



Santa Maria General Plan

Planning Commission

October 17, 2024



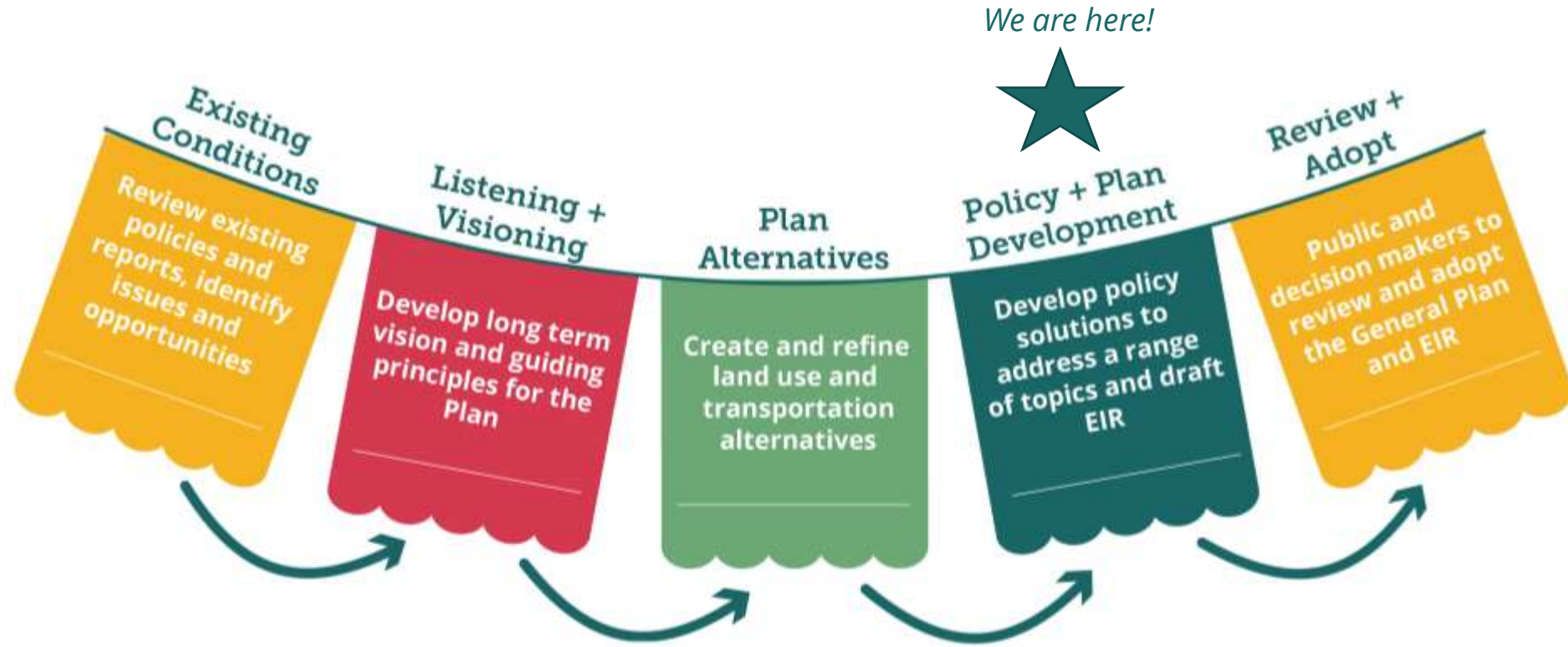
Welcome

Agenda

- Welcome, Overview, and Introductions
- Recap of Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the General Plan Update
- Introduction to Phase 4: Plan and Policy Development
- Policy Brainstorm
- Wrap up and Next Steps

Recap of Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the General Plan Update

Planning Process



Community engagement throughout process

Please visit www.imaginesantamaria.com to learn more about the General Plan Update

Project Milestones

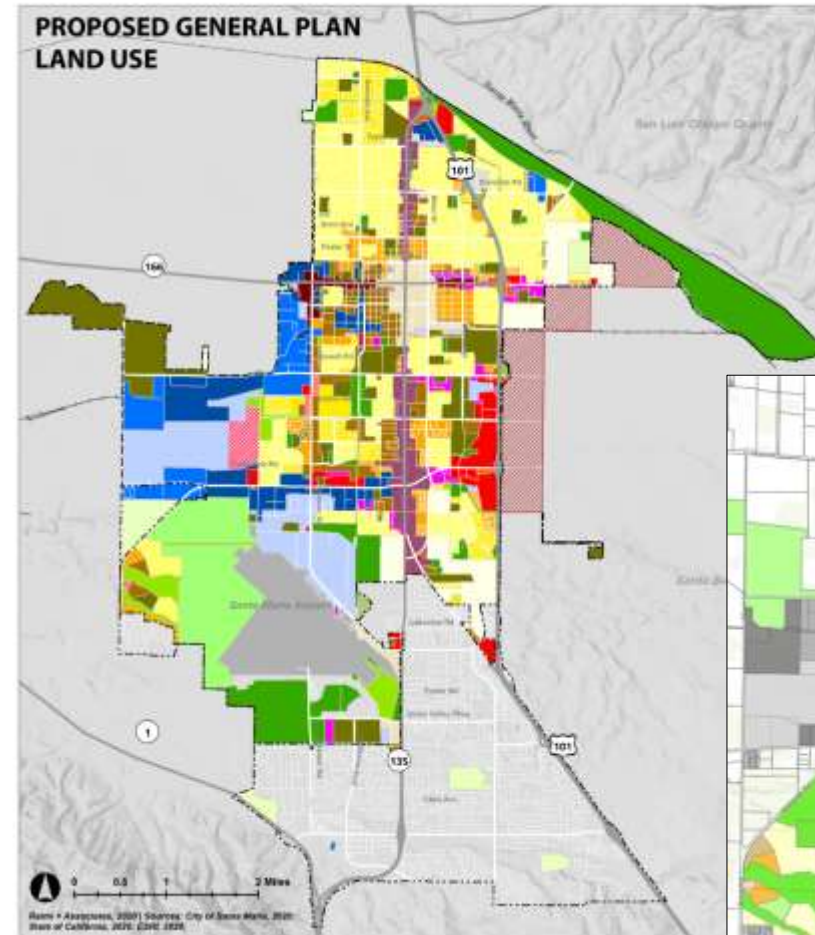
- Existing Conditions Reports (2020)
 - *Approved by City Council in 2021*
- Vision, Guiding Principles, and Areas of Change and Stability
 - *Approved by City Council in 2021*
- Land Use Alternatives and Analysis (2023)
- Housing Element
 - *Adopted by City Council in late 2023*
- Preferred Land Use Alternative
 - *Approved by City Council in late 2023*
 - *Council requested studying an expanded annexation area*
- Annexation Study (*Underway*)



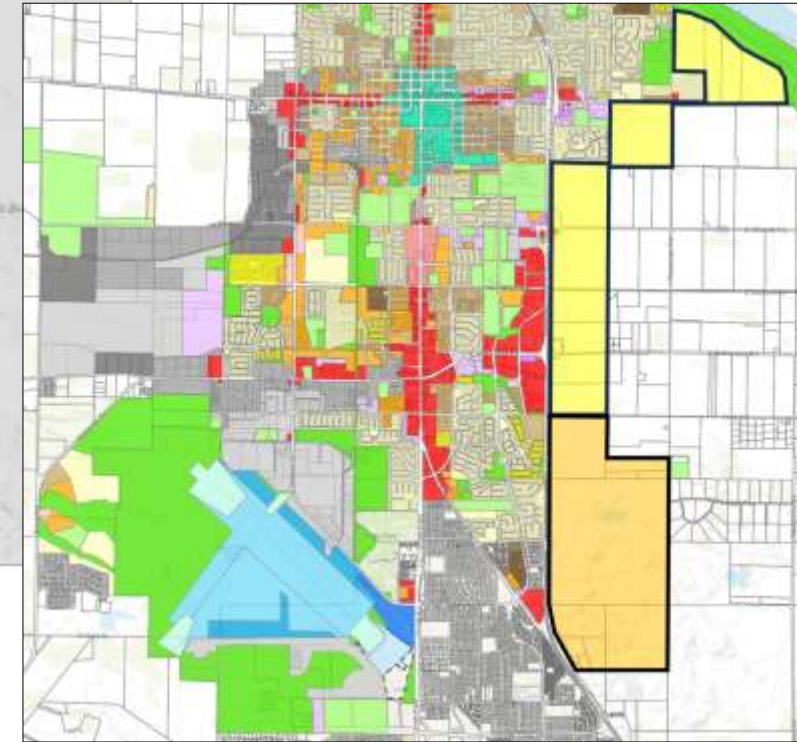
Preferred Land Use Alternative

- The Preferred Land Use Alternative will inform and complement updated General Plan policies
- Land use changes:
 - Includes annexation of land east of City limits
 - Allows mixed use on Broadway and Main
 - Changes parcel on N Broadway to Community Facilities
 - Increases allowed density of High Density Residential designation

Preferred Land Use Map

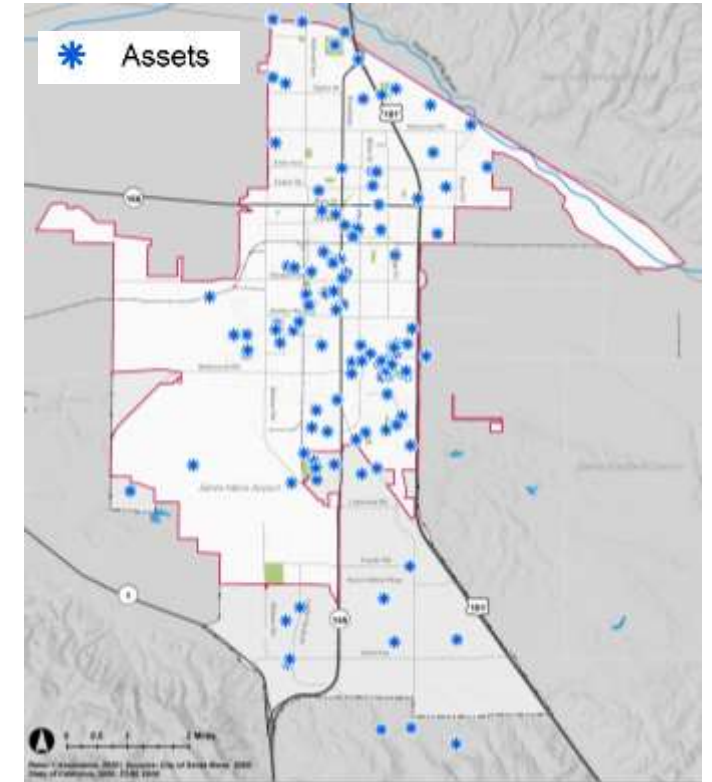


Expanded Annexation Area Studied



Community Engagement To Date

- TAC meetings (11)
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Online surveys (4)
- Community workshops (2)
- Alternatives orientation and office hours (4)
- Community cafes (SB 1000, farmworkers, safety, housing) (4)
- Housing Element engagement (survey, workshops)
- City Council (3) and Planning Commission (5) Meetings
- *Engagement activities conducted in English, Spanish, and Mixteco*



Phase 4: Policy and Plan Development

Policy Frameworks Purpose

- Outline the proposed policy direction for each Element of the General Plan
- Serves as direction to achieve the Vision
- Serve as a basis of community and decision-maker feedback before the next step in the GPU process – the Administrative Draft General Plan



Policy Framework Structure

Goal

- | An expression of community direction, stated as desired ends
- | in 2045

- | — ➔ **Policy**

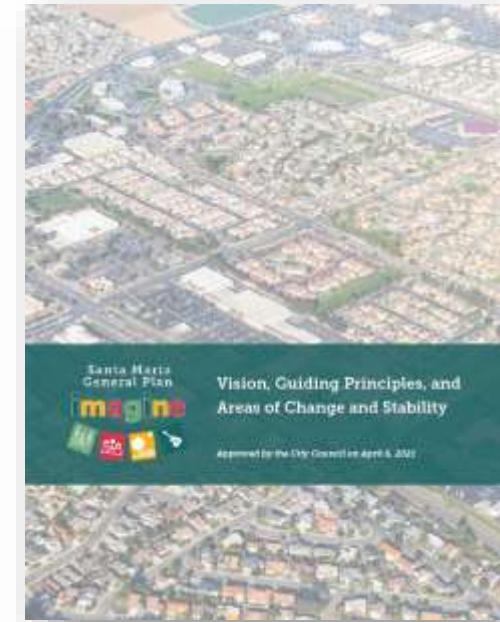
- | A specific statement of intent or direction that guides
 - | decision-making and helps implement a goal

- | — ➔ **Implementation Action**

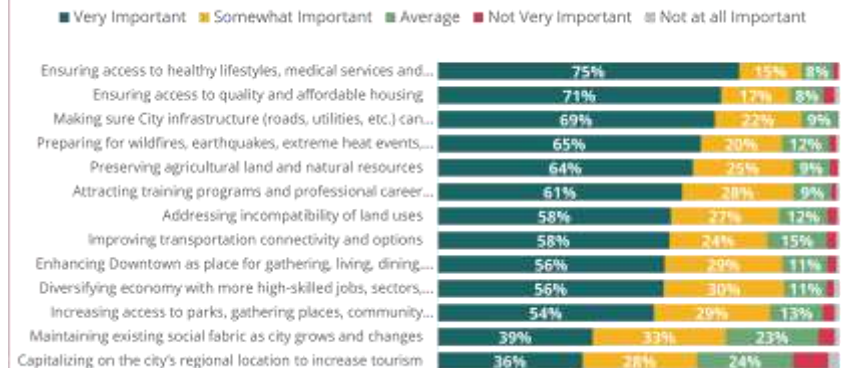
A specific activity, procedure, program, or project that carries out a policy

Policy Frameworks Build On:

- Existing General Plan policy that is still relevant
- Related plans and studies
- Existing Conditions Reports
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- Direction in the Preferred Land Use Alternative
- Community engagement
- Direction from City staff
- Input from City Council and Planning Commission



How important are the following changes to Santa Maria in the future to you?



Policy Frameworks

- Land Use* and Community Design
- Environmental Justice*
- Circulation and Mobility*
- Safety*
- Noise*
- Conservation* and Open Space*
- Public Facilities and Services
 - Includes parks and infrastructure
- Economic Development

*State-required Element

Policy Frameworks Tentative Timeline

Pre-Policy Framework Development

Sept. – Oct.
2024

- Project team initiates work on Policy Frameworks
- Policy brainstorm meetings with City staff
- Policy brainstorm meetings with TAC and Planning Commission *We are here!*

Policy Framework Development

Late Fall 2024

- Project team writes Admin Draft Policy Frameworks

Public Draft Frameworks and Community Engagement

Early 2025

- Public Draft Policy Frameworks released
- Community engagement (*including more TAC meetings!*)

Policy Revisions and Admin Draft Plan

Spring 2025

- Project team revises policy based on community feedback
- Project team writes Admin Draft General Plan

Questions

Any questions?



Policy Brainstorm

Policy Brainstorm

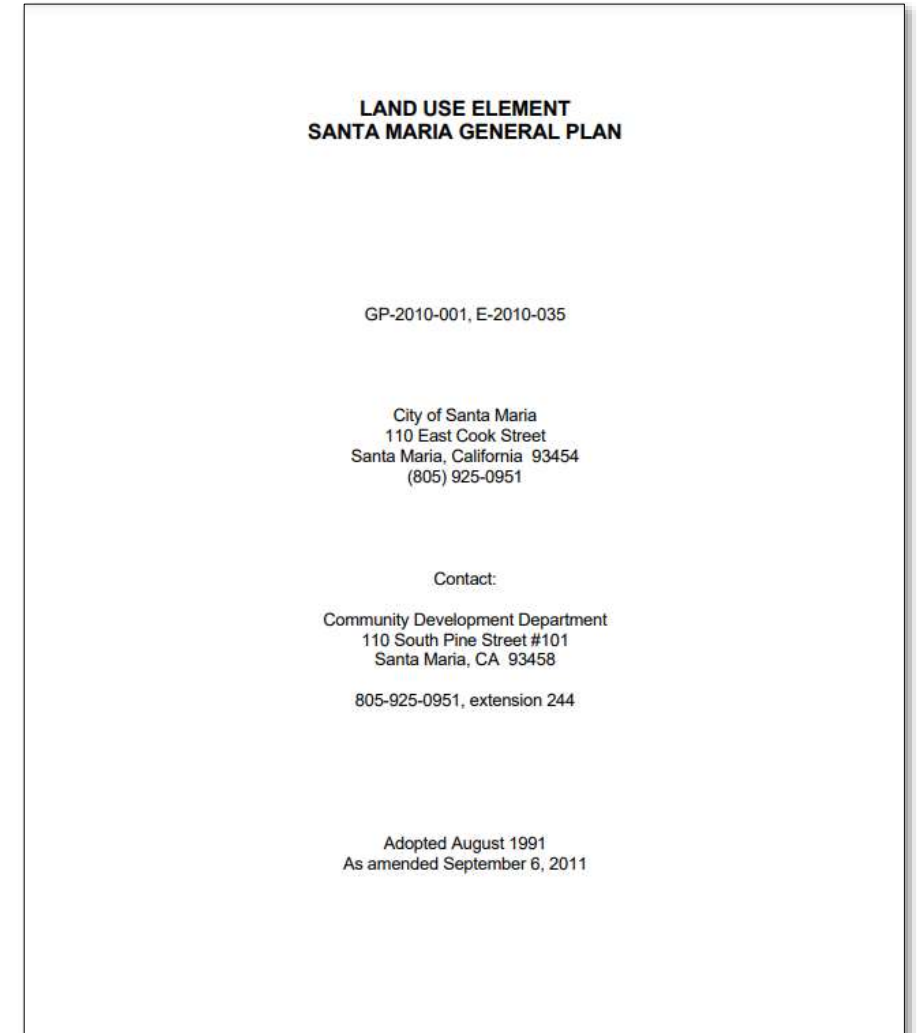
1. Review topics covered in the Land Use and Community Design and Environmental Justice Elements
 - a. Residential areas
 - b. Public realm
 - c. Environmental justice
2. Review existing General Plan direction
3. Review what we've heard so far
4. Discussion

Residential Land Uses

What the Land Use Element Covers

- Diagram(s) to designate the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of land uses*
- Standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts*
- **Policy direction to implement the land use vision and diagram(s)**

*Completed as part of the process of developing the Preferred Land Use Alternative



Land Use and Community Design Element Topics

- Land use designations and map
- Citywide policies
- Policies for areas of the city
 - Residential areas
 - Commercial and industrial areas
 - Agriculture and open space areas
 - Annexation
 - Broadway and Main Street corridors
 - Downtown
- Urban design and public realm
 - Arts and culture (as related to public realm)
 - Plazas, open spaces, and gathering places
- Regional coordination



Current General Plan Direction: Residential

[Link to current Land Use Element](#)

- Provide a diversity of housing types, sizes, and density at a variety of price points (*Policy LU.9*)
- Encourage infill residential development (*Objective LU.9a*)
- Enhance character of existing residential neighborhoods through use of land use and development standards, street trees, parks, other amenities, and code enforcement (*Objective LU.9b*)
- Encourage creative site design in new residential developments and encourage the development of a unique identity for each neighborhood (*Objective LU.9c*)
- Reduce conflicts between residential and incompatible non-residential uses (*Objective LU.7b*)
- Encourage mixed use projects (*Implementation Action 1.8*)

What We've Heard So Far

- High rents, code violations, and crowding are issues
- Consider impact of residential growth on public facilities, services, and infrastructure
- Support diversity of housing types at varying levels of affordability
 - Executive housing
 - Affordable housing
 - Farmworker housing
- Improve bike/pedestrian access to from neighborhoods to destinations (retail, schools, etc.)
- Increase mixed use
- Encourage quality housing design

Discussion

- Which aspects residential policy direction in the current General Plan are still relevant?
- What issues related to residential land uses should be addressed in the Land Use and Community Design Element?



Public Realm

Current General Plan Direction: Public Realm

- Develop design themes and standards in specific plans (*Implementation Action 3.1*)*
- Emphasize quality urban design features in rehabilitation and new development (*Policy LU.3*)
- Continue ongoing code enforcement efforts (*Objective LU.3b*)
- Focus public realm improvements (lighting, landscaping, etc.) in neighborhoods most in need (*Objective LU.3c*)
- Implement point of entry design overlays at freeway and highway entrances (*Implementation Action 3.1*)

*Note, the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan cover public realm design Downtown

What We've Heard So Far

- Improve sidewalks and conditions for walking and biking
- Create pedestrian-friendly and active cultural/entertainment area Downtown
- More trees
- Need more spaces in the city for gathering and events
- Support arts, culture, and history



Potential Public Realm Strategies

Plazas



Pocket Park



Food Truck Pod



Additional Strategies

- Parklets
- Slow streets
- Gateways
- Public art

Sidewalk widening



Street trees



Furnishings



Landscape strip



Curb extension



Alleyway activation



[Potential public realm strategies in the Alternatives Technical Memo – see Appendix B](#)

Discussion

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



Environmental Justice

Key Concepts: Environmental Justice

SB 1000 defines environmental justice as **“the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”**



Source: Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies

Purpose of SB 1000

Assessment

- Identification of disadvantaged communities

Engagement

- Identification of unique or compounded risks
- Promotion of civic engagement in public decision-making

Outcomes

- Prioritization of policies, goals, objectives to address needs of DACs
- Final EJ Element or EJ integrated into the General Plan

SB 1000 Topics



Promote physical activity



Promote food access



Promote public facilities



Reduce exposure to pollution
and improve air quality



**Promote safe and sanitary
housing**



Promote civic engagement

Key Findings from Existing Conditions Report



Physical Activity

- Some areas lack convenient walking access to transit, public facilities, and parks
- Santa Maria has a higher obesity rate (36%) than the County (27%)



Public Facilities

- Most of the city is designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area for primary care to the Medicaid eligible population
- There are four Census tracts where <20% of adults age 65+ are up to date on preventative health services



Safe + Sanitary Housing

- Santa Maria has higher than average household size than the County, which may indicate crowding
- Many households are cost-burdened, paying 50% or more of their income on housing
- Older housing stock

What We've Heard So Far

- Physical activity
 - Improve opportunities between schools and City for facility sharing
 - Make Santa Maria more friendly to walking
 - Not enough bike paths
 - Improve walking access to healthy food
- Safe and sanitary housing
 - Improve housing quality and health
- Public facilities and services
 - More public safety resources needed to serve areas most in need
 - Improve social services
 - Expand healthcare options and access to mental healthcare
 - Need for youth and senior services and recreational programming
 - Expand broadband access
- Misc.
 - Make sure planning benefits all (not just new residents in annexation area)

Sample Environmental Justice Policy Direction



Physical Activity

- Increase park and open space, particularly in neighborhoods most in need
- Prioritize investments in City recreational programs that focus on physical activity
- Improve sidewalks



Public Facilities

- Support health care expansion
- Expand public facilities in areas most in need and where population is anticipated to grow
- Support expansion of childcare access



Safe + Sanitary Housing

- Seek partnerships for developing affordable housing solutions
- Increase housing options and shelters for unhoused community members
- Promote aging-in-place and multi-generational housing

Discussion

- What could be done to address environmental justice issues?
 - Physical activity / walk access
 - Public facilities (e.g., health care)
 - Safe and sanitary housing



Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next Steps

Develop Policy Frameworks

TAC Meeting #11

Planning Commission Study Session (10/17/24)

Policy Framework Development

Fall 2024

Policy Frameworks Engagement

TAC Meetings (TBD)

Engagement activities (exact activities TBD)

Early 2025

Write General Plan

Development of Administrative Draft General Plan and EIR

Development of Public Draft General Plan

Spring – Fall 2025

Public Draft General Plan Engagement

Public Draft General Plan released

Community Engagement

Fall/Winter 2025

General Plan Adoption

Review and Adopt General Plan and EIR

2026

Thank you!