



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date: 10/15/2019

Staff Report Number: 19-212-CC

Study Session: Report from City Council subcommittees on planning and zoning

Recommendation

1. Receive input from the two City Council subcommittees; and
2. City Council to provide general direction to staff on next steps.

Background

The City Council formed two separate City Council subcommittees June 11 to prepare recommendations regarding zoning and planning changes for District 1 and Districts 2-5. Both subcommittees have met several times. The purpose of this study session is to provide an opportunity for the City Council to discuss the status of the two subcommittees and their direction on the development of next steps. A number of legislative actions have recently occurred which may impact any zoning or planning actions.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Attachments

- A. District 1 subcommittee member Mayor Pro Tem Taylor's recommendations
- B. District 2-5 subcommittee recommendations

Report prepared by:

Starla Jerome-Robinson, City Manager

City of Menlo Park

Recommendations from Mayor Pro Tem Taylor, member of City Council subcommittee on planning and zoning in District 1

October 9, 2019

1. Identify immediate infrastructure improvements to alleviate traffic. The subcommittee recommends that the City Council complete its work on the transportation master plan (TMP), the transportation impact fee (TIF), and the Belle Haven neighborhood traffic management plan (BHNTMP). The subcommittee further recommends that the City's subcommittee on Facebook's Willow Village project incorporate traffic mitigations in their discussions with Facebook.

City Council action requested – Reaffirm prioritization of the TMP, TIF, and BHNTMP; appoint Facebook Willow Village subcommittee.

2. **THERE NEEDS TO BE A MORE IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN. A MORE MODERATE BALANCE TO THE HOUSING DENSITY STANDARDS BETWEEN BELLE HAVEN AND THE REST OF THE CITY. THIS DOES NOT REQUIRE AN UPDATE TO THE GENERAL PLAN THIS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED BEFORE ANY MORE APPLICATONS FOR RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS ARE ACCEPTED OR APPROVED.**

Initiate update to the General Plan's housing, land use, and environmental justice elements and update the zoning code. The subcommittee recommends that the City Council prioritize an update to several key elements of the General Plan to incorporate changes in state law since the last General Plan update (SB1000, AB617, and SB330). The update is expected to begin in early 2020 and continue through mid-2022 to allow for extensive community engagement, the necessary studies, and analysis to update the General Plan and zoning codes, and multiple public hearings at both the planning commission and City Council.

City Council action requested – The City Council may consider providing the following direction to staff to ensure that this recommendation is properly resourced:

- i. Direct staff to return with a proposed budget to complete the recommended work. The City's most recent General Plan update and Housing Element update cost approximately \$2.53 million. With a broader scope and inflation, the cost for the General Plan update will likely exceed \$2-3 million over twenty-four months.
 - ii. Direct staff to prepare a public engagement plan for the General Plan update.
3. ConnectMenlo community amenities list. The subcommittee recommends that the City Council update the community amenities list. The community amenities list was adopted as part of Connect Menlo General Plan update and is intended to offset the impact of bonus level development in the Bayfront neighborhood.

City Council action requested – The City Council may consider two options to advance this recommendation from the subcommittee:

- i. Direct staff to return with a public engagement plan sufficient to solicit feedback from affected stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and property owners. This option provides stakeholders the opportunity to collaborate in the revised community amenity list but will take resources away from other projects.
- ii. Accept Mayor Pro Tem Taylor's recommended revisions, Attachment B, to the community amenities list and direct staff to return with the enabling City Council action. This option requires the least resources.

4. Community education series on development processes. The subcommittee recommends that the City Council prioritize staff resources to develop an education series on the development process. The first session envisioned provides a basic overview of the City's development processes and procedures, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and other legal requirements that determine how a property owner can develop their property. The second session is intended to provide the public with a greater understanding of the community's opportunities to influence development activity. Included in the second session are an in-depth review of the environmental impact report (EIR) process and the linkages between project applications. Also included in the second session is an overview of the online tools available to members of the public.
City Council action requested – The City Council may consider the following options to advance this recommendation from the subcommittee:
 - i. Direct staff to prioritize the education series with the sessions occurring in early January.

5. Joint study session with Menlo Park Fire Protection District (MPFPD) on evaluation/emergency access planning. The subcommittee recommends that the City Council hold a joint meeting with the MPFPD to discuss evacuation and emergency access in the Belle Haven neighborhood. As a result of the study session, the two agencies may consider collaboration on updates to evacuation plans for all Menlo Park residents and discuss opportunities to improve emergency vehicle access to the Belle Haven and Bayfront neighborhoods during periods of congestion.
City Council action requested – Direction to invite MPFPD to a joint study session.

6. Air quality monitoring. The subcommittee supports the installation of air quality monitors in the Belle Haven neighborhood, and the City has sent a letter, Attachment A, to San Mateo County requesting sensors as part of their smart communities effort through SMC Labs.
City Council action requested – None.

Subcommittee Districts 2-5 Report to Council – 10.15.19

Our town continues to struggle with inadequate housing availability and affordability, and traffic congestion that chokes our streets. These are symptoms of a serious jobs/housing imbalance that has been growing over time and continues to worsen. Net new non-residential development with associated jobs, adds commuter traffic to our streets, and pushes out current residents and residents of moderate incomes. Our subcommittee believes that Menlo Park should immediately encourage construction of multi-family housing throughout Menlo Park, especially in districts 2-5.

In particular, our subcommittee recommends:

- Stimulate building of new multi-family housing units in Districts 2-5:
 - Use the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan area as a focal point
 - Streamline the planning and permitting process to encourage construction of the remaining housing units available under the ECR/DSP caps (approximately 180 units).
 - Adjust the zoning code to encourage more multi-family units on the existing land within the ECR/DSP.
 - Rezone areas in Districts 2-5 for residential mixed uses to promote more and denser housing development, especially close to essential services and transit.
- Identify city land downtown, and potential partners to take the lead in building affordable housing (also missing middle and senior housing).
- Revise the ADU ordinance citywide to encourage building new ADUs to add to the housing supply at a lower affordability level – ADU reach code.
- Update the General Plan (housing, environmental justice, land use, zoning) to meet the new Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) numbers.