



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday May 4, 2016

City Hall, 8th floor Conference Room
250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301
3:00 PM TO 6:00 PM

TITLE: Sustainability Subcommittee Discussion
FROM: Elena Lee, Interim Planning Manager, Planning & Community Environment Department

The City of Palo Alto's Draft Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (SCAP) is a bold document that outlines a roadmap for reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 80 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2030. It contains proposed principles, goals and strategies regarding mobility, energy efficiency and electrification, water management, resilience and adaptation, the natural environment, and other issues on which the Comp Plan has direct bearing. Recognizing this, the City Council directed staff to work toward integrating the two plans and City staff is hoping for the subcommittee's assistance as outlined here. We anticipate that the S/CAP will be incorporated by reference in the Comp Plan Update, but the S/CAP will be a stand-alone document that can be refined and adopted on its own schedule and subsequently modified without a Comp Plan amendment. This is important because Comp Plan amendments can require a significant process and the S/CAP will need to be evaluated and modified on an ongoing basis to achieve its stated goal.

To build a solid bridge between the Comp Plan and SCAP, staff proposes to include policy language in the Comp Plan incorporating the S/CAP by reference and embracing the "80 x 30" GHG reduction goal it sets forth. Subcommittee suggestions on the location and specifics of this policy language are welcome.

Also, staff would appreciate the Subcommittee's help in ensuring there are a handful of intersecting policies in each element of the Comp Plan in order to align the policy framework of the SCAP and the Comp Plan where appropriate. Some of the work that's already been done (on the Transportation Element for example) is consistent with the S/CAP and may require very little adjustment. In other elements (Safety for example), much more work will be required. Also, staff expects that it will be the City Council, and not the S/CAP or the CAC, which decides how to address the issue of housing and land use (specifically how many housing units to plan for in 2030). So we recommend the Subcommittee review the Land Use element with this in mind, potentially focusing on ensuring the intersection between land use and transportation is clear, and that concepts such as "transit oriented development" and "walkable neighborhoods" are affirmatively and adequately incorporated.

The transportation/land use intersection is already the focus of discussion at the full CAC in the guise of “adaptive” growth management strategies, and while staff would like to ensure that the “no net trips” approach outlined in EIR Mitigation Measure TRANS-1a remains in future drafts, it could certainly be articulated within the framework of sustainability.

By way of background, the Draft S/CAP and Appendices can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rtvhcpzqey6pk5e/AABOfA7XRxp4IU7vUmW2OH3Za?dl=0>.

What to Expect at the Meeting

City Manager Jim Keene and Chief Sustainability Office Gil Friend will be at the sustainability subcommittee meeting on May 4 to meet the subcommittee members and provide context and direction for the task of integrating the Comp Plan and SCAP. With the preliminary draft of the Comp Plan Land Use Element in development and the revised preliminary draft of the Transportation Element scheduled to return to the CAC in June, staff suggests that the timing is right for the sustainability to focus on recommending intersecting policies for these two elements. Many of the key concepts already built into the Land Use and Transportation Elements support the goals and objectives of the SCAP, so staff suggests that the sustainability subcommittee could consider and discuss the following questions on May 4:

- Which policies in the current draft of the Land Use and Transportation Elements establish a strong link with the S/CAP, and do these need to be adjusted in any way?
- Are there other policies that should be added to either element to strengthen support for SCAP goals and objectives?
- Where is the appropriate place for a Comp Plan policy to incorporate the S/CAP by reference as well as the S/CAP goal of reducing GHG emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2030? Staff has been assuming this will be included in the Natural Resources Element with other policies regarding air quality; does the subcommittee agree?

To facilitate the discussion, the current draft of each element is attached to this packet:

- Attachment A - Revised Land Use Element Policy Framework 20160502
- Attachment B - Preliminary Draft Transportation Element 201603

Next Steps

Staff will summarize subcommittee recommendations on land use and incorporate intersecting policies into the Preliminary Draft Land Use Element for review by the full CAC on May 17, 2016. Similarly, staff will summarize subcommittee recommendations on transportation and incorporate intersecting policies into the revised draft Transportation Element, set to return to the CAC in June. The full CAC will have an opportunity to review and comment on sustainability subcommittee recommendations before each element goes to City Council for review.