



---

DATE: May 9, 2024

TO: Senior Advisory Committee

FROM: Brian Oh, Community Development Director  
Heather Hines, Special Projects Manager  
Christina Paul, Principal Policy Planner

SUBJECT: Receive a presentation and provide feedback related to the Draft Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy Framework as part of foundational work on the General Plan Update

---

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Senior Advisory Committee receive a presentation from staff and the consultant team on the draft Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice 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 Committee 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?
- Other than the Equity Priority Areas identified in Figure 1, are there additional low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation?
- Does the framework address the challenges residents face in reducing their exposure to pollution and accessing health, social, and other services through the City?

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**

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 Health and Environmental Justice. The Existing Conditions Report found that there are eight census tracts identified as disadvantaged communities. As defined by the State, a DAC is "a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation." For purpose of the GPU, Petaluma refers to DACs as "Equity Priority Areas" in order to center equity and equitable investments as part of the general plan process.

The three most prevalent burdens within the City’s eight EPAs are highway related air pollution, low proximity to high-frequency transit, and traffic impacts. As such, the Existing Conditions Report lifted up transportation concerns as a key opportunity for the General Plan’s Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice element. The draft Transportation Policy Framework is available at Attachment 3 for additional background for those interested in that adjacent topic.

One specific EPA (Northeast and North McDowell Boulevard) were identified as being particularly affected and ranked high for several health and health and environmental burdens and therefore this area should also be a focus of the Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Element.

### **Vision Pillars, and Guiding Principles**

Simultaneous 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](http://planpetaluma.org)).

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

#### *Vision*

- We are caring and connected. We celebrate our differences by providing inclusive community spaces for the diverse people that form Petaluma and by cultivating a sense of belonging.
- We welcome newcomers seeking refuge, a place to call home, and new opportunity.
- Our engaged residents and local government ensure equity, livability, opportunity, and access for all residents.
- We embrace each other’s cultures, lift each other up, and move forward together.

- We invest in each other. We are a community where children and youth thrive, families in all forms are supported, and our elders flourish as they age in place. We provide plentiful and varied housing choices, convenient access to healthy local food, and an educational system that builds leaders. We support all residents with accessible city services.
- 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.

### *Pillars*

- Equity, Justice and Demographic Changes. Current demographic trends indicate that Petaluma will have an older, more diverse population well into the future. Petaluma commits 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 advances bold action in terms of housing, transportation, public spaces and intergenerational and multi-cultural programs in order to take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges as they arise.
- Participatory Decision-Making and Government Transparency. Success in these endeavors will depend on an engaged community that participates in decision making and a government that is open and transparent. The General Plan must reflect the perspectives of Petaluma's diverse population, ensuring that opportunities to engage in public dialogue are accessible to all and setting the stage to address and solve future challenges with integrity, creativity, and collaboration.

### *Guiding Principles*

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

- Promote social and economic justice to address structural social and economic inequities and racism.
- Ensure the health and wellness of all residents.
- Physically and psychologically integrate and connect the East and West sides of town.
- Create a welcoming, affordable, accessible, and age- and family-friendly city.

- Prioritize cycling, walking, transit, and other transportation alternatives over automobiles.

## **Policy Frameworks**

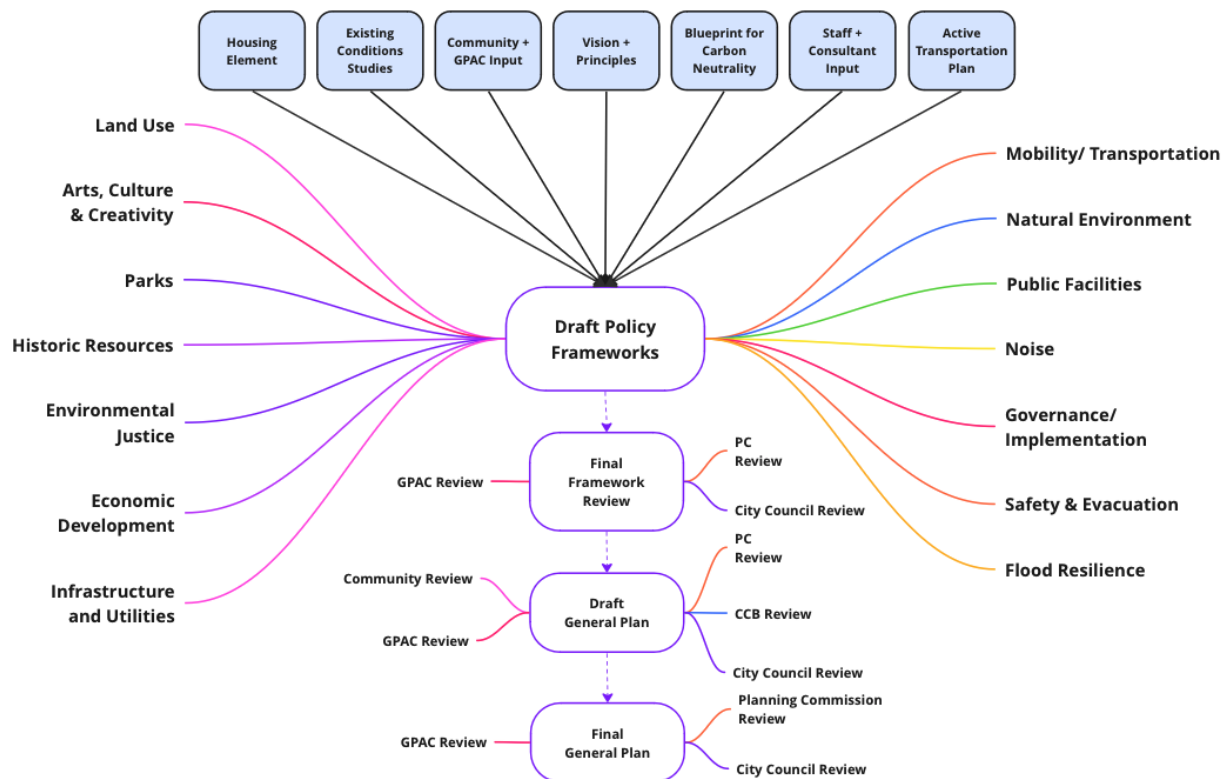
### *Context and Foundation*

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. 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 Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy Framework addresses the required elements that are needed for compliance with state and federal regulations, including:

- Compliance with Senate Bill 1000
- Adoption of an Environmental Justice Element, including the following topics:
  - Reduce pollution exposure
  - Promote public facilities
  - Promote food access
  - Promote safe and sanitary homes
  - Promote physical activity
  - Promote civic engagement

The Draft Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy Framework has nine goals:

- Goal HEEJ-1: Public Health
- Goal HEEJ-2: Leader in Equity
- Goal HEEJ-3: Pollution Reduction
- Goal HEEJ-4: Equitable Access to Services + Facilities
- Goal HEEJ-5: Access to Healthy Food
- Goal HEEJ-6: Safe and Sanitary Housing
- Goal HEEJ-7: Physical Activity
- Goal HEEJ-8: Engaged Community
- Goal HEEJ-9: Age Friendly

These goals are supported by 29 policies as well as actions/programs that support the goals. The goals, policies, and actions/programs are listed in the Draft Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy Framework which is available on [planpetaluma.org](http://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 Senior Advisory Committee provide feedback on the Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy 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?
- Other than the Equity Priority Areas identified in Figure 1, are there additional low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation?
- Does the framework address the challenges residents face in reducing their exposure to pollution and accessing health, social, and other services through the City?

### Other Opportunities to Participate

Members of the Committees who attend this meeting are asked to provide feedback on the Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice 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
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 June 13, 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	TBD	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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A. PowerPoint Presentation

Attachment B. Draft Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Policy Framework link: <https://tinyurl.com/3dv5a92u>

Attachment C. Draft Transportation Policy Framework link: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4d4ymc>