



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

**Tuesday July 26, 2016**

Palo Alto City Development Center, First Floor Conference Room  
1:00 PM TO 4:00 PM

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

The land use subcommittee met several times and discussed options for the “Cumulative Growth Management & Monitoring” subsection of the Land Use Element. The full CAC considered these options at the July 19 meeting. In developing these options, one idea the subcommittee generated was the use of both performance measures, which ensure new projects reflect the high standard for development in Palo Alto, and community sustainability metrics, which ensure that the City as a whole is on track to meet the sustainability goals the Council has adopted. These community sustainability metrics would be used in a proposed 10-year evaluation when the city would decide whether development caps should be raised, lowered or eliminated.

There were some subcommittee members who preferred using performance measures only to promote sustainability, others who preferred an “all of the above” approach to monitoring and growth management strategies, and still others who suggested using an annual limit plus performance measures would be the right way to go (i.e. no cap). Whatever the final mechanism, based on the discussion July 19, it seems like there is broad support for including both the performance measures and the community sustainability metrics in the suite of policies and programs that is ultimately forwarded to the City Council. Staff would like the subcommittee to delve into both tools in greater detail and flesh them out for further CAC discussion at the August 16 CAC meeting.

To support the subcommittee conversation, staff offers some additional explanation of the differing roles of performance measures versus community sustainability metrics.

- Performance Measures:
  - Are imposed on new development at the time of approval (whether through changes to the zoning ordinance or standard conditions of approval).
  - Are not applied to existing development.

- Support and add to existing development standards required of all new development with a particular emphasis on promoting sustainability.
- Community Sustainability Metrics:
  - Evaluate the progress toward greater sustainability of the community as a whole, including existing and new development.
  - Reflect the outcomes of changes in behavior, new technologies, etc., over the planning period to improve sustainability, not only the outcomes of new construction.
  - Help the community understand its performance, recognize successes, and tailor efforts to areas where improvement is still needed.

The metrics will be most effective in achieving this role if they are focused on a concise list of key indicators for sustainability and are based on readily available (and reliable) data. It is important to understand that the metrics are not about achieving a specific end point, but about taking a snapshot, or check-up, of the City to measure progress over time.

A final note on “sustainability”: while some CAC members expressed interest in dropping this term, the Council has specifically directed that sustainability be one of the primary themes of the updated Comp Plan and of the Land Use Element specifically. We know that sustainability is an important topic for the Council, so staff suggests leaving this term in.

### **What to Expect at the Meeting**

Table 1 below presents the list of performance measures to promote sustainability and community sustainability metrics with updates reflecting CAC input from July 19. Staff suggests that the sustainability subcommittee could consider and discuss the following questions on July 26:

- Does this revised table include the right topics to promote sustainability in new development and measure community sustainability ??
- What is the right schedule for revisiting the list of measures and metrics to evaluate their effectiveness? The Land Use subcommittee suggested 10 years. Other CAC members were interested in considering a shorter time-frame. Keep in mind that the effect of some measures may take time to become evident.
- Are there certain topics that might be better located in other Elements, such as the upcoming Natural Resources and Environment Element, rather than in Land Use? For example, metrics or performance measures related to noise could be captured in the Safety and Noise Element.

**Table 1: Summary of Performance Measures and Community Sustainability Metrics**

Performance Measures (Measures applied to new development to promote sustainability)	Community Sustainability Metrics (Metrics that are monitored over time to gauge Community Sustainability)
a. Trip reduction: a specific percentage reduction from typical SOV commuter trips	1. MT of greenhouse gas emissions & progress towards the SCAP goal (80% below 1990 emissions by 2030)
b. Water conservation: meeting a per capita water use target at or below existing per capita average	2. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita
c. Resource conservation: achieving a specific green building or energy conservation standard.	3. % of commute trips to employment centers by SOV
d. Urban forest, open space, and habitat: preserving or increasing natural ground cover or a percent landscape/open space areas	4. Jobs/housing balance (expressed as a ratio of jobs to employed residents)
e. Parking & loading: meeting demand without providing excess parking that will encourage auto trips	5. Community diversity, especially income diversity (metric TBD)
f. Displacement: no net loss of affordable dwelling units	6. Acres of protected open space
g. Glare, noise, shade: avoiding significant impacts	7. School quality- PAUSD spending per student

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

- Attachment A - Revised Land Use Element Policy Framework 20160502

**Next Steps**

Staff will summarize subcommittee recommendations on the performance measures and community sustainability metrics and incorporate into the Land Use Element Policy Framework for review by the full CAC on August 16, 2016. The full CAC will have an opportunity to review and comment on sustainability subcommittee recommendations before the Land Use Element goes to City Council for review.