



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT**

October 5, 2016

Downtown Library – El Camino Real Room
270 Forest Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

TITLE: Natural Environment Element Subcommittee Discussion
FROM: Elena Lee, Interim Planning Manager,
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Background

This will be the second subcommittee meeting on the Natural Environment Element.

As discussed at the initial meeting of the Natural Environment subcommittee, the next two meetings of the subcommittee will focus on specific topics in order to allow time for focused and detailed discussions. To support this approach, the attached policy framework includes **only** the goals that are to be discussed on October 5:

1. N-5: Air Quality, which has been revised to reflect input from the August 30 meeting
2. N-6: Noise, which was not discussed at the August 30 meeting and has not been revised
3. N-7: Energy (including a new light pollution policy), which has been revised to reflect input from the August 30 meeting
4. N-8: Climate Change and Climate Adaptation, which was not discussed at the August 30 meeting and has not been revised

Since August 30, the policies in the attached framework have been re-organized based on subcommittee and CAC input on the organization of the Element, and have also been renumbered to match the updated Comp Plan format of other Elements.

Staff from the Airport, Utilities, and Public Works departments will be present to share information about specific initiatives relevant to the meeting topics. The agenda is timed to enable these staff to attend only for the relevant portions of the meeting.

At this meeting, the subcommittee will identify issues for further discussion at the next meeting of the full CAC on the Natural Environment Element, to be held on October 18, 2016. Following this meeting, City staff and the consultants will prepare a staff report for the October 18 CAC meeting that summarizes the subcommittee discussion and outlines the issues on which the CAC may choose to focus.

Policy changes related to the remaining topics will be the focus of the third Natural Environment subcommittee meeting, which will be held after the October CAC meeting. The remaining goals for subcommittee meeting #3 in November will be: Open Space, Creeks and Riparian Areas, Urban Forest, and Water Resources. The goals in the existing Natural Environment Element that the City Council directed to move to a new Safety Element (Goal N-6: Hazardous Materials, Goal N-7: Solid Waste, and Goal N-10: Natural Hazards) have been removed and will be discussed with the Safety subcommittee and full CAC.

Organization

At the September 20 meeting, the full CAC provided direction on a recommended organization, based on the initial subcommittee input from the August 30 meeting. Based on that feedback, the Natural Environment Element has been reorganized as shown in Attachment B, toward the goal of providing a practical, implementable element.

Policy Framework Changes and Issues

The attached Natural Environment policy framework reflects the input of the Natural Environment and Sustainability subcommittees at their August 30 meeting. Tracked changes in the attached policy framework illustrate insertions and deletions from the existing Natural Environment Element based on PTC revisions, City staff input, EIR mitigation measures, S/CAP strategies, and prior subcommittee discussion of Goals N-5 (Air Quality) and N-7 (Energy). When individual policies and programs have been moved to other Elements, those are shown as deletions and noted in comment bubbles. (As noted above, the entire goals that have been moved to the Safety Element are not shown in strikethrough.)

The major changes under each goal are listed below:

Goal N-5 Air Quality

- Added new sources of pollutants Policy N5.2 regarding reducing emissions, to more accurately reflect current primary pollution sources of concern. Previous Program N-42, prohibiting new wood burning stoves, has been deleted, as such appliances are already prohibited. In order to prioritize education over incentives, a proposed PTC program to provide incentives to replace wood burning fireplaces has been deleted. Program N5.2.3, which calls for providing information about the overall health impacts of particulate emissions, has been added.
- The issue of replacing of gas powered appliances with electric appliances, referenced in a deleted PTC program, is covered in the Energy section.
- Program N5.2.2, which calls for cooperation with the County and BAAQMD to ensure healthful mining and industrial operations, has been added to reflect concerns over the Lehigh cement plant, but is intentionally worded broadly to capture other pollution sources as well.

Goal N-6 Noise

The subcommittee and CAC have not yet discussed substantive changes to these policies and programs, so no subcommittee revisions are reflected. However, policies have been revised based on City staff review to reflect an appropriate level of detail, consistent with the level of detail in other Comp Plan policies. The level of detail in the current wording is more appropriate for the Noise Ordinance, so Program N6.3.1 has been added to update noise impact review procedures.

Goal N-7 Energy

- To better address and deliver the range of topics related to energy provision and conservation, policies and programs under Goal N-7 have been reorganized so that policies and programs on the same topic (e.g. alternative energy, energy conservation and efficiency, CPAU operations) are grouped together.
- Policy N7.7 and two accompanying programs have been added to Goal N-7 to address citywide energy independence and resiliency, including the development of a redundant city power source and off-grid power supplies.
- Policy N7.8 regarding light pollution has been added. In addition, note that current, Municipal Code provisions related to light pollution include:
 - Chapter 18.23.030 Performance Criteria for Multiple Family, Commercial, Manufacturing and Planned Community Districts provides requirements to minimize the visual impacts of lighting on abutting or nearby residential sites. Requirements include limiting illumination at abutting residential property lines, shielding lights, and directing lighting so as not to impact adjacent land uses.
 - The Development Standards of the Downtown Commercial District (Chapter 18.18) identify “glare” and “night illuminations” as two of numerous “prohibited nuisances.”
 - Chapter 16.14.170 of the City’s Green Building Requirements states that “Section A4.106.10 Light Pollution Reduction, of the California green building code, is adopted as a Tier 1 and Tier 2 elective measure and shall apply to all covered projects,” with the exception of high-rise [HR] buildings.
- Policy N7.11 encouraging a shift to all-electric buildings is consistent with the Draft S/CAP recommendations. However, subcommittee members expressed different viewpoints at the August 30 meeting. Because the current draft wording is to “encourage” rather than require, the wording has been left as is.
- Staff checked with CPAU about the possibility of a proposed new policy limiting city power procurement to sources/projects that do not impact endangered species. CPAU is committed to providing a [carbon-neutral electricity supply \[link\]](#) from sources including solar, wind, landfill-gas-to-energy plants and hydroelectric projects and has many long term power contracts in place to ensure a reliable supply of renewable energy. CPAU requires that all of the facilities from which CPAU procures electricity must comply with applicable State, federal and local environmental rules and regulations, including individual environmental review and permitting processes. CPAU relies on

those State and federal environmental laws and controls that protect endangered species, which the developers of renewable energy power plants must comply with and which the governing bodies approving those developments must enforce.

Goal N-8 Climate Change and Climate Adaptation

The subcommittee and CAC have not yet discussed substantive changes to these policies and programs, so no subcommittee revisions are reflected. However, Programs N8.4.2, N8.4.3, and N8.4.4 have been refined based on staff review and input and to reflect the current name “Sustainability and Climate Action Plan” rather than the old “Climate Protection Plan.”

What to Expect at the Meeting

At the outset of the meeting, time will be given over to public comment from members of the community. Speakers will be allowed up to three minutes to share their thoughts on issues addressed in the Natural Environment Element, ideally with a focus on the topics to be addressed at the October 5 meeting (Air Quality, Noise, Energy, Climate Change and Adaptation, and Light Pollution). Time limits are intended to ensure that there is an opportunity for members of the public to express their opinions, while also ensuring that the subcommittee can complete the agenda set out for the meeting.

Next Steps

The four topics addressed at this meeting of the Natural Environment subcommittee will be reflected in a revised policy framework and will be brought forward to the full CAC in the packet for the October 18 meeting. The Natural Environment subcommittee will have one additional meeting in either late October or early November to review the remaining four goals of the Natural Environment policy framework:

- N-1: Open Space
- N-2: Creeks and Riparian Areas
- N-3: Urban Forest and Understory
- N-4: Water Resources

Following the third meeting of the subcommittee, a Draft Natural Environment Element will be developed.

Attachments

- A. Natural Environment Element Policy Framework, Goals N-5 through N-8
- B. Natural Environment Element and Safety Element Outline