the policy frameworks were shaped through the input from the General Plan Advisory Committee, expertise from the consultant team, operational expertise from city staff, and input from the community.

Twelve of the 14 policy frameworks were published for public review on March 21, 2024 (<https://www.planpetaluma.org/policy-frameworks>). The Flood Resiliency Framework was released for public review on April 23, 2024. The Land Use Framework will be released later this summer alongside the Land Use Alternatives.

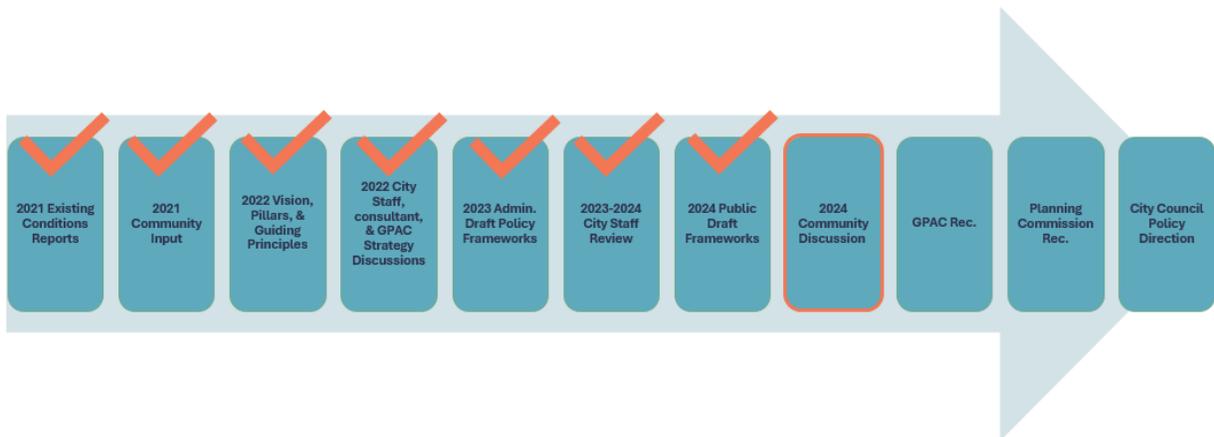
Figure 1 diagrams the process that resulted in the Draft Policy Frameworks, and the subsequent review process and development of the General Plan.

Figure 1: Context of the Draft Policy Frameworks



The draft Policy Frameworks were developed through an extensive process that included a wide range of inputs. Figure 2 diagrams the process to arrive at and review the Policy Frameworks.

Figure 2: Policy Framework Development and Review Process



DISCUSSION

The Transportation Draft Policy Framework addresses the required elements that are needed for compliance with state and federal regulations, including:

- shift to Vehicle Miles Traveled to assess environmental impacts;
- adoption of complete streets standards;
- integrate climate adaptation and resilience strategies, including evacuation routes for identified fire and geologic hazards (currently under development);
- incorporate Safe Systems Approach and Vision Zero policies to improve traffic safety; and
- ensure a zero-emission transit fleet by 2040.

The Draft Transportation Policy Framework has six goals:

- Goal TP-1: Petaluma’s Transportation Network Reimagined
- Goal TP-2: Climate Emergency Resolution
- Goal TP-3: Equitable Access for All
- Goal TP-4: Safe and Healthy Mobility
- Goal TP-5: Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Goal TP-6: Timely and Efficient Implementation

These goals are supported by 26 policies as well as actions/programs that support the goals.

The goals, policies, and actions/programs are listed in the [Draft Transportation Policy Framework](#) which is available on planpetaluma.org.

Requested Feedback

The General Plan consultant team and staff have launched a robust public engagement process to gather feedback on the draft General Plan Policy Frameworks. This includes requesting that the City’s Committees, Commissions, and Boards provide feedback on frameworks within their purview.

The General Plan Update team is requesting that the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Transit Advisory Committee provide feedback on the Transportation Framework by answering the following questions:

- What do you see as the most important policies in this framework?
- What concerns do you have about the policies in this framework? For example, are they

unclear? Should they be softened or strengthened? Do you disagree with the policy direction?

- Does the framework establish a clear path to transforming the City’s transportation system, reducing VMT, and removing barriers to safe walking, biking, and transit use?
- The framework establishes a modal hierarchy (Policy 1.1), includes actions related to developing complete and green streets (Actions 1.1.2 and 1.2.1), and includes a draft street typology framework in Appendix A. Does this approach appropriately reflect the community’s transportation priorities, when taking into account more specific plans such as the draft Active Transportation Plan?

Other Opportunities to Participate

Members of the Committees who attend this meeting are asked to provide feedback on the Transportation Framework from their point of view as committee members, who are responsible for the charge of their committee. Committee members may wish to make comments on other frameworks. As there is a great deal of content in the Policy Frameworks as a whole and it is not possible to review all of that content with each Committee or Commission, members are encouraged to provide feedback on policies not related to the charge of their Committee as individual members of the community. There are ample opportunities to participate in the Policy Framework review process as members of the public, including:

1. Submitting comments draft policy frameworks through the [online portal](#).
2. Attending the [May 11th General Plan Festival](#) open house, at which there will be free food, activities for kids, prizes, and an opportunity to talk with the City and consultant team one on one at interactive stations for each of the 13 available frameworks.
3. Attending a CCB meeting and making comments as a member of the public:

CCB	Meeting Date	Frameworks to Review
Airport Commission	May 2, 2024	Mobility and Transportation
Historic and Cultural Preservation Committee	May 7, 2024	Historic Resources
Senior Advisory Committee	May 9, 2024	Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice
Climate Action Commission	May 9, 2024	Natural Environment Mobility and Transportation Flood Resilience
Recreation Music and Parks Commission joint meeting with the Tree Advisory Committee	May 15, 2024	Parks Natural Environment Public Facilities
Public Art Committee	May 23, 2024	Arts, Culture, and Creativity

Planning Commission	May 28, 2024 June 25, 2024 July 23, 2024	Natural Environment Infrastructure and Utilities Economic Development Noise Parks Mobility and Transportation Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Flood Resilience Land Use
General Plan Advisory Committee	Ongoing, with Final review June 20, 2024	Working Group Recommendations on all Frameworks

General Plan Next Steps

Following the outreach effort on the draft Policy Frameworks, the input will be brought before the Planning Commission for review and recommendation followed by City Council consideration and acceptance. Later this year, the general plan team will begin a public engagement process around the Land Use Alternatives. The General Plan team anticipates a Briefing Book for the Land Use Alternatives will be available for review in August 2024. The subsequent outreach strategies and meeting dates are currently being refined by the City. After public review and discussion, the Planning Commission will review and consider a preferred land use alternative for recommendation to the City Council. The item will be brought before the City Council for approval of the preferred land use alternative. Once the preferred land use alternative is identified, the consultant team will release the official Notice of Preparation for the General Plan Environmental Impact Report. This will initiate the environmental process.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The General Plan Update process is documented via the City of Petaluma General Plan website: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>. It contains all information available on the General Plan Update process, including any documents that have been complete and many meeting recordings. General Plan Advisory Committee meetings are publicized, and the public is invited to attend and provide feedback via public comment at these and other public meetings.

The consultant team has launched a significant public engagement effort that will invite the public to provide feedback on the policy frameworks and the Land Use Alternatives. The public will have the option to attend the city’s Committee, Commissions and Board meetings, utilize the online portal for feedback, and/or participate in the public outreach event, [General Plan Festival](#) on Saturday, May 11, 2024 from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Attendees will have the chance to learn

about the frameworks, engage in informal discussion about the policies in the frameworks, and provide feedback.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Following review of the draft policy frameworks and development of the draft Land Use Framework, the General Plan Update project will begin preparation of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project. When the General Plan is brought forward to the Planning Commission for a recommendation and to City council for adoption in late 2025 it will include a programmatic EIR for certification.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A. PowerPoint Presentation
Attachment B. Draft Transportation Policy Framework