

# Natural Environment Policy Framework

PC Adhoc 2 Working Group

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# Overview

This Public Draft Policy Framework was prepared for review by the Petaluma community. The first two sections provide important context and are identical in each of the draft policy frameworks. The “Introduction” section briefly explains general plans, Petaluma’s General Plan Update project, policy frameworks, project next steps, and key terminology. The “Policy Framework Foundations” section summarizes the analysis and community input that informed this policy framework.

The remaining sections are the core of this document that the City would like the community to review. The first of these sections, “Summary of Framework Approach,” summarizes the overall approach to the topic addressed by this framework. Next is the main body of the framework, the “Goals, Policies, and Actions” section, which is organized into several goals. Each goal, in turn, has several related policies. And many policies have actions that implement those policies.

## Introduction

### General Plans

State law requires that each city “adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city.” This general plan must contain an “integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies” that appropriately responds to local conditions and circumstances. General plans are organized into different “elements,” or chapters, like conservation, housing, and land use. There is no required time interval at which jurisdictions must update their general plans, though Housing Elements must be updated every eight years.

State law stipulates that capital improvements and certain other planning policies, such as specific plans, zoning actions, development agreements, and subdivisions, must be consistent with the general plan. The general plan also includes policies that relate to a wide variety of matters under local jurisdiction, which can guide future decision-making.

### Petaluma’s General Plan Update

The current Petaluma General Plan was adopted in 2008 and last updated in 2012, and it accounts for a planning period through 2025. Petaluma has experienced a great deal of change since then, so the City initiated an update to the General Plan internally in 2020, and brought a consultant team on to assist with the project in 2021.

Petaluma’s updated General Plan will address many topics, including: natural environment, hazard mitigation, historic preservation, land use, urban design, housing, mobility, parks, facilities, the arts, economic development, and environmental justice. To meet State deadlines, the Housing Element was completed, adopted, and certified by the State in early 2023. Concurrently with the General Plan Update, the City is also developing a Climate Action Plan, the “Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality” (Blueprint); the team has worked to align the two concurrent efforts and will continue to align greenhouse gas reduction strategies with the General Plan elements as the Blueprint moves through the adoption process.

For more information about General Plans and Petaluma’s General Plan Update process, go to <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>.

# Policy Frameworks

## Purpose and Structure

Policy frameworks such as this one outline the proposed General Plan goals, policies, and implementation actions for each topic addressed by the General Plan. They were developed based on:

- The existing General Plan (<https://cityofpetaluma.org/general-plan/>)
- Key findings from the Existing Conditions Reports (see the “Policy Framework Foundations” section below)
- State requirements and guidance
- Related technical, policy, and programmatic resources
- Extensive community input (<https://www.planpetaluma.org/getinvolved>)
- The Vision, Pillars, and Guiding Principles developed based on community input (see the “Policy Framework Foundations” section below)
- Input from the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) (<https://www.planpetaluma.org/gpac-page>)
- Input from City committees, boards, and commissions, and
- Guidance from City staff and consultants.

## Topics Covered

There is a draft Policy Framework for each of the following topics<sup>1</sup>:

- Natural Environment
- Safety
- Flood Resilience
- Land Use & Community Character
- Transportation
- Infrastructure & Utilities
- Public Facilities
- Parks & Recreation
- Historic Resources
- Arts, Culture, and Creativity
- Economic Development
- Noise
- Health Equity and Environmental Justice
- Implementation & Governance.

There are many connections among the topics covered in different frameworks. Generally, the following topics are addressed as follows. This list includes overarching topics and subtopics, and then lists the frameworks that address this topic in brackets. This is not a comprehensive list of topics covered or of intersections among frameworks:

### Climate Change

- Greenhouse gas reduction (Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality, Parks & Recreation, Transportation, Infrastructure & Utilities)
- Mode shift, active transportation, EV charging, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (Transportation)
- Green building<sup>2</sup> (Land Use & Community Character, Public Facilities, Infrastructure & Utilities)
- Low impact development<sup>3</sup> (Natural Environment, Infrastructure & Utilities)
- Climate adaptation (Safety, Flood Resilience, Land Use & Community Character, Health Equity & Environmental Justice)
- Just transition<sup>4</sup> (Economic Development)

## **Ecosystems**

- Habitats, wildlife corridors, & open space (Natural Environment, Parks & Recreation, Transportation)
- Urban forestry<sup>5</sup> (Parks & Recreation, Health Equity and Environmental Justice)

## **Petaluma River and Tributaries**

- Ecology, habitats, & wildlife corridors (Natural Environment)
- Flooding (Safety, Flood Resilience)
- Adjacent land uses (Land Use & Community Character, Parks & Recreation, Historic Resources)
- Trails and transportation (Transportation)
- River Access and Enhancement Plan (Parks & Recreation, Flood Resilience)

## **Stormwater, Water Supply, and Wastewater**

- Watershed and river protection (Natural Environment)
- Flood control (Flood Resilience, Parks & Recreation, Safety)
- Public water, water conservation, drought, & wastewater systems (Infrastructure & Utilities, Safety)

## **Transportation**

- Mobility network<sup>6</sup>, accessibility<sup>7</sup>, safety, and VMT (Transportation, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, Safety)
- Public realm<sup>8</sup> (Land Use & Community Character, Noise)

## **15-Minute Neighborhoods**

- Types, locations, and characteristics (Land Use & Community Character)
- Mobility networks, design, and safety (Transportation)

## **Equity (in addition to the Health Equity and Environmental Justice Framework)**

- Tribal collaboration<sup>9</sup> (Natural Environment, Historic Resources)
- Equitable transportation (Transportation)
- Park and public facilities access (Parks & Recreation, Public Facilities)
- Recreation program access (Parks & Recreation)
- Cultural equity (Arts, Culture, & Creativity)
- Economic justice<sup>10</sup> (Economic Development)
- Community engagement (Parks & Recreation, Implementation & Governance).

## **Next Steps**

The Public Draft Policy Frameworks will be reviewed by the public, Petaluma committees and commissions, the GPAC, and the City Council. Community input and related direction from the City will inform the Draft General Plan, which will also be reviewed by the community before it is presented to the City Council for adoption. A Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared and approved along with the updated General Plan. For the most up-to-date project information and schedule, go to <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>.

## Key Definitions

When reviewing the Policy Frameworks, keep in mind these definitions:

- **Goal:** a general statement that expresses the outcomes towards which planning efforts are directed; often a topic-specific component of the Vision
- **Policy:** a statement of intent or direction that contributes toward achieving a goal and that guides decision-making
- **Action:** a specific activity, procedure, program, or project aimed at implementing a policy.

# Policy Framework Foundations

## Existing Conditions Key Findings

The Existing Conditions Reports for Petaluma’s General Plan Update serve as the technical analysis of diverse dimensions of the city’s status as evaluated in 2021. They provide a detailed analysis of current conditions and provide a data-based foundation for policymaking. The nineteen Existing Conditions Reports as well as a summary presentation can be downloaded from the “Plan Documents” section of the project website: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/documents#ecr-final>.

The following key findings from Existing Conditions Reports informed the preparation of this policy framework:

- Petaluma’s Commitment – Work by both the city’s non-profit community and City staff shall continually demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship. The City’s Climate Action Commission takes proactive steps to address climate change, working towards reducing the City’s carbon footprint and enhancing climate resilience. The Climate Action Plan, the Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality, provides a framework for achieving long-term sustainability goals and identifies projects to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Many committees and commissions prioritize the natural environment and climate action in their work. The Petaluma Wetlands Alliance actively supports the restoration of wetlands and advocates for future sites within the Petaluma River watershed, collaborating with local authorities and environmental groups to educate the public about wetland ecology and its intrinsic value. Daily Acts works in close partnership with City and county agencies to promote environmental and climate policies, while also providing hands-on sustainability programs to empower residents. Friends of the Petaluma River and the Petaluma Watershed Collective are dedicated to the conservation and education surrounding the Petaluma Watershed. The City continues to require dedication and records Open Space Easements in perpetuity over land dedicated through the development review process. The City continues to plan and execute flood reduction projects that create additional open space along the River and creek corridors and reduce the severity and depth of storm events.
- Agencies such as Sonoma County Regional Parks and the California State Parks Department manage multiple parks and open spaces in and around the City of Petaluma. The California State Parks Department manages the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. Sonoma County Regional Parks manages the 256-acre Helen Putnam Regional Park and the 3,400-acre Tolay Lake Park (the largest regional park). All three of these facilities are located outside the jurisdiction of the City but within the greater community known as Petaluma.
- The large wetland ecosystems to the south and west of the City of Petaluma provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants and have economic and community value in the form of groundwater recharge, flood prevention, and recreational use. These wetlands also play an important role in mitigating sea level rise as they provide a buffer between the San Pablo Bay and the city. While these ecosystems lie mostly outside the City’s jurisdiction, the City’s actions regarding the management of river frontage, creeks, and other drainages have the potential to impact the interdependent habitats and resources throughout the Petaluma River watershed.
- There are 13 special-status plant and animal species that have been historically located within the Petaluma Planning Area, including the western pond turtle, steelhead trout, salmonid species, California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), and the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma*

*californiense*), which have critical habitat located within Petaluma's city boundary. Areas along the Petaluma River and its tributaries provide valuable habitat for several of these special status species, as do grassland and oak savannah habitats along the western city limits. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife plays an important role in assisting the City in monitoring key habitats for the benefit of these special status species, as well as providing early consultation services for habitat enhancement projects.

- Petaluma lies within a broad network of natural lands protected from development through a variety of mechanisms including conservation easements, Williamson Act contracts, City-owned open spaces and Urban Separators, the City's Urban Growth Boundary, and County-established Community Separators. Land managers include the County of Sonoma, Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the City of Petaluma. These protected lands serve the dual purpose of containing urban sprawl and preserving corridors of natural lands vital to the free movement of wildlife throughout the region. These wildlife corridors serve as critical connections between habitat patches for a variety of species, which supports biodiversity and ecological health for the region. In addition to regional wildlife corridors, local naturalists have identified local wildlife corridors that facilitate the movement of local species through the southwestern hills and agricultural land to the northeast of the city.
- The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District has acquired land in the form of conservation easements to protect agricultural areas and natural resources to establish a greenbelt primarily north of Adobe Road and east of the city limits. The District also contributed to the funding of Petaluma River Park, and it has accepted open space easements in riparian corridor/flood retention improvement projects and non-development open space areas of the city dedicated as part of a project entitlement process.
- The headwaters of the Petaluma River, including Lichau, Willow Brook, Liberty, Wilson, and Marin Creeks lie in the rural residential, protected natural and working agricultural lands surrounding the city, making the city and its urban riparian corridors of Corona, Capri, Deer, Thompson, Lynch, Washington, East Washington, and Adobe creeks, both hydrologically and ecologically connected to these lands.
- Prior to European settlement in present-day Sonoma County, the region was inhabited by the Coast Miwok, a geographically and culturally distinct subgroup of the larger Miwok Native American group, who made their home in the areas known today as Marin County and southern Sonoma County. A number of Coast Miwok villages existed in the modern-day area of Petaluma. One of these villages was named "Péta Lúuma" and was located to the east of current-day Petaluma and the Petaluma River. "Péta Lúuma," which means "hillside ridge" or "hillside back," was adapted to "Petaluma" by the Spanish and was the name given to the Rancho Petaluma land grant in 1834. From Rancho Petaluma, the name was later adopted by the growing town.
- Petaluma River Benefits – The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) list existing beneficial uses for the Petaluma River, Willow Brook Creek, and Adobe Creek in the Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the San Francisco Bay Basin. Existing beneficial uses for the Petaluma River include cold and warm freshwater habitat, marine habitat, fish migration and spawning, preservation of rare and endangered species, and contact and non-contact water recreation. Open space along the river's banks offers opportunities for recreational hiking and biking as well as flood protection.
- Petaluma Watershed – The Petaluma River and its tributaries drain an area of approximately 146 square miles, 113 square miles (77%) of which are in Sonoma County. The city is located near

the center of the 87 square mile Sonoma Water/City of Petaluma Basin Zone 2A. The perennial length of the Petaluma River begins with the confluence of Liberty and Willow Brook Creeks, flowing through the city and receiving flows from Corona, Capri, Deer, Lynch, Washington, and Adobe creeks from the east side of the Petaluma River and from Thompson Creek and various piped drainages from the west side of the river. The topography of, and the tidal influence of the San Francisco Bay on, the lower Petaluma River watershed makes the river and its tributaries susceptible to flooding.

- Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan – The Plan was adopted in 1996 and readopted with the General Plan 2025 in 2008. The Plan includes objectives and policies intended to encourage developments that incorporate the river as a central feature; educate community members on the river's ecological, historical, and cultural significance; create city gateways at key entry points to Petaluma; create a continuous trail system that unites the river corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians; and restore, link, and protect existing wildlife habitats and natural areas along the river. The Plan envisions both immediate and long-term implementation, with private development activities driving most phases over time.
- Urban Separator and Regional Connections –The City has developed an extensive connected greenbelt along the eastern boundary of the city. The City has worked to connect its open spaces and trails to regional resources.

## Related Vision, Pillars, and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement, Pillars, Guiding Principles, and Supporting Concepts reflect community engagement input that occurred during the Visioning Phase of the General Plan Update in 2021. On February 17, 2022, the GPAC voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council accept these Vision materials as the guidance for the ongoing General Plan Update planning process, and the City Council accepted them on March 21, 2022.

- 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 the broad direction and pathways to achieve the vision and honor community values, with a focus on the community's specific challenges and opportunities.

The Vision Statement, Pillars, and Guiding Principles and Supporting Concepts can be downloaded from the "Plan Documents" section of the project website:

<https://www.planpetaluma.org/documents#gpuvision>. Together, the Vision Statement, Pillars, and Guiding Principles and Supporting Concepts provide the basis for the goals, policies, and programs included in the General Plan Public Draft Policy Frameworks.

The following verbatim excerpts from the Vision Statement, Pillars, and Guiding Principles informed the preparation of this policy framework:

### Vision and Pillars

**Petaluma is a vibrant river town rooted in the relationship between our people and the land.**

We acknowledge that Petaluma is the traditional territory and unceded lands of the Coast Miwok peoples. We appreciate that our name springs from those tribes who first called this land home. Our identity also evolves from our deep agricultural roots, historic downtown, living river, and preserved open spaces. We

honor this legacy to celebrate, protect, and restore our natural landscapes and habitats both within and outside our community. Together, we sustain a resilient ecosystem for humans, wildlife, and the earth.

**We relish our spirited, distinctive neighborhoods where we live, work, and play.**

We enjoy active, animated communities throughout our city along with an energetic historic downtown. 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.

**Geographic context and sense of place.**

Petaluma is distinguished by its topography, watersheds, coastal climate, surrounding greenbelt, and intact oak and riparian habitats. Petaluma’s community character stems from its agricultural heritage, history as a river town, historic neighborhoods, legacy of growth management, sense of community, and engaged and forward-thinking population. The General Plan must preserve Petaluma’s distinctive sense of place.

## Guiding Principles

There are a total of sixteen Guiding Principles, each with multiple, lettered Supporting Concepts. The following Guiding Principles informed this policy framework:

2. Preserve and enhance Petaluma’s natural environment and surrounding open spaces.

*Agriculture is outside city limits – do we mention interface with Ag?*

3. Protect and restore the natural function of the Petaluma River and its tributaries while expanding complementary recreational, entertainment, and civic opportunities.

9. Prioritize infill development in appropriate locations throughout the city.

11. Honor, celebrate, and preserve Petaluma’s heritage and historic character and its place in the modern city.

16. Be a leader in advancing these guiding principles within the region and beyond.

# Summary of Framework Approach

This framework was developed to fulfill the regulatory requirements that apply to the open space and conservation elements under California law including Government Code section 65560, which establishes open space specific requirements, and Government Code Section 65302(d), which establishes requirements to prevent erosion, manage flooding and stormwater runoff, and protect watersheds. Additionally, the framework addresses the requirements of Senate Bill 1425, which mandates the cross-element consideration of climate resilience, rewilding opportunities, and the social, economic, and racial equity in relation to open space.

The goals and policies of this framework address the natural environment through stewardship and preservation of open space and connected natural lands (Goal ENV-2), water resource management (Goal ENV-3), use of green infrastructure to promote climate resiliency (Goal ENV-4), and the protection of local Native American heritage and conservation principles (Goal ENV-5).

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### Goal ENV-1: Community Integrated with Nature

Can we expand on this? Explanations of planning policies/documents/important decisions in the future?

Explore enhanced interconnectivity of trails. Explore land use changes that effectively integrate open space throughout residential communities

Petaluma is a city that demonstrates its commitment to sustainability and ecological harmony by integrating development patterns and natural areas so that community members see, experience, and celebrate their connection to the natural world.

#### Policy ENV-1.1: Environmental Stewardship

Demonstrate environmental stewardship in decision-making, support community initiatives, and integrated approaches to planning.

### Goal ENV-2: Healthy, Protected, and Productive

#### Natural Lands

Continue to develop a cohesive network of healthy, protected, and productive natural lands that facilitates the coexistence of people and the natural environment and **more conscientious partnership with non-human organisms** including plants, wildlife, fungi, and insects.

#### Policy ENV-2.1: ~~Create Network of Healthy Habitats~~ Create Network of Open Spaces

Facilitate the connection of open spaces, urban separators, and conservation easements to create a network of healthy habitats around and throughout the city.

**Action ENV-2.1.1:** Identify optimal locations to protect additional lands to expand the Urban Separator and create connections between City-owned open spaces, **public right of way corridors**, the Urban Separator, and other conservation easements to create an integrated network of protected open space

around and throughout the city.

**Action ENV-2.1.2:** Continue to seek new opportunities to conserve more open space with the Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation, Sonoma Water, and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District by creating a coordinated plan for identifying and procuring land for preservation.

**Action ENV-2.1.3:** Engage with neighboring property owners and community partners to develop a vision for stewardship and maintenance of neighborhood open spaces, **public right of way street corridors**, and urban separator improvements.

**Action ENV-2.1.4:** Investigate a program to match funding used to acquire new land that will contribute to a connected network of open spaces around and throughout the city.

- We should make a specific reference to ATP when we talk about trails and open space corridors
- Street, Sidewalks & Trails need shade!
- Enhancing safety and accessibility for all ages and abilities (ADA) to open space corridors, connectors, trails
- Planning Dept application review - how can each new development application/project contribute to interconnected open space networks

## **Policy ENV-2.2: ~~Create Network of Open Spaces~~ Create Network of Healthy Habitats**

Should this be combined with above Goal ENV-2.1?

Identify opportunities to create a network of interconnected open spaces to create a network of healthy and functional wildlife corridors within the 147 square mile Petaluma River Watershed. Include multi-use trails to increase residents' access to open spaces where feasible.

**Action ENV-2.2.1:** Coordinate with State and local agencies to enhance tributary corridors within the broader Petaluma River watershed to provide improved bank stabilization, stormwater retention, and habitat quality.

**Action ENV-2.2.2:** Identify trails and open space networks that can be improved and expanded upon to increase access to green space and provide improved connections as extended wildlife corridors.

**Action ENV-2.2.x:** work with local organizations to identify and map existing wildlife corridors

**Action ENV-2.2.3:** Prioritize improvements and expansion of trails, **public right of way corridors**, and open space networks through an equity lens, with a focus on areas and communities that have limited access to open space, lack sufficient tree canopy coverage or are identified as Equity Priority Areas ~~where marginalized communities that may~~ will benefit from increased access to open spaces.

## **Policy ENV-2.3: Preserve Open Space**

Expand to include strategies beyond TDR!

Explore the continued use of transfer of development rights (TDR) in infill development projects to preserve open space land.

**Action ENV-2.3.1:** Study the feasibility of a voluntary TDR program to promote infill development and preserve open space areas within the municipal code. If feasible:

- Pair TDR with density bonus incentives for the receiving area.
- Establish standardized procedures for the permanent preservation of land, such as conservation easements, in the sending area.
- Establish specific procedures for utilizing a TDR program to facilitate the creation of floodable recreation areas and dedicated retention basins where needed.

**Action ENV-2.3.x:** Define and Identify “Priority Open Space” parcels within city limits to include city-owned and private properties. Spaces will be analyzed in the context of wildlife corridors, biodiversity and proximity to existing open space land uses.

### **Policy ENV-2.4: Maintain Natural Lands**

We need to define “Natural Lands” – is this just open space with no other defined land use? Is this referencing city-owned/public lands that are distinct from parks?

Are we implying ecosystem restoration, or land enhancement? Helpful to use those terms

Provide for continued stewardship, management, and maintenance of natural lands and open space throughout Petaluma.

**Action ENV-2.4.1:** Develop a plan for natural resource management and maintenance of natural lands, including definitions and indicators of ecosystem health, and an implementation plan for City staff including the following steps:

- Identify a responsible department lead to oversee implementation and coordination.
- Develop a community involvement strategy including key partners, stipend programs, and an engagement plan for community members.
- Track and pursue regional, state, and federal funding to implement projects identified in the River Access and Enhancement Plan and other natural resource strategies.
- Conduct an annual progress report of progress and findings from community engagement activities.

This kind of baseline and ongoing analysis would mesh well with a process of identifying Priority Open Spaces mentioned above

**Action ENV-2.4.2:** Engage and coordinate with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR), especially regarding matters of open space management including native plantings, habitat restoration, and interpretive sites and signage.

**Action ENV-2.4.3:** Collaborate with FIGR to identify open space for tribal use, plant and preserve tribe-preferred species, and provide for harvesting by Tribal members of native materials.

**Action ENV-2.4.4:** Monitor the city’s natural lands and open spaces for habitat health and the presence of special status species.

- fold into Action ENV-2.4.1? or should habitat preservation and wildlife corridors be broken out into its own goal?

**Action ENV-2.4.x:** Continue soil testing of “natural lands” to be performed by Parks and/or Public

## Goal ENV-3: Water Resource Management

Harmonize policies and actions in this Goal with the Utilities & Infrastructure framework – Section ENV-3.4 uses strong language that could replace comparable sections of Utilities & Infrastructure

Use a proactive and integrated approach to water resource management.

### Policy ENV-3.1: Minimize Erosion and Runoff

Minimize soil erosion and discharge of sediments into surface runoff, drainage systems, and water bodies.

**Action ENV-3.1.1:** Continue to require grading plans that address soil erosion and on-site sediment retention.

**Action ENV-3.1.2:** Continue to require the incorporation of Low-impact Development (LID) and other site design elements that slow stormwater flows and facilitate infiltration.

**Action ENV-3.1.3:** Review and, as needed, update the City's Municipal Code every 10 years to incorporate standards and best practices for reducing erosion and sediment discharge into local water bodies.

**Action ENV-3.1.4:** Develop partnerships with regional organizations and landowners within the Petaluma River watershed to install infrastructure to mitigate pollution and sedimentation associated with agricultural and stormwater runoff, including rainwater catchment and storage systems.

**Action ENV-3.1.5:** Advise property owners to ensure the proper management and maintenance of privately owned drainages that flow into the Petaluma River. Assistance may include the creation of design standards for land use and development adjacent to watercourses and a manual for the maintenance of riparian areas for property owners.

**Action ENV-3.1.6:** Work with the State Lands Commission, State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sonoma Water, and other jurisdictional agencies on the preservation/enhancement of the Petaluma River watershed.

### Policy ENV-3.2: Protect the River and Creeks

Preserve the wildlife and recreational benefits associated with the Petaluma River and tributary creeks by protecting the river from pollution and contamination in coordination with local key partners and river-focused non-profit organizations.

**Action ENV-3.2.x:** Identify sources of pollution to the watershed & Petaluma River in coordination with regional bodies, RWCQB, etc

**Action ENV-3.2.1:** Update the Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan and include creeks.

- Review existing setback distances to the river and creeks.
- Create design guidelines for project setbacks related to site usage (parking, service, building, open space)

- **Action ENV-3.2.x or is this included implicitly?** Design a river connectivity plan to encourage connection between people and the River. Plan a network of trails to river access points and establish viewing points (ie. observation decks) that integrates to existing trail/street networks - make sure this is part of the PRAEP, Alternative Transportation Network Plan. Where can we collaborate with the developing Greenway plan?

**Action ENV-3.2.2:** Implement the actions outlined in the San Francisco Bay Water Board's Basin Plan intended to reduce the total maximum daily load (TMDL) for bacteria in the Petaluma River Watershed.

**Action ENV-3.2.3:** Develop an educational program focused on informing residents about the value of the Petaluma River and strategies for preservation.

**Action ENV-3.2.4:** Bolster signage at key access points along the Petaluma River to educate users on the importance of this valuable natural resource and habitat, support informed community interaction, and discourage behaviors that may disrupt the ecology of the area.

**Action ENV-3.2.5:** Train staff to identify and prevent ecologically harmful behavior from community members.

**Action ENV-3.2.6:** Develop a Riverkeepers program that acts as a neighborhood water watch group for the Petaluma River by empowering community members working with the City to protect the water quality of the Petaluma River.

### Policy ENV-3.3: Prevent Development Pollutant Discharge

Continue to require that all development activities be constructed and maintained in accordance with Phase 2 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements.

**Action ENV-3.3.1:** Continue to review, and conditionally approve where appropriate, all development permits to ensure compliance with NPDES Phase 2 requirements.

**Action ENV-3.3.2:** Maintain, update as needed, and implement the City's Storm Water Management Plan to retain a current stormwater discharge permit with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

**Action ENV-3.3.3:** Explore the feasibility of a funding mechanism, such as a stormwater utility fee or benefit assessment district, to ensure a dedicated source of funds is available for all surface water drainage system maintenance and improvement needs.

- Was this included in Infrastructure framework? If not, why not?

### Policy ENV-3.4: Promote Sustainable Development Practices

Promote sustainable urban development through the adoption and implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) strategies and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for new construction projects, aimed at safeguarding and enhancing water quality in local creeks and the Petaluma River.

**Action ENV-3.4.x:** Consider using LEED-ND certification process as guidance to achieve best environmental practices and outcomes.

**Action ENV-3.4.1:** Consider creating a Stormwater Guidebook to assist property owners and developers in designing projects to best incorporate effective LID strategies for various conditions and project types in the city.

**Action ENV-3.4.2:** Adopt and enforce the mandatory incorporation of LID techniques and BMPs in all new development projects, ensuring compliance with established guidelines and standards (is this phrase a catch-all for city and/or outside agency guidelines and standards? Anything specific we can reference?) for stormwater management, erosion control, and water quality protection.

**Action ENV-3.4.3:** ~~Establish~~ Refer to/Promote existing educational programs to inform developers, contractors, and the public about the benefits and methods of LID integration, promoting awareness and fostering a culture of responsible urban development and stewardship of the watershed.

**Action ENV-3.4.4:** Develop financial incentives, such as fee reductions, to encourage developers to adopt advanced LID practices and go beyond minimum regulatory requirements, incentivizing innovation in sustainable design and construction.

**Action ENV-3.4.5:** Partner with regional agencies and implement a robust monitoring and inspection system to assess the effectiveness of LID measures, ensuring ongoing compliance with water quality standards, and taking corrective action in cases of ineffective techniques.

Use superior language/references in this section to inform Infrastructure framework

## Goal ENV-4: Green Infrastructure

Maximize the use of plants and other elements of the natural environment to connect and support natural spaces and mitigate climate impacts.

Trees (and other native herbaceous plants) should be integrated into this section as a separate policy item or preferably have another goal in this framework. Trees are the original green infrastructure! Not good idea to keep tree policy only within "Parks" framework

### Policy ENV-4.1: Utilize Green Infrastructure

Encourage the use of green infrastructure techniques to capture, slow, treat, and facilitate the infiltration of stormwater runoff, provide environmental and habitat benefits, and improve connection and integration with natural systems.

**Action ENV-4.1.1:** Identify and prioritize high-impact capital improvement projects that integrate green infrastructure principles.

**Action ENV-4.1.2:** Develop green infrastructure on City facilities to increase public exposure through municipal demonstration systems, including aspects such as green walls and roofs, bioswales, and other green infrastructure systems.

**Action ENV-4.1.3:** Explore a storm drain impact fee reduction program for property owners who install green roofs, onsite retention, rain gardens, bio-swales, curb cuts (should this be here? Do we want private property owners doing this?! What is the context?), permeable pavements, and other techniques intended to reduce the flow of stormwater off-site.

- Street tree planting and maintenance included as part of fee reduction program

**Action ENV-4.1.4:** Develop design guidance for green infrastructure strategies such as downspout disconnection, rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, and green walls and roofs to minimize water needs and maximize green infrastructure benefits.

- Develop tree planting and maintenance guidelines to maximize benefits

**Action ENV-4.1.5:** Develop a robust list of native, drought-tolerant, and climate-resilient tree and plant species that are compatible with various green stormwater management methods and at-grade landscaping.

**Action ENV-4.1.6:** Provide educational materials for property owners to adapt their properties to include green infrastructure techniques, including green stormwater management techniques, to minimize urban heat island effects and take advantage of all green infrastructure benefits. ~~include green stormwater management techniques to minimize stormwater runoff. Prioritize those neighborhoods at elevated risk due to extreme heat exposure, such as neighborhoods with limited access to air conditioning, and higher concentrations of young children and seniors.~~ (Prioritization qualifier is confusing and unnecessary – is this supposed to be an equity consideration? If so, inconsistent with other similar sections.)

**Action ENV-4.1.7:** Develop neighborhood-specific and ecologically informed vegetation and landscaping guidance to support an integrated ecological network.

- Seems infeasible to generate plans by neighborhood. This could be wrapped into Urban Forestry policy/goal. Oblique mention of trees and plants that could be better explained elsewhere

## Goal ENV-X: Urban Forestry

## Goal ENV-5: Native American Heritage

Honor and protect Petaluma’s Native American heritage through community consultation and resource prioritization.

### Policy ENV-5.1: Partner with Native American Tribes

Expand to include tribes/peoples beyond FIGR?

Partner with Native American tribes within Sonoma County to steward and celebrate cultural heritage, assets, lands, and sites.

**Action ENV-5.1.1:** Collaborate with FIGR and other local tribal organizations to guide the management of natural and cultural resources and landscapes of significance to local tribal partners.

**Action ENV-5.1.2:** Conduct Native American consultation consistent with most recent regulations when new development is proposed in potentially culturally sensitive areas.

**Action ENV-5.1.3:** ~~Consider integrating~~ Research and integrate Native American practices into ecosystem management.

### Policy ENV-5.2: Promote Local Native American Heritage

Educate the community about Petaluma’s Native American heritage.

**Action ENV-5.2.1:** Partner with local Native Americans to host events that present and celebrate the City’s tribal and cultural heritage.

**Action ENV-5.2.2:** Host an annual workshop in which tribal representatives educate City staff about local tribal resources and heritage and ways to incorporate an understanding of that heritage into their work.

# Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The Flood Resilience and Land Use policy frameworks will be released after the other frameworks. These Frameworks relied on the development of a comprehensive update to the City’s floodplain model, which was completed in late 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Environmentally responsible and resource-efficient planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition of buildings

<sup>3</sup> Techniques to increase water infiltration, reduce runoff, and improve water quality

<sup>4</sup> The protection of workers’ rights and livelihoods while economies are shifting to sustainable production, combating climate change, and protecting biodiversity

<sup>5</sup> The management of trees in urban settings

<sup>6</sup> The system of streets, walkways, trails, and railroads used to move goods and people

<sup>7</sup> The ease of reaching destinations by people of all abilities

<sup>8</sup> Public space that is open and accessible to the general public, including roads, trails, public squares, and parks

<sup>9</sup> Communication and coordination among local government and Native American Tribes

<sup>10</sup> Creating opportunities for every person to have a dignified, productive, and creative life