

Planning Commission Study Session

October 17, 2024, 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Background

In the next stage of the General Plan Update, the City will prepare a Policy Framework for each General Plan Element describing goals, policies, and implementation actions to achieve the [General Plan Vision](#). The Policy Frameworks will be developed by incorporating findings from previous project phases, including previous feedback from the Planning Commission. The Policy Frameworks will be shared with the community for feedback, and this feedback will be used to revise goals, policies, and implementation actions for inclusion in the Public Draft General Plan.

In this study session, we will brainstorm initial ideas for policy to incorporate in the Land Use and Community Design Policy Framework and the Environmental Justice Policy Framework. To prepare for the meeting, please review the questions and resources below.

Discussion Questions

Land Use and Community Design Element: Policy for Residential Areas

Some sample goals, policies, and actions related to residential uses from the current Element are included below. [Click here to view the current General Plan Land Use Element \(Section III\).](#)

- *Policy L.U.9: Housing for All Economic Segments of Society. Assure that adequate housing is provided for all economic segments of the population through a diversity of housing types, sizes, and density (similar policies are in the Housing Element).*
- *Objective L.U.9a. Encourage infill development in those areas of the City that are designated for residential development which are presently undeveloped or underutilized (refer to the Housing Element for related policies).*
- *Objective L.U.9b. Enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods through the use of high quality land use and development standards, street trees, neighborhood parks, other amenities, and code enforcement.*
- *Objective L.U.9c. Encourage creative site design in new residential developments and encourage the development of a unique identity for each neighborhood.*
- *Objective L.U.7b. Protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible nonresidential uses and the impacts associated with adjacent nonresidential activities.*
- *Implementation Action 1.8: Mixed-Use Projects. (Resolution 2011-111) Encourage projects that provide for a diverse yet compatible mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, public, and recreational uses, not found in a single established Zoning District.*
- **Which aspects of residential policy direction in the current General Plan Land Use Element are still relevant?**

- **What issues related to residential land uses should be addressed in the Land Use and Community Design Element?**

Land Use and Community Design Element: Public Realm Policy

The Land Use and Community Design Element will include policies relating to the design of the public realm, such as plazas, open spaces, and gathering spaces. The Element will also touch on arts and culture as related to public realm design. [Click here to review potential public realm strategies from the Alternatives Technical Memorandum \(see Appendix B\).](#)

- **Which of these public realm strategies are appropriate to Santa Maria?**
- **Which features of each strategy do you like, and which would you change?**
- **Are any public realm or design strategies missing that would be appropriate for Santa Maria?**

Environmental Justice Element Policy

The original environmental justice analysis for Santa Maria identified some key issues, including: lack of convenient walking access to transit, public facilities, and parks in some areas; limited access to public services like health care; and housing cost burden and overcrowding. [Click here to review the Health and Environmental Justice Existing Conditions Report.](#)

- **What could be done to address these environmental justice issues?**