



Legislation Text

File #: 16-341, **Version:** 1

Staff Report and Presentation on the Draft 2035 San Leandro General Plan and Related Draft Environmental Impact Report

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational report only and no City Council action is required.

The City of San Leandro released a Draft General Plan (Draft Plan) and related Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), the latter required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for public review on June 1, 2016. Tonight's presentation provides an opportunity to review the Public Review Draft document in its entirety, and to hear City Council and public comments on the Draft Plan and DEIR.

It is anticipated that the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Plan Addendum will be posted to the Project website (www.sanleandro2035.org <<http://www.sanleandro2035.org>>) in mid-August 2016. These two documents, along with the DEIR and Public Review Draft General Plan, will be brought to the Planning Commission for action at a public hearing tentatively scheduled for August 25, 2016. Following Planning Commission action, the General Plan/General Plan Addendum and DEIR/ FEIR will be forwarded to the City Council for adoption, tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2016. Once the City Council has adopted the Plan, the General Plan Addendum will be integrated into a "Final" Plan, which will serve as an important public document for future City use and public information.

BACKGROUND

Every city and county in California is required to prepare a general plan guiding its future growth. State law requires that general plans include the following seven elements:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Open Space
- Conservation
- Safety
- Noise

San Leandro has incorporated these elements and also added the following "optional" elements to its

Plan:

- Economic Development
- Historic Preservation and Community Design
- Community Services and Facilities.

The Housing Element of the General Plan stands alone as a separate document, and is subject to review and certification by the State. It must be updated every eight years, according to a schedule approved by the legislature. Because Housing Elements for 2015-2023 were due to the State in January 2015, San Leandro prioritized completion of the Housing Element and made this the first task of the 2014-2016 General Plan Update process. The remaining elements are not subject to State certification, although periodic updates are recommended to ensure that the Plan complies with new legislation and best practices, and continues to be relevant and useful.

The City retained a consultant to undertake the General Plan Update in March 2014. The project was characterized as a General Plan Update, and not a brand new General Plan, as was prepared in 1998-2002. Rather than starting “from scratch,” the focus was on updating factual information in the 2002 Plan and revisiting the existing policies and actions to reflect current issues, objectives, laws, and community perspectives.

Much of the work completed during early 2015 consisted of an “audit” of the policies in the existing plan and a discussion of which policies in that plan should be deleted, carried forward, or edited. The work also included an update of the General Plan Map to reflect development since 2002, new development opportunities, ongoing plans and projects [such as the Shoreline Development Plan and the Downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy], and projections for the year 2035. Concurrently the City prepared a DEIR for the General Plan Update, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act.

Community input was solicited throughout the General Plan Update process. In addition to the nine Planning Commission study sessions, study sessions were also convened with the Board of Zoning Adjustments, the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Human Services Commission, Library-Historical Commission, the Rent Review Board, the Youth Advisory Commission, the Senior Commission, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Several study sessions of the City Council also were convened. Presentations and work sessions were held with various neighborhood and community groups, business groups, housing advocates, and local interest groups. In addition, four rounds of community workshops were held, including one focused on housing (July 30, 2014), one focused on a citywide vision (October 23 and 28, 2014), one focused on policy options (April 30, 2015), and one focused on Draft policies and the General Plan Map (January 12, 2016). A General Plan website also was created and regularly updated throughout the project. In all, more than 60 public meetings were held over the course of the two year period between March 2014 and May 2016.

The Draft General Plan and Draft EIR (DEIR) were released on June 1, 2016. The DEIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse, and interested parties were notified by email of the 45-day review period for submitting written/e-mailed comments. The 45-day period ends on July 15, 2016.

ANALYSIS

The 2035 General Plan will replace the 2015 General Plan. Each chapter of the Plan has been updated to incorporate current data and forecasts and to discuss current issues. All maps, charts, and tables have been updated. The Planning Area boundary has been updated to show a change to the San Leandro Sphere of Influence that took place after the last General Plan was adopted. In addition, the goals, policies and actions have been comprehensively updated.

One of the most important differences between the 2015 Plan and the 2035 Plan is the use of new demographic and economic forecasts. The 2015 Plan used forecasts developed in the Year 2000 and looked ahead to the year 2015. The 2035 Plan uses forecasts developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) through the Plan Bay Area regional planning process in 2013-2014. These forecasts show San Leandro growing much more rapidly during the next 20 years than it did during the last 20 years. Forecasts for the City are indicated below:

	2015	2035	2015-2035 Increase
Households	31,315	36,685	5,370
Population	88,450	102,270	13,820
Employment	43,400	55,500	12,100

The projected increase of 5,370 households equates to approximately 275 new housing units a year, a rate of construction not seen in San Leandro since the 1980s. The 20-year growth forecast would represent a 17 percent increase in households and a 25 percent increase in jobs over current conditions. The General Plan directs most of this growth to areas within one-half mile of the city’s two BART stations and along the East 14th Street corridor.

The new Plan carries forward many of the recommendations of the City’s prior Plan, as well as plans adopted in more recent years such as the Climate Action Plan and the Downtown Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy. It also incorporates new directives responding to public input on topics relating to the future of the city, such as pedestrian and bicycle safety, a desire for more sit-down restaurants and entertainment venues, and opportunities to leverage the Lit San Leandro fiber optic network. The new Plan places a greater emphasis on topics such as sustainability, greenhouse gas reduction, and public health. It also includes an Economic Development Element, which was not included in the 2015 Plan.

In April 2016, the City published a “Compendium of Policies” listing all goals, policies, and actions in the proposed 2035 Plan. The Compendium was formatted to provide a “crosswalk” between the 2015 Plan and the 2035 Plan, with red text highlighting the changes being made. The Compendium provides a tool for quickly determining which policies are new and which are being edited or carried forward. It also traces the source for each policy, noting whether it originated in the prior Plan, another document, or from staff or public input.

Each chapter of the General Plan is outlined below, with major changes noted:

† **Introduction (Chapter 1)** describes the 2014-2016 General Plan process and introduces the reader to the document.

† **San Leandro in Perspective (Chapter 2)** includes background data on San Leandro. This chapter describes San Leandro's history and development, its role within the region, and the trends shaping its future. Data from the prior Plan on population, the economy, land use, and transportation has all been updated. The revised forecasts (for 2035) are presented.

† **The Land Use Element (Chapter 3)** is comprised of the following "sub-elements":

- † An overall framework for the city's development, including the General Plan Map.
- † Residential Neighborhoods, profiling the city's neighborhoods, major issues, and goals for the future.
- † Employment and Mixed Use Districts, profiling the city's mixed use and industrial areas, major issues, and goals for the future.
- † Strategies for eight "focus areas," which are parts of the city where the most substantial changes are anticipated during the next 15 years.
- † An overview of land use designations and policies for the unincorporated San Leandro Planning Area.

Each of these sections also appeared in the previous General Plan. The content has been completely revised through the Update process. The Framework section has been expanded to address new concerns about climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, public health, and the 21st Century workplace. The concept of "Priority Development Areas" is introduced. The City Structure Map and Land Use Map have been updated. Policies for Residential Neighborhoods have been amended to address second units, live-work development, multiple homes on single family lots, the needs of multi-generational households, the concept of "complete neighborhoods," and new modes of communication such as social media. Policies on Employment and Mixed Use districts have been changed significantly, building in the recommendations of recent plans and studies for Downtown, East 14th Street, and the San Leandro Shoreline. The concept of "Innovation Districts" is introduced, and new implementation tools are described in light of the elimination of redevelopment agencies in 2012. A new goal on Growth Management has been added, with accompanying new policies.

The 2002 Land Use Element included a discussion of 10 "Focus Areas." There are now eight Focus Areas, including Downtown, the San Leandro BART Station area, the Bay Fair BART Station area, East 14th Street, the Shoreline Development Area, the Marina Boulevard corridor, Mid-Washington Avenue, and the MacArthur corridor. Narrative and policy guidance for each area is provided. The Land Use Element also includes a discussion of the unincorporated sphere of influence; that discussion has been updated to reflect recent plans for Ashland and Castro Valley.

† **The Transportation Element (Chapter 4)** addresses the movement of people and goods in and around San Leandro. It is organized by topical headings corresponding to different modes of travel (e.g., bicycles, transit, autos, etc.) and transportation issues (e.g., traffic safety, parking, etc.). The Element chronicles existing conditions and describes anticipated conditions in 2035. Maps identifying the city's future circulation system are included.

This Element has been updated to incorporate the concept of "Complete Streets" (which is mandated by the State) and to address the impacts of technology on travel patterns and behavior. A new section on "Transportation Demographics" has been added, with data provided on the

commute patterns and vehicle ownership patterns of San Leandro residents. The text also has been updated to reflect the 2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, proposed Bus Rapid Transit improvements, the LINKS shuttle, and recent changes to the roadway system (e.g., redesign of San Leandro Boulevard, etc.). The Truck Route Map for the City has also been updated. Traffic forecasts for 2035 are presented, including the identification of congested intersections. The Element also includes current information on parking, traffic calming, and safety.

Policies and actions in the Transportation Element have been comprehensively updated. The policies emphasize the use of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a metric for measuring the impacts of future development on the road network. A new goal on “Complete Streets” has been added, including policies to make sure that roads are designed for all travelers and not just automobiles. Policies and actions on bicycle and pedestrian travel have been completely rewritten to reflect the 2011 Master Plan. Recommendations for BART and AC Transit have been updated to reflect current priorities. The Plan also emphasizes coordination with Oakland and Alameda County to reduce truck traffic on residential streets.

† **The Economic Development Element (Chapter 5)** is a new addition to the San Leandro General Plan. It identifies policies and actions to attract business and strengthen the local economy, support the success of existing businesses, embrace innovation, create vibrant retail centers, and create pathways to jobs for San Leandro residents. Some of the content of this Element is taken from the 2002 Land Use Element, but most of it is new. The Element incorporates the City’s Economic Development Strategy and many of the recommendations of the Next Generation Workplace District Study.

Policies and actions in this element are organized under the following six goal headings:

- Business Attraction and Diversification
- Economic Prosperity
- Innovation
- Vibrant Retail Centers
- Business Amenities
- Workforce Development

† **The Open Space, Parks, and Conservation, Element (Chapter 6)** addresses the management of open space and the conservation of natural resources such as soil, water, plants and animals, air, and energy. The Element establishes guidelines for the management and maintenance of parks, priorities for park improvement, and strategies to increase the amount of parkland in the city.

The text has been updated to place a greater emphasis on sustainability and global climate change. In addition, updated data on parks has been provided and new acreage tables and service standards are included. These reflect planned improvements to Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline, the East Bay Greenway, and opportunities for “urban” open spaces such as rooftop gardens, parklets, and plazas. Text on San Leandro Creek has been updated to reflect the Creek Trail Study, and recent efforts to improve the creek environment. Most of the conservation narrative is presented in the context of the City’s climate action strategy, including energy and water conservation goals and solid waste and recycling goals.

Policies and actions in this Element have also been updated. A greater emphasis is placed on parks and public health, and a “no net loss” policy for parkland acreage has been introduced.

Specific improvements to Downtown parks and non-traditional open spaces (such as community gardens) are included. The most substantial changes are in the Resource Conservation section, where key policies from the Climate Action Plan have been woven into the General Plan. Issues such as green building, low impact development, and Community Choice Aggregation are covered.

† **The Environmental Hazards Element (Chapter 7)** describes natural and manmade hazards in San Leandro. The Element describes current hazards, anticipates future hazards, and presents policies and programs to minimize future loss of life and property. The first part of the Element addresses earthquakes, landslides, flooding, wildfire, air and water quality, hazardous materials, and emergency preparedness. The second part of the Element describes the existing noise environment, projected noise conditions, and policies and programs to mitigate noise conflicts in the community.

This Element has been updated to include current data on earthquake risks and flooding, and additional information on wildfire hazards as required by Senate Bill 1241. It also describes the City's current Emergency Operations Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Current data on flood hazards and projected sea level rise is provided. Data on air and water pollution has been updated to 2016, and revised data on hazardous materials is included. The chapter also includes an updated Noise section, with current data on noise levels and new noise contour maps.

Policies and actions in this Element have been updated. There are new policies addressing sea level rise and resilience, wildfire hazard mitigation, health risk assessments for future development near freeways and other air pollution sources, and current water quality requirements for stormwater runoff. New policies are included relating to green infrastructure, pipeline safety, and the City's Brace and Bolt program.

† **The Historic Preservation and Community Design Element (Chapter 8)** addresses the visual character of the city and establishes priorities for the preservation of historic structures and sites. Its policies and programs ensure that new development makes a positive aesthetic contribution to the community, protects historic landmarks, and builds a stronger sense of local identity.

The 2002 narrative on historic preservation has been updated to reflect the current state of preservation efforts in the city. Community design text has been updated with new information on city gateways, public art, street trees, and wireless facilities. Policies and actions in this Element have been updated to incorporate state requirements for tribal resource consultation [SB 18 and Assembly Bill (AB) 52], new methods for preservation outreach and education, and updated priorities for beautification and streetscape improvements.

† **The Community Services and Facilities Element (Chapter 9)** addresses the provision of police, fire, school, library, and human services, as well as water, sewer, and drainage services to San Leandro residents and businesses. It is organized under topical headings corresponding to major service categories. Where appropriate, the Element includes projections of future service demand and identifies the capital improvements that may be needed to meet these demands.

The 2002 narrative in this chapter has been updated to incorporate current data on each service and to discuss current issues and forecasts. Current data on police services and crime rates is provided, along with plans for improvements to police facilities. Current fire and EMS statistics are provided. Updated information on school enrollment and capacity is presented. A new

section on cultural arts has been added. The narrative for utility services has been updated based on current conditions.

Similarly, the goals, policies, and actions in this section have been updated to reflect current and future priorities. In particular, a new goal on information services has been added, with new policies on expansion of fiber optics and technology resources. Policies on libraries have been expanded. The goals on child care, youth care, and senior services have been merged into a broader goal on human services. New policies on responsiveness to the culturally diverse needs of San Leandro residents have been added.

† **The Housing Element (Chapter 10)** is simply a one-page insert in the General Plan that informs the reader that the full Housing Element is a separate document that was adopted in January 2015.

† **Implementation (Chapter 11)** summarizes the activities and programs the City will undertake to implement the General Plan. This chapter contains no policies and is a summary of the actions in Chapter 3-9. Chapter 11 was not included in the June 1, 2016 release and will be developed following the study session on June 16 to ensure that any feedback on priorities is included.

General Plan Map

The General Plan includes a new Land Use Map for San Leandro. The following bulleted list highlights the major differences between the new Map and the existing General Plan Map. The new Map includes:

- A new land use category for high-density residential uses in the 30-50 unit/acre range (the current General Plan caps residential densities at 29.9 units per acre, except in mixed use areas). The new high-density residential category is being mapped in areas where the existing density already exceeds 30 units per acre, and is intended to reduce the number of properties in the city that are non-conforming for density.
- A new “Industrial-Transition” (I-T) category to recognize areas where existing (industrial) uses have a high potential to transition to new uses in the next 20 years. Industrial uses will continue to be supported in the I-T areas. However, these areas are acknowledged to have the potential for other activities such as offices, hotels, and shopping centers by 2035. Housing would only be permitted in Industrial-Transition areas if they are near a BART station.
- A new “Bay Fair Transit Oriented Development” category to recognize the fact that a Specific Plan is being prepared for the Bay Fair area. The new “B-TOD” designation will maximize flexibility for Bay Fair and avoid the need for extensive General Plan Map amendments when the new Plan is completed in Spring/Summer 2017.
- Elimination of the “Office” General Plan Map category, since the areas with this designation have largely been absorbed into other “mixed use” categories (such as Downtown and Transit-Oriented Development) where office is a permitted use.
- An increase in the allowable density in the Downtown Mixed Use category from 75 units per acre to 100 units per acre, and an increase in the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 2.0 to 3.5, to reflect current real estate trends and market economics.
- An increase in the allowable FAR in the Transit Oriented Mixed Use category from 4.0 to 5.0 for parcels adjacent to the BART station.
- Designation of the East Bay “Greenway” as a new open space on the Map.
- Minor map changes to reflect development that took place between 2002 and 2015.

- Minor map changes to more accurately reflect existing land uses.
- Map changes on the perimeter of Downtown to reflect existing densities and future transit-oriented development opportunities.
- Re-designation of Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline from “Resource Conservation” to “Parks and Recreation” and redesignation of Burrell Field from “Public/Institutional” to “Parks and Recreation.”

Summary of June 16 Planning Commission Meeting

On June 16, 2016, the San Leandro Planning Commission convened a public hearing and study session on the Draft General Plan, Draft EIR, and proposed zoning changes. One of the purposes of the hearing was to provide an opportunity for oral testimony on the Draft EIR before the end of the comment period on July 15, 2016.

There were two public comments on the General Plan and one comment on the DEIR received at the hearing. The General Plan comments included generally supportive remarks from Bike East Bay, with specific suggestions for strengthening the Transportation Element language on future bicycle facilities. The second comment was from a San Leandro resident and included specific recommendations for strengthening policies on historic preservation. The commenter on the EIR felt that the analysis did not adequately address future geologic hazards and traffic congestion. This commenter also expressed concerns about tree cutting and the future of the shoreline.

Most of the public feedback at the June 16 meeting related to the proposed zoning changes, and more specifically to the proposed rezoning of the 1300 - 1380 Bancroft Avenue site in the area east of Downtown. Public and Planning Commissioner comments can be found as an attachment to the staff report on the proposed amendments to the Zoning Code and Zoning Map which follows this agenda item.

Next Steps

Following tonight’s City Council hearing, staff will continue to receive comments on the Draft Plan, DEIR, and related Zoning Code changes. As required under CEQA, the official Draft EIR comment period closes on July 15, 2016. However, comments on the General Plan and related Zoning Code changes may still be provided beyond that date.

For comments on the DEIR, staff will prepare a “Response to Comments” document, including responses to the points raised in each letter received. Testimony at public meetings will be annotated, so that responses to oral comments may also be prepared. Where needed and appropriate, edits to the DEIR will be proposed in response to the comments. A Final EIR (FEIR) will be prepared which incorporates any changes, as well as copies of the comments and the City’s formal responses.

For comments on the General Plan, staff will prepare a “Plan Addendum.” The Addendum will indicate where specific changes will be made to the Draft Plan to incorporate public comments, including written and oral comments, and comments from the Planning Commission and City Council. The Addendum changes will be annotated to note the source/comment that prompted the change.

It is anticipated that the FEIR and Plan Addendum will be posted to the Project website (

www.sanleandro2035.org <<http://www.sanleandro2035.org>>) in mid-August 2016. These two documents, along with the DEIR and Public Review Draft General Plan, will be brought to the Planning Commission for action at a public hearing tentatively scheduled for August 25, 2016. Additional changes to the Addendum and FEIR may be considered at that hearing. A resolution for Planning Commission action, recommending approval of the documents by the City Council, would also be considered at that meeting.

Following Planning Commission action, the General Plan/General Plan Addendum and DEIR/ FEIR will be forwarded to the City Council for adoption, tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2016. Once the City Council has adopted the Plan, the General Plan Addendum will be integrated into a "Final" Plan, which will serve as an important public document for future City use and public information.

Environmental Review

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the DEIR was prepared by the City of San Leandro Community Development Department. The DEIR was released for public review on June 1, 2016 for a 45-day public review and comment period. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIR was distributed to State, local and stakeholder agencies, emailed to over 400 people on the General Plan 2035 interested parties list, and posted on the City's website.

The DEIR assesses the potential impacts of the proposed General Plan 2035. The following environmental topics are addressed in the DEIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

Due to the existing urbanization of the EIR Study Area, no environmental impacts associated with agricultural and forestry resources and mineral resources are expected to occur as a result of the proposed Project. These resource topics therefore were not addressed further in the DEIR.

Section 15126.2 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that "direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment shall be clearly identified and described, giving due consideration to both the short-term and long term effects."

Chapter 1, Executive Summary, of the DEIR contains Table 1-1, which summarizes the impacts,

mitigation measures, and levels of significance before and after mitigation. While actions from the Project and mitigation measures, where feasible, would reduce the level of impact to less than significant in most cases, the impacts listed below would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation measures are applied. In many cases, development allowed under the proposed Project would contribute to each of these significant and unavoidable impacts, but would not be the sole cause of the impact. These impacts or similar impacts are likely to occur in San Leandro over the next 20 years due to regional growth, regardless of whether the City adopts the updated General Plan and related Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The four issues where significant and unavoidable impacts exist in the DEIR are: Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise and Traffic.

Chapter 6 (“Alternatives to the Project”) of the DEIR also analyzes alternatives to the Project that are designed to reduce the significant environmental impacts of the Project and feasibly attain most of the Project objectives. The following alternatives to the Project were considered and analyzed in detail in Chapter 6 Chapter 6, as well as alternatives that were rejected for various reasons.

- No Project
- Reduced Industrial Development Alternative

The 45-day public comment period on the DEIR will end on July 15, 2016. In addition to all comments made at this public meeting, written comments are encouraged. All written comments related to the Draft EIR should be directed to Tom Liao, Deputy Community Development Director, Community Development Department, 835 E. 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94577 (fax: 510-577-6007), tliao@sanleandro.org. All written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on July 15, 2016. The DEIR may be found on the City of San Leandro General Plan 2035 website at <http://www.sanleandro2035.org/documents/> and copies may be reviewed at the San Leandro Main Library (located at 300 Estudillo Avenue) and the City’s Community Development Department at 835 E. 14th Street during normal business hours. Hard copies or a CD of the DEIR may also be obtained at the Community Development Department.

Attachments

The Draft General Plan, and related Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), were provided to City Council in hard copy and CD. These two documents were also made available online for the public as of June 1, 2016 at <http://www.sanleandro2035.org/documents/>.

PREPARED BY: Tom Liao, Deputy Community Development Director, Community Development Department, and Barry Miller, General Plan Consultant