



CITY OF OAKLAND
Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development

TO: Princess Allen, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
FROM: Lakshmi Rajagopalan, Planner IV, Strategic Planning Division, Planning and Building Department
DATE: January 24, 2022
SUBJECT: REQUEST THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO RECEIVE THE INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON THE CITY OF OAKLAND'S GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS.

SUMMARY

The City of Oakland Planning & Building Department (PBD), in coordination with multiple other City departments, is leading a Citywide comprehensive General Plan Update planning process that will allow Oaklanders to come together to create a visionary blueprint for a just and fair Oakland.

Staff has prepared this Report to inform the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission about the General Plan Update. This report provides an overview of the General Plan, required topics to be addressed, project schedule, and the community engagement process.

FISCAL IMPACT

Since this report is informational only, no fiscal impacts are included.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City of Oakland's General Plan is a policy document and consisting of various topical "Elements"; and establishes a citywide vision and consistent direction for city policy and future development. It reflects community priorities, values, and includes supporting goals, policies, and implementation measures to achieve the community's vision.

It has been over 20 years since the City of Oakland has comprehensively updated its various General Plan Elements. Given this length of time and the critical need to update the General Plan, the Planning & Building Department (PBD), in coordination with multiple other City departments, is leading a Citywide comprehensive General Plan Update planning process that will allow Oaklanders to come together to create a visionary blueprint for a just and fair Oakland.

In the fall of 2020, the City convened a series of listening sessions with staff from City departments and other local government agencies, each of the eight City Councilmembers (in some instances comments were given through Council staff on behalf of the Councilmember), the City Administrator, the Mayor, and representatives from 41 Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The interviews informed the General Plan Update scope of work, helping to identify key issues that need to be addressed in the General Plan Update and to develop strategies for equitable, meaningful participation.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The General Plan Update (GPU) is an opportunity for all Oaklanders to work together to create a visionary blueprint for the future of the City over the next two decades, shaped by the City's commitment to intentionally integrate principles of fairness and justice into all City policies. The update will occur in two phases, guided by a set of core principles rooted in equity:

- Phase I includes the update of the Housing and Safety Elements of the General Plan; creation of the City's first Environmental Justice Element; associated amendments to other Elements of the General Plan, along with Zoning Code and map updates; Racial Equity Impact Analysis, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review; and an Industrial Land Use Study. Phase I is anticipated to be completed by early 2023.
- Phase II includes the update of the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE); Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element (OSCAR); Noise Element; and the development of a new Infrastructure and Facilities Element. Phase II work also includes zoning updates and CEQA review. The Phase I process will help inform the components of Phase II. Phase II is anticipated to be completed by mid-2025.

The GPU process will build upon past and ongoing city plans, initiatives, studies, and projects in terms of lessons learned, staff insights, and data collected. Many of these projects and programs have also developed innovative and equitable public engagement programs that will serve as models for this process.

Both phases of the GPU will be guided by a comprehensive, collaborative, accessible, inclusive, and equity-driven public engagement approach that focuses on communities impacted by environmental harm, health stress and other barriers to opportunity, while also being inclusive of the City as a whole.

General Plan Consultant Team

On November 29, 2021, pursuant to [Ordinance No. 88847 C.M.S.](#), and [Ordinance No. 88848 C.M.S.](#), the City finalized the General Plan Update Consultant Team and kicked off the General Plan Update project.

- **Technical Consultant Team:** The Technical Consultant Team is being led by Dyett & Bhatia (DB), an innovative and experienced urban planning firm. The Technical Consultant Team includes as partners: Environmental Science Associates, Kittelson & Associates, Toole Design, Page & Turnbull, Economic & Planning Systems, BKF Engineers, PolicyLink, and Environmental Justice Solutions.
- **Community Consultant Team:** The Community Consultant Team is being led by the Deeply Rooted (DR) Collaborative, which includes EastSide Arts Alliance, Just Cities Institute, and Urban Strategies Council. Partners include: Black Cultural Zone, The Village, Malonga Arts Residents Association, Oakland Asian Cultural Center Association, House/Full

of Blackwomen, Lao Family Community Development, Inc., CURYJ, The Unity Council, the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP), and Black Arts Movement Business District, CDC.

The GPU process will be instrumental in promoting cultural understanding and historical healing in a diverse and changing community. It will be important to give voice to the many cultures that have created—and are still transforming—Oakland. The process must begin by acknowledging the detrimental impacts that past governmental and planning practices have had on Oakland’s communities, specifically Ohlone, Black, Asian, Latinx, Muslim, immigrant and refugee communities. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to work to eliminate the root causes of inequity, to undo the harms of the past, and to integrate the principle of fairness into today’s planning policies.

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

California Government Code Section 65302 requires specific topics, also called "Elements," to be covered in a General Plan. Table 1 summarizes the seven required General Plan Elements and the topics covered.

Table 1: General Plan Elements

Required General Plan Element	Required Content
<i>Phase I of the General Plan Update includes the update of the Housing and Safety Elements of the General Plan and creation of the City’s first Environmental Justice Element.</i>	
Housing Element	<p>The Housing element analyzes Oakland's housing conditions and needs for all income levels, including lower income households and households with special needs. It provides various programs to create a variety of housing to meet Oakland's housing needs. Additionally, the Housing Element must identify adequate sites for housing and demonstrate the availability and realistic capacity for development on those sites. This element implements the declaration of State law that the availability of housing is a matter of vital statewide importance. It is more specific and directive than other General Plan elements, with detailed guidance, reviews, and deadlines. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (State HCD) must review and certify the Housing Element. Jurisdictions must also submit annual progress reports. In Oakland (and most major cities), the Housing Element must be revised and submitted to State HCD for review on an eight-year cycle.</p> <p>Oakland’s current 2015-2023 Housing Element was adopted in 2014 and is required to be revised and adopted for the next eight-year cycle (2023-2031) by the end of January 2023¹</p>

Required General Plan Element	Required Content
Safety Element	<p>A successful Safety Element reduces potential short and long-term risks of death, injuries, property damage, and economic dislocation resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change; as well as local hazards. As a result of several recent legislative changes, local jurisdictions are required to review and revise Safety Elements upon each revision of the Housing Element to address and update hazards related to flooding, fires and to include climate adaptation and resilience strategies.</p> <p>Oakland’s current Safety Element was adopted in 2004 and subsequently amended to incorporate the City’s Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2012, 2016, and 2021.</p>
Environmental Justice Element	<p>Senate Bill 1000, passed in 2016, requires that cities and counties with disadvantaged communities adopt environmental justice policies or an Environmental Justice Element. These must include objectives and policies to reduce health risks in disadvantaged communities, promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. The overall legislative purpose of Senate Bill 1000 is to address the unique and compounded health risks in environmental justice communities by decreasing pollution exposure, increasing community assets, and improving overall health.</p> <p>Under SB 1000, Oakland is required to adopt an Environmental Justice Element, either standalone or interwoven with other Elements, at the same time that the Housing and Safety Elements are updated.</p>
<p><i>Phase II of the General Plan Update includes the update of the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE); Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element (OSCAR); Noise Element; and the development of a new Infrastructure and Facilities Element.</i></p>	
Land Use Element	<p>The Land Use Element is intended to promote the community’s vision for growth via equitable and accessible distribution of different land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space.</p> <p>In Oakland, the current Land Use Element is contained in the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE), adopted in 1998.</p> <p>The Estuary Policy Plan (EPP) establishes the General Plan land use policies for lands between Interstate 880 and the Oakland waterfront. The EPP was adopted as part of the LUTE in 1999.</p>

Required General Plan Element	Required Content
Circulation Element	<p>The Circulation Element identifies the general location and extent of existing and future transportation networks in Oakland for all users (automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and trucks), public transportation routes and terminals, and public utilities (water, sewer, stormwater, communications).</p> <p>By statute, the Circulation Element must correlate directly with the Land Use Element.</p> <p>In Oakland, the 1998 Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE), the 1999 Estuary Policy Plan (EPP), the 2019 Oakland Bike Plan, and the 2017 Pedestrian Plan establish the General Plan circulation policies.</p>
Open Space Element	<p>The Open Space Element identifies valuable undeveloped areas of land or water designated as open space in Oakland and creates a long-term plan to preserve them. The Conservation Element describes Oakland's natural resources and establishes goals and policies to preserve, enhance, and develop them. The Open Space Element must correlate with the Land Use Element.</p> <p>In Oakland, open space is covered in the City's Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR), adopted in 1996.</p>
Conservation Element	<p>The Conservation Element describes Oakland's natural resources and establishes goals and policies to preserve, enhance, and develop them. The Conservation Element must correlate with the Land Use Element.</p> <p>In Oakland, conservation is covered in the City's Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR), adopted in 1996</p>
Noise Element	<p>The Noise Element describes the local noise environment and analyzes current and projected noise levels. It outlines policies and implementation measures to address existing and foreseeable noise problems.</p> <p>Oakland's Noise Element was adopted in 2005.</p>
<p>Notes: 1: All cities have a 120-day grace period, and the housing element is considered compliant if adopted during this time.</p>	

State law also allows a jurisdiction to include within its General Plan any other elements as it sees fit. Although not required by State Law, the City is preparing a new Infrastructure and Facilities Element as part of the General Plan Update. The Infrastructure and Facilities Element will provide

overarching goals and policies for city infrastructure over the long term, reflecting capital improvements identified in the LUTE, OSCAR, Safety, and other General Plan elements.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

See Exhibit A for the General Plan Update Project Schedule.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

General Plan Update Scoping

During the fall of 2020, Planning staff, with assistance from a planning consulting firm that was funded via a technical assistance grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), held a series of listening sessions with: staff from City departments and other local government agencies, each of the eight City Councilmembers (in some instances comments were given through Council staff on behalf of the Councilmember), the City Administrator, the Mayor, and representatives from 41 CBOs. The interviews sought to identify key issues that need to be addressed in the General Plan Update and to develop strategies for equitable, meaningful participation.

The feedback received during those listening sessions helped inform the [General Plan Update Technical Memorandum](#). This memorandum was not a final nor rigid blueprint for the General Plan Update process. Rather, it has been used to inform the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the General Plan consultant services.

The following are initial guiding principles for an inclusive planning and engagement process for the General Plan Update, based on the feedback received during the listening sessions conducted in fall 2020. More details regarding these principals can be found on the project website and were also included in the RFP. These guiding principles are a first step in working out a shared vision with all Oaklanders that will serve as a foundation for the General Plan:

- *Equity and Environmental Justice*
- *Transparency*
- *Relevance and Clarity*
- *Focused Planning Process*
- *Flexible and Adaptable Process*
- *Strategic and Long-Range Thinking*
- *Interdepartmental Coordination*
- *Inter-Agency Coordination*
- *Important Role of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)*
- *Youth Engagement*
- *Place-based Approach*

General Plan Update Engagement Process

The City of Oakland General Plan Update (GPU) will be a collaborative planning process to address citywide needs and plan for a vibrant future for all Oakland residents. Community engagement will be the cornerstone of the GPU process in order to ensure that the final Plan accurately and holistically represents the city and its diverse residents. The community engagement effort will comprise of an extensive outreach process, with the intention of engaging stakeholders throughout the community, with additional resources dedicated to engaging communities historically underrepresented and excluded from traditional planning processes and often most disparately and negatively impacted by City policies. All community input shared will be used to “ground truth” data based on peoples’ lived experience, inform areas of focus for General Plan elements, and guide development of General Plan policies. Events will occur in parts of Oakland where the following communities reside: unhoused, formerly incarcerated, low-income, Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx, multiracial, and community experiencing environmental injustice.

The engagement effort will be co-led by City staff, the Community Consultant team, Deeply Rooted (DR), who will lead neighborhood-focused community outreach; and the Technical Consultant, Dyett & Bhatia (D&B), who will lead supplementary citywide outreach events and provide support to the Community Consultant. The outreach process will include the following engagement components:

- **Engagement by City Staff:** Ahead of the work that will be done by the General Plan Update Consultant Team, City staff has already begun an outreach campaign to begin reaching out to Oaklanders, including presentations to the Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy (August 2021), West Oakland Community Action Plan (WOCAP) Steering Committee (December 2021) and to the Healthy Development Guidelines (HDG) Project Management Team (December 2021).
- **General Plan Website and Social Media:** The [General Plan Update website](#) provides key project information, community meeting dates, and project updates. Community members can sign up for updates via [email](#) and social media. The City also recently completed [the first of a video series about the General Plan Update](#) about the Plan, the process, and progress toward a City that works for all Oaklanders.
- **Neighborhood Workshops and Community Hubs:**
 - The neighborhood workshops and townhalls will introduce the General Plan process and seek community input and priorities on a variety of topics, including land use, open space, parks and recreation, safety, environmental justice, and other topics. They will identify local issues of concern and solutions to address them. Participants can share their input using interactive tools, or through the complementary online survey.
 - Community hub events will be large outdoor cultural and community events that bring Oaklanders together through art, performance, celebration, and the sharing of visions, issues and solutions for the future of Oakland. Community members will be

able to share their stories of Oakland past and present, vision for the future, and receive information for current support.

- Information on neighborhood workshops and community hubs will be provided via the [General Plan Update website](#), e-newsletters, and social media updates.
- **Popup Outreach:** Mobile pop-ups will meet people where they are in the community - membership meetings, farmers markets, outside a grocery store, a park, a mall, Akoma Market, etc. Pop-ups will include a variety of activities, including hearing Oaklanders stories; sharing history and context on housing, environmental justice and other General Plan topics; and activities to gather community input for various General Plan topics. Information on popup outreach and feedback received will be provided on the [General Plan Update website](#).
- **Youth Engagement:** Youth engagement strategy will complement the participation strategies led by the Community Consultant within frontline communities. These organizations can help identify youth engagement coordinators who will partner with the Consultant Team to assist in concept development, planning, logistics, and notification for public participation strategies. Youth engagement coordinators will be provided with training and a stipend. In addition to community outreach, the Consultant will collaborate with high schools, youth organizations, as well as young professionals' groups to organize youth-focused opportunities to receive feedback from this targeted demographic.
- **Stakeholder Meetings and Interest-Based Focus Group Meetings:** Stakeholders include key groups with specific interest in social equity/inclusion, economic development and opportunity, housing, fire/public safety, Downtown, small businesses, public art, historic preservation, medical centers, schools, public health, and others. The meetings will focus on specific topics related to the General Plan, clarify differences in priorities and build common, collaborative ground. Participants may be grouped and invited to attend specific meetings based upon their role and meeting topics, at various points in the process.
- **Technical Advisory Committee:** The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of internal City department representatives as well as other Oakland-based, neighboring, and regional governmental agency representatives. The TAC serves to advise on key strategies to address Oakland's big issues related to housing, environmental justice, safety, and other topics; review community input collected at key points in the process; and inform, discuss, and provide technical direction on policies and actions. The first TAC meeting was held on December 2, 2021, and TAC members provided initial guidance and ideas on topics to address in the General Plan.
- **Equity Working Group:** The Equity Working Group (EWG) will be comprised of individuals who have been highly engaged in Oakland housing, safety and environmental justice, land use issues and solutions. The EWG will work with the City Staff and the General Plan team to make sure that Housing, Safety, Environmental Justice, Land Use, Transportation, Zoning Code, Noise, and Open Space/Conservation/Recreation Policies, and key issues align with community concerns and needs. The EWG will also support outreach

efforts to ensure that geographies and populations that are most burdened by environmental justice are engaged in identifying community needs and assets and providing feedback on proposed solutions. EWG members will be provided with a stipend. Deeply Rooted Collaborative began recruitment for the EWG on December 22, 2021. The recruitment concluded on January 31, 2022. The recruitment flyers and applications (online and paper) were promoted on social media, the [General Plan Update website](#), and the [listserv](#). In addition, staff worked with Oakland Public Library and Oakland Parks and Recreation Department to promote EWG recruitment by sharing the flyers and applications.

- **Study Sessions with Decisionmakers:** The Planning Commission, City Council, and various boards and commissions will be active participants in the GPU and will have opportunities to provide direction at each Stage in the process. The project team will check in with these decision-making bodies at key milestones to ensure that the project remains on the right track in terms of process, direction, and overall vision. Engagement will take the form of study sessions and informational presentations to review products and generate feedback on drafts.

Finally, outreach will also take place through distribution of a citywide postcard mailer, and e-newsletters, and online surveys.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission receive this informational report.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Lakshmi Rajagopalan

Prepared by:

Lakshmi Rajagopalan, Planner IV

Strategic Planning Division, Planning and Building Department

/s/ Laura Kaminski

Approved by:

Laura Kaminski, Strategic Planning Manager

Strategic Planning Division, Planning and Building Department

Identification of Support Documents:

Attachments: Exhibit A – *Project Schedule*