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April 11, 2025

Petaluma City Council
11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952

Re: Item 1: Workshop on the Draft Land Use Policy Framework

Dear Mayor McDonnell, Vice Mayor Nau, Councilmembers, and Staff,

As the City considers updates to the General Plan, we appreciate the comprehensive approach being taken to shape Petaluma's future. We recognize the importance of balancing housing, transportation, sustainability, and economic development, and we support policies that promote more housing opportunities, encourage infill development, and improve walkability and transit accessibility.

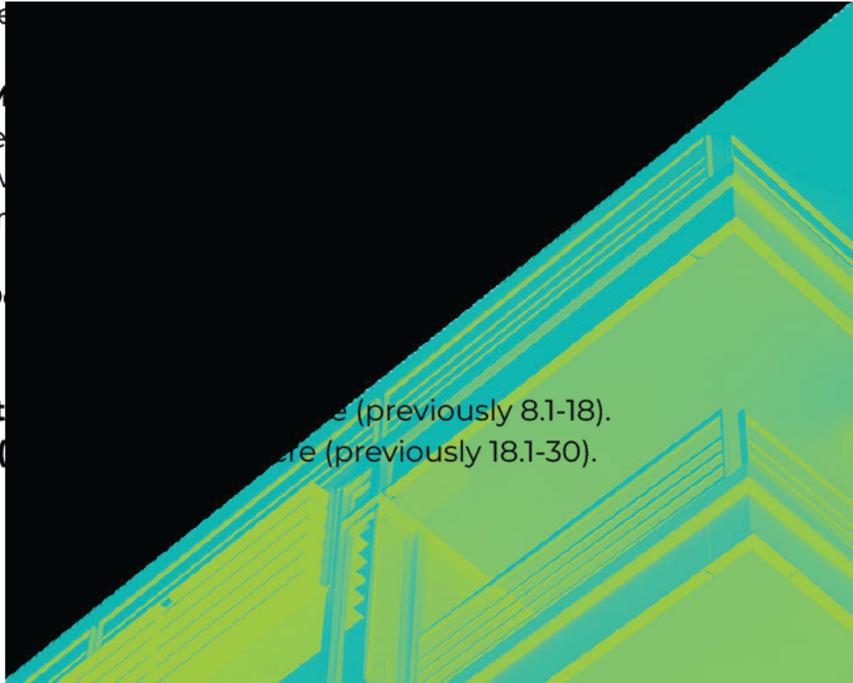
We respectfully urge the City Council to prioritize and adopt the following policies and zoning designations that align with these goals—and to ensure that the forward-thinking changes originally proposed under the Downtown Housing and Economic Development Overlay for Zones B and C are preserved and carried forward into the General Plan.

Supporting 15-Minute Neighborhoods & Transit-Oriented Development

- **Blueprint Action TLUC-1:** Expands housing capacity in transit-oriented areas by increasing heights and densities.
- **Policy LU-6:** Establishes complete neighborhoods that mix housing, jobs, and amenities.
- **Policy LU-11:** Encourages walkable corridors.
- **Urban Corridor Mixed Use (UC-MU):** Ensures compact, transit-oriented development.
- **Station Mixed Use (ST-MU):** Allows for high-density development supporting high-density development.

Expanding Housing Density to Meet Demand

- **Updated Residential Densities:**
 - **Medium Density Residential (MDR):** (previously 8.1-18).
 - **High Density Residential (HDR):** (previously 18.1-30).



- **Station Mixed Use (ST-MU):** 60-125 du/acre, up to 8 stories.
- **Policy LU-3.2:** Encourages development at the **upper end of density limits** to maximize land efficiency.
- **Housing Element Program 4:** Raises minimum densities in multifamily and mixed-use zones to ensure housing production keeps pace with demand.
- **SB 10 Provisions:** Allows up to **10 units per parcel by-right** in transit-rich or infill areas.

Strengthening Infill Development & Mixed-Use Flexibility

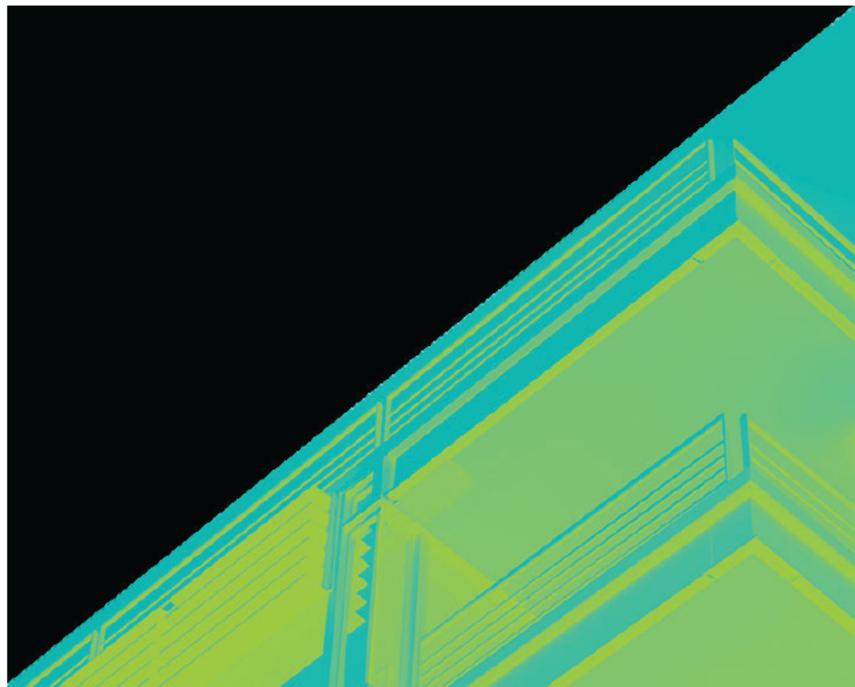
- **Policy LU-3:** Supports incremental infill, including **plex housing, ADUs, and redevelopment of underutilized parcels.**
- **Urban Core Mixed Use (CORE-MU):** Allows **50-95 du/acre, up to 6 stories,** encouraging dense, mixed-use infill.
- **Mini-Center Mixed Use (MC-MU):** Allows **12-30 du/acre, up to 3 stories,** enabling small-scale neighborhood infill.

These policies will help expand housing opportunities, support smart growth, and create vibrant, walkable communities while ensuring Petaluma grows in a sustainable way. We encourage the City Council to prioritize these provisions in the final General Plan update to promote housing affordability and sustainable development.

In partnership,
Stephanie Picard Bowen

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Bowen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deputy Director, Generation Housing



From: [Spencer Stuart](#)
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment — General Plan Update — Land Use Map Concerns & Requests
Date: Monday, April 14, 2025 11:33:10 AM

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

Dear Mayor, City Councilmembers, and City Staff —

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment regarding the General Plan Update and proposed Land Use Alternatives.

I appreciate the considerable work that has gone into this process. However, I would like to raise several concerns and respectfully request clarification before the Preferred Land Use Map is finalized — particularly as a property owner along Petaluma Boulevard South within the corridor between I Street and Mountain View Avenue.

1. Community Engagement — Sufficiency of Participation Relative to Impact

For a General Plan Update of this scale — guiding Petaluma's growth and development through 2050 — I am concerned that the community engagement sample size appears limited relative to the significance of the decisions being made.

Based on the materials provided, approximately 500 participants engaged directly in the land use alternatives process. With a city population of approximately 58,800 residents, this equates to over 99% of Petaluma residents who did not directly engage.

For decisions of this magnitude — impacting property rights, development patterns, and neighborhood character — I respectfully question whether this level of participation sufficiently represents the broader community's voice.

2. Petaluma Boulevard South — Omission of Parcels Between I Street and Mountain View

In reviewing Attachment 3 (Briefing Book) and the April 14, 2025 Staff Report, the recommended land use changes for Petaluma Boulevard South appear to stop abruptly two parcels past I Street. There is no analysis provided for the intervening stretch of parcels between I Street and Mountain View Avenue — including my property.

This omission is particularly concerning given:

The detailed planning and re-designation efforts applied to other segments of the Petaluma Boulevard South corridor.

The fact that properties within this omitted segment share similar MU2 zoning, frontage conditions, and adjacency to residential neighborhoods.

Moreover, the April 14, 2025 Staff Report states that approximately 160 properties were directly notified via mail on April 4, 2025 of proposed land use changes within the Areas of Change. **As of today's date, I have not received any such notice from the City — despite my parcel clearly falling within the area of proposed changes.**

I respectfully request clarification on:

Why parcels between I Street and Mountain View were omitted from formal analysis and recommendation;

Whether these parcels are intended to retain their existing MU2 designation or be subject to future re-designation;

When property owners like myself will receive individualized notification of any proposed changes affecting development potential;

Whether transitional development standards will apply to these parcels where MU2 properties abut lower-density residential neighborhoods.

Given the long-term implications of the General Plan Update, I believe these clarifications are both necessary and appropriate prior to adoption of the Preferred Land Use Map.

3. Assessment and Notification for Existing MU2 Properties Being Re-Designated

Many existing MU2 parcels citywide are proposed for conversion to new mixed-use designations with different standards for building height, density, minimum active ground floor use, and development form.

I would like to understand whether an assessment has been completed for these properties — particularly where MU2 parcels directly abut residential neighborhoods (R1, R2, R3, PUD).

Additionally, I question why property owners in these areas — especially those within omitted segments like Petaluma Boulevard South — have not received individualized notification of these proposed changes, when far less impactful design review projects require mailed notice under existing City policy.

4. Transition Standards — NC-MU Parcels Abutting Residential Zones

Clarification is needed on how transition standards — including setbacks, stepdowns, and height limits — will be applied to NC-MU parcels abutting residential zones.

Without clear, codified standards, future development proposals risk uncertainty, unnecessary variance requests, and potential neighborhood conflicts.

5. Minimum Ground Floor Active Use Requirement — NC-MU

The proposed minimum 0.10 FAR active ground floor use requirement for NC-MU parcels should be reconsidered in areas directly adjacent to R1, R2, or R3 residential zoning.

While I support the goal of encouraging active street-level uses, this requirement may create unintended feasibility challenges for smaller properties or residential-adjacent parcels where commercial activity may not be viable or appropriate.

6. Request for Parcel-Specific Land Use Map Transparency

Given the magnitude of these proposed changes, I respectfully request that the City publish a parcel-specific summary map — clearly identifying which parcels are proposed for re-designation — prior to final adoption.

This level of transparency will allow property owners and neighbors to engage meaningfully and understand the implications of the plan.

7. Request for Public Review of Zoning Code Update

As many of the General Plan designations will require significant updates to the City's zoning code, I encourage the City to commit to a robust public process focused on reviewing the draft zoning code updates.

8. Implementation Concerns — Qualified Staff & Subject Matter Expertise

Finally, I would like to raise a concern regarding future implementation and administration of the General Plan — particularly given the current staffing structure of the City's Planning and Building Department.

As a property owner who interacts with City staff on land use matters, I am concerned about the qualifications and expertise of the contract staff (M-Group) currently occupying many roles within the Department.

Given the complexity of these proposed changes, I respectfully request clarification on:

Who will serve as the City's subject matter experts (SMEs) for property owners, residents, and developers;

Whether there will be dedicated, qualified planners available to provide accurate guidance;

How the City intends to ensure consistency, accuracy, and technical expertise at the public counter in the years ahead.

General Plans are about vision — but they are also about trust. I urge the City to hold itself to the highest standards of transparency, community engagement, and respect for Petaluma's diverse neighborhoods, property owners, and long-standing community character.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Spencer M. Stuart
Petaluma Resident

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