

Community Meeting #4: Draft 2040 General Plan Response to Questions

Online Zoom Meeting | Tuesday June 29, 2021

On Tuesday, June 29, 2021, the Town hosted the fourth community meeting of the General Plan update process to discuss the Draft 2040 General Plan. The intent of the meeting was to provide community members with an overview of the General Plan update process that began in 2018 and a summary of the Draft 2040 General Plan. The meeting covered some of the biggest changes from the Town's last General Plan Update in 2010. Following a presentation, Town staff facilitated a community comment and question and answer session. Below are community questions posed in advance of and during this meeting with responses. Questions have been categorized by general topics. Following the questions and responses below is a bulleted list of additional items that participants requested be considered as part of the Draft 2040 General Plan.

Community Questions and Responses

Background Report

1. In table 3.8-3 of the Background Report, it shows that the vacant land development capacity for multi-family units is 239 housing units. Table 3.1 of the draft General Plan shows 521 multi-family units being developed on vacant land and 1,875 planned for redevelopment. The 521 would appear to exceed the Background Reports development capacity analysis. Which analysis is correct, and can you please explain how the public should view table 3.8-3 in the Background Report and table 3.1 in the draft General Plan?

Response | The difference between the table in the Background Report and the Draft 2040 General Plan is based on the analysis completed during the land use alternatives phase, which followed completion of the Background Report. The Background Report serves as the regional setting or snapshot of Los Gatos in 2018-2019. The buildout in Table 3.8-3 was a simplified buildout based on existing General Plan densities (2020) and typical project densities the Town has seen. The Draft 2040 General Plan buildout considers land use changes based on discussions with the community, General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPAC), and Joint Study Sessions of Town Council and Planning Commission in consideration of the land use alternatives. In these discussions, the intent was to determine a land use alternative that met the vision and guiding principles, as well as the goal of meeting the housing needs expected for the upcoming Housing Element. The selected land use alternative, confirmed by the Town Council, increased densities within most land use designations and focused mixed use development on key commercial corridors and shopping areas. The Background Report should

be viewed as a starting point or the foundation on which the rest of the process is built. For the purposes of the Draft 2040 General Plan, the public should focus on the Land Use Element (Table 3.1) as that represents the recommended GPAC direction to Planning Commission and Town Council.

Land Use Alternatives

1. The Land Use Alternative report projected the Town's population would increase by approximately 3,478 people from 2020 to 2040 (assuming Los Gatos continued to grow at the historical rate of .6 percent annually). Why is the General Plan residential buildout based on a projected population increase of 8,971? Is this a reasonable assumption and what is the basis for using this projected increase?

Response | The biggest difference from the Alternatives Report and the final Land Use Diagram and Buildout in the Draft 2040 General Plan is that in early 2020 the GPAC and subsequent approval by Planning Commission and Town Council, used a hybrid alternative that includes aspects of Land Use Alternative Options B, C, and D with the goal of providing opportunity for at least 2,000 new housing units. This hybrid alternative eliminated the "inside opportunity area" density differences to simplify the Land Use Diagram and its implementation and included increased densities Town-wide (except in the hillsides and light industrial areas) to allow for new housing typologies, such as missing middle housing. This approach resulted in an increased number of anticipated housing units as well as the related population growth. This hybrid also included redevelopment assumptions for the downtown, which was not an opportunity area analyzed as part of the Alternatives Report. The projected increase assumes a redevelopment percentage for all properties that are currently developed. This redevelopment percentage was confirmed by the economist on the General Plan consultant team based on typical redevelopment trends in other communities.

Draft 2040 General Plan Elements

1. The draft General Plan Land Use element is proposing 87% of the 2,763 total new housing units added from 2020 to 2040 to be concentrated in less than 6% (approximately 277 acres) of the total land use currently designated for residential use. This high concentration of new development will materially impact traffic, infrastructure, and noise in the MDR and HDR land use areas. What are the feasible remedies to address the traffic, infrastructure, and noise impacts of this high concentration of new housing in this small area? Is this concentration of housing growth consistent with the objective of sustainability and enhancing the Town's unique identity?

Community Meeting #4 Response to Questions

June 29, 2021

Response | The environmental impacts associated with the increased densities and intensities of projected development within the Town are being evaluated as part of the Environmental Impact Report which will be available for public review later this summer (2021). The concentrated areas for increase residential development were specifically selected by the GPAC since these areas already contain the highest concentration of more intense development within the Town (i.e., commercial corridors and shopping centers). The existing infrastructure in these areas is best suited for additional development compared to the rest of the Town which is predominantly existing single-family neighborhoods.

Regarding the unique character and identity of the Los Gatos, the GPAC discussed this issue at length as part of their meetings over the last two years. The GPAC determined that overall preservation of the “small-town character” is an important part of the General Plan, especially in light of the new State legislation requiring the Town to plan for a substantially increased number of housing units as part of the upcoming Housing Element. This significant increase in development may alter aspects of Los Gatos; however, the Draft General Plan contains design guidelines and policies to address land use compatibility within existing neighborhoods. These policies articulate urban design requirements, strengthen historic preservation outcomes, and improve connectivity to enhance the existing walkable environment of the Town, and foster other mobility options (e.g., bicycles, scooters, etc.). All these policies and any subsequent programs will be implemented over the lifetime of this General Plan and may require updates to the Town Code for consistency. The Town is also currently in the process of updating its Housing Element and creating Comprehensive Objective Design Standards to implement SB 35 and SB 330, that will build upon the General Plan direction.

2. Will the General Plan enforce riparian setbacks as mentioned in Policy ENV-6.3? How will this align with the resolution from the Town Council back in 2007 adopting the Valley Water Resources Protection Collaborative Guidelines and Standards for Land Use near Streams? The City of San Jose 2040 General Plan states that a 100-foot setback is require for development adjacent to riparian habitats. Would it be possible to strengthen Policy ENV-6.3 by giving a specific setback requirement?

Response | In approving Resolution 2007-020 (available online here: <http://weblink.losgatosca.gov/weblink/0/doc/437540/Page1.aspx>), Town Council adopted the “Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams” (available online here: <https://www.valleywater.org/contractors/doing-businesses-with-the-district/permits-working-district-land-or-easement/guidelines-and-standards-land-use-near-streams>) and directed that it be applied to developments within the Town of Los Gatos that require discretionary approvals. The use of the guidelines and standards prepared by Valley Water is an example of how policies in the General Plan can be implemented with the flexibility to address each project based on the

Community Meeting #4 Response to Questions

June 29, 2021

specifics of the particular property. The Town Council will have the opportunity to consider adding a specific setback distance to ENV-6.3 when it reviews the Draft General Plan in the fall.

3. The draft General Plan 2040 contains 190 implementation programs. The draft states that “the Town will need to evaluate each program in light of Town resources” which includes “financial, staffing and technology” resources (reference page 1-14). Does the Town have sufficient resources to fully implement the programs identified in the draft General Plan? If not, what is the Staff’s estimate of the incremental resources required and what will be the financial impact of obtaining these resources?

Response | The Town Council can re-prioritize, as needed, the Implementation Programs as outlined in the Draft 2040 General Plan. The Town and the General Plan update consultant team recognize the unpredictability of future economic trends over the next 20 years and assumes there is a high probability that all the implementation programs may not be implemented within the timeframe of this General Plan

4. There are two different numbers relating to housing presented, one is 2,763 new units, approximately 130 per year over the next 20 years, or is it 3,700+ housing units, pretty close to 200 units per year. This is a pace that has not been seen in the area and certainly not in the Town and I do not see the basis for why such numbers need to be put in place other than fear in the State of California government coming in and mandating these numbers. My fear is that it is the State that is driving and pushing these types of numbers going forward. Let us review in earnest what the targets should be, including reconfiguring some of the existing housing units, working to develop the missing middle. A lot more work can be done in that area in terms of understanding it and seeing how to optimize that part of the housing in Town and we can still do so and achieve the economic level of inclusiveness we want going forward, not just the economic, but also the social inclusiveness. I have been a 30-year resident of the Town and I am getting worried about how we are going to deal with a lack of water, not just freshwater, but also manage the wastewater to build so many more houses. How do we have the freshwater to sustain the existing and new houses that are being mandated. We also have to look at the energy consumption that is going to be required, both electricity and as we are transitioning from natural gas to renewable energy that have a significant cost in infrastructure requirements that the Town is going to have to deal with and of course the fire risk going forward. These are the things that I think we need to spend a little more time discussing, understanding, and finding solutions together to move us forward.

Community Meeting #4 Response to Questions

June 29, 2021

Response | The number of units is located on Page 3-4 of the Land Use Element in Table 3-1. The 2,763 units refers to new units on either vacant land or from the redevelopment (increased densities and the potential development from those increases) of exiting parcels that currently have structures. In addition to the residential buildout of those parcels, the Town included units that are currently being considered as a part of existing development applications (pipeline units) within the horizon year of the Draft 2040 General Plan which total 475 units, as well as projected Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). As part of this General Plan update, the Town projects that an average of 25 ADUs will be constructed annually over 20 years, totaling 500 ADUs. The ADU estimate is based on the average number of ADUs the Town has permitted over the past five years. When combining the new units (2,763), pipeline units (475), and project ADUs (500), the projected total new units is 3,738.

The State has released the draft 6th cycle Housing Element Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers for the Bay Area. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has determined preliminary RHNA for Bay Area cities and counties, including Los Gatos, which is approximately 2,000 housing units. The Town must plan for the 2,000 housing units as part of the 6th Cycle Housing Element Update. It is important to note that the Town does not construct housing; instead, the Town is required to plan for the units, zone land to achieve the RHNA, and reduce any regulatory barriers to the construction of housing. The 6th Cycle Housing Element RHNA is a substantial increase from the 5th Cycle, from 619 units to approximately 2,000 units. This substantial increase was the primary factor for the increase in housing units in the Draft 2040 General Plan. The GPAC met several times to strategize with Town staff and the community on the best approach to plan for the upcoming RHNA. To meet the RHNA, residential densities were increased Town-wide to include additional mixed-use development in commercial designations, additional residential units in the Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential designations and missing middle housing typologies in Low Density Residential.

Concerns about access and infrastructure capacity related to water, wastewater, and energy are being evaluated as part of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR is also analyzing the existing conditions of traffic within Town and the potential impacts related to future development. The EIR provides mitigation options where applicable to offset potential impacts from the Draft 2040 General Plan. The EIR will be available for review later this summer (2021). After public review, the Planning Commission and Town Council will hold public hearings on the EIR and Draft 2040 General Plan, obtain testimony on both documents, and consider including recommended mitigations measures into the Draft 2040 General Plan prior to adoption.

Additional Public Comments and Recommendations

- Los Gatos Plant Based Advocates would like to see the promotion of plant-based eating more prominently displayed within the Draft 2040 General Plan.
- Recommendation to add a plant-based education program for the Town to educate residents on the health benefits of a plant-based diet. It was recommended to add this program to Section 8.12 (Implementation Programs) in the Environment and Sustainability Element.
- Recommendation to add the words “plant-based” to the Climate Change Education implementation program (Program CC, in the Environment and Sustainability Element).
- Recommendation that the Town take into consideration the problems relating to the access of water that will be created with new housing units.
- Recommendation that the Town consider filing for an exemption or appeal to the RHNA based on its location as funnel for regional traffic between the valley and coast.
- Recommendation that the Town should expand the support for Bird Safe Building Design and the Dark Skies policy and implementation program.
- Recommendation that the Town should expand Mobility Implementation Program I (Streetlighting Policy and Guidelines) to include the protection of sensitive habitats, diversity of species, including birds and bats.