



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Council Meeting Date: February 11, 2014  
Staff Report #: 14-028

Agenda Item #: F-2

**REGULAR BUSINESS:**                    **Authorize Staff to Proceed with the Preparation of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Consultant Services for the General Plan Update and M-2 Area Zoning Update**

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### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council consider the staff report, presentation and public comment and authorize staff to proceed with the preparation of the request for proposal (RFP) for consultant services for the General Plan Update and M-2 Area Zoning Update.

### BACKGROUND

On December 17, 2013, the City Council conducted a study session on the scope of work for the General Plan Update. The Council provided general comments, including general support for a focused update of the M-2 Area, and expressed an interest in hearing feedback from stakeholders and the Commissions before providing formal direction in February 2014. Staff conducted the outreach in January and early February 2014. A summary of the feedback is included in the Analysis section below.

On January 14, 2014, the City Council appointed Mayor Mueller and Council Member Ohtaki to the General Plan Update Subcommittee. The Subcommittee would meet as necessary to provide guidance to staff either as an ad hoc committee or as part of a larger advisory body that may be formed later in the process.

### ANALYSIS

#### Outreach Summaries

#### *Commissions*

Staff conducted outreach with the six City Commissions with some role in the physical development of the City. Staff made the same presentation at each meeting using the presentation given at the December 17, 2013 Council meeting as the template.

The minutes of the meetings are not yet available. Each Commission expressed an interest in the topic, asked questions, and provided individual comments. The following summarizes the collective input from each Commission.

***Transportation Commission (1/8/14):*** The Transportation Commission made the following motion that passed unanimously:

Recommend to City Council to include the Circulation Element in the General Plan Update and that the City do a thorough job of examining and updating its transportation policies so as to achieve the City's goals for the environment, quality of life , and economic development.

***Bicycle Commission (1/13/14):*** The Bicycle Commission expressed general agreement for a citywide, multi-modal approach to transportation, improving east/west connectivity, and support for involvement of the Bicycle Commission if an advisory committee is formed.

***Parks and Recreation Commission (1/22/14):*** Based on general consensus, the Parks and Recreation Commission expressed an interest in being involved in the process as it related to the following:

Explore opportunities for enhanced connections to recreational opportunities (e.g., Bedwell Bayfront Park and the Bay Trail) for employees in the M-2 Area and nearby residents through a cohesive and coordinated transportation system.

***Environmental Quality Commission (1/22/14):*** The Environmental Quality Commission formed an ad hoc group comprised of three Commissioners (Chair, Outgoing Vice Chair and Incoming Vice Chair) to formulate a recommendation on behalf of the entire Commission based on the dialogue at the meeting and related to the following topics, which are core to the Commission's mission: sustainability, water (source, use, conservation, etc.), climate (both mitigation and adaptation), and hazardous material use. The group's recommendation will be presented at the February 11 Council meeting.

***Planning Commission (1/27/14):*** The Planning Commission provided individual comments as summarized in Attachment C, and then communicated the following based on general consensus:

Recommend that the City Council establish guidelines for considering potential project-specific General Plan Amendments that may come forward during the General Plan Update process.

Commissioners Kadvany and Riggs would be willing to serve on a consultant selection committee if one were formed similar to the El Camino Real/Downtown planning process with the understanding that

Commissioner Riggs' term is up at the end of April 2014 and would potentially serve as an ex officio member.

**Housing Commission (2/5/14):** The Housing Commission voted unanimously to provide the following feedback to the City Council:

Explore the possibility of including some level of affordable housing as part of any residential rezonings considered as part of the General Plan Update.

### ***M-2 Property Owners***

Staff met with the following five property owners that control approximately two-thirds of the land in the M-2 Area through a series of individual meetings: Bohannon, Facebook, Prologis, TE, and Tarlton/Menlo Business Park. Two of the entities have representation on the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. All of the property owners expressed an interest in the update and a willingness to engage in the process. A summary of individual comments is included as Attachment D. In order to provide context for some of the property owner comments regarding thresholds based on floor area, Attachment E provides a snapshot of estimated building sizes in the M-2 Area on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

### ***Additional Outreach***

As part of the Belle Haven Neighborhood meeting scheduled for February 13, 2014, staff is scheduled to present on the General Plan update topic. Staff intends to reach out to additional nearby residential neighborhoods, such as Lorelei Manor and Suburban Park. As part of the Circulation Element Update, there will be a need to conduct Citywide outreach, which will occur at a later point in time.

### **Initial Givens for the General Plan Update**

On December 17, 2013, staff provided the following a set of "givens" or principles that would guide the overall development of the General Plan Update:

- Community outreach and engagement will be an integral and robust component of the process to develop the plan;
- Focus will be given to the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district, especially the evolutions of the area and the appropriateness of land uses, intensity of uses, development standards, project review procedures, and use of hazardous materials;
- Throughout development of the General Plan Update, pursue opportunities to establish goals and policies that will support streamlining of the development review process where appropriate;
- Inclusion of new concepts and strategies to address emerging needs, including Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Sea Level Rise, Complete Streets, and Transportation Management Associations;
- Land use and traffic projections for potential growth would be to the Year 2040 for general consistency with other local and regional plans; (e.g., Urban Water

Management Plan, City/Council Association of Governments (C/CAG) Traffic Model, etc.);

- Development of the General Plan will be informed by an Environmental Impact Report and a Fiscal Impact Analysis; and
- General Plan will comply with State law.

### **RFP Parameters**

Staff intends to consider both the individual comments and collective feedback in preparing the RFP. In addition to the givens above, staff will prepare the RFP with the following parameters in mind unless directed otherwise by the City Council:

- The Circulation Element update would be Citywide, but the focus would be east of El Camino Real.
- The General Plan would comply with the Complete Street Act of 2008.
- Potential changes to measuring transportation impacts (Vehicle Level of Service vs. Multi-Modal Level of Service) and the City's roadway classification systems (arterials, collectors, etc., as shown in Attachment A) should be considered.
- Material/substantive changes to the Land Use Element would be limited to M-2 Area for this phase of the General Plan Update.
- Increased intensities in the M-2 Area (as shown in Attachment B) in terms of Floor Area Ratios (FAR) and opportunities for a mix of land use in select locations would be considered through the process with the criteria to be established through the process. (This statement is in lieu of choosing one of the 3 options for the "Extent of M-2 Area Changes" presented on December 17, 2013).
- Zoning Ordinance Amendments applicable to the M-2 Area would be considered concurrently with the General Plan Update, and would include potential changes to the process for reviewing the use and storage of hazardous materials.
- Themes of sustainability, integration, connection should be pursued and environmental circumstances should be considered prior to preparation of the Environmental Impact Report.
- The Open Space/Conservation, Noise and Safety Elements would be updated as needed for consistency or another compelling reason.
- The Housing Element would only be updated if needed for consistency.
- The "stretch" goal is to complete adoption of the General Plan Update and Zoning Ordinance Amendments two years after award of contract with the understanding that this may result in impacts to other City projects.
- The City is interested in partnering with a consultant team that is knowledgeable in best practices, has a proven track record, is innovative and creative, and is tuned into the needs of the community.

In addition, staff would recommend that the RFP include consideration of an optional element. Although not part of the short term focus, consideration should be given to the potential creation of a Community Character Element as a policy document to incorporate community issues such as aesthetics, residential design guidelines, potential historic resources, various type of frontage improvements (i.e., sidewalks vs. parking strips), street tree canopies, overhead utility lines, neighborhood serving retail, etc. The

character would be examined on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis to understand existing conditions and trends. These various topics reflect topics that have been raised in various forums including the Capital Improvement Plan. By including this concept in the RFP, there may be potential efficiencies in terms of data gathering and preparation of the Environmental Impact Report.

Staff intends to present a work program/RFP, which incorporates input from the outreach to date, for Council consideration at the February 25, 2014 City Council meeting. The work program will include a recommendation or options related to community outreach and the potential formation of an outreach and oversight committee, steering committee, task force or some other type of advisory body. In addition, staff intends to recommend a process and timeline for screening the proposals and selecting the consultant team.

If there is any other specific consideration that Council would like staff to consider as part of the RFP preparation, Council should provide that feedback at the meeting.

### **Other Emerging Considerations**

#### ***Priority Development Areas***

Established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are locally designated areas within existing communities that have been identified and approved by local cities or counties for future growth. These areas are typically accessible to transit, jobs, shopping and other services. The boundaries of the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan are currently a PDA. This status provides the City with benefits when competing for regional grants. ABAG has recently issued guidelines for adding, removing or changing PDAs and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs). The M-2 Area may be a candidate for a new PDA. The General Plan Update would provide an avenue to consider the pros and cons of submitting an application, which ultimately requires adoption of a City Council resolution. Staff intends to evaluate this possibility unless directed otherwise by the City Council.

#### ***Complete Streets and Grant Funding***

To receive funding through the current One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program, a jurisdiction must have: 1) either updated its General Plan to comply with the "Complete Streets" Act of 2008 or adopted a "Complete Streets" Resolution; and, 2) have a certified Housing Element. For future funding cycles, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has provided preliminary guidance that jurisdictions will need to have updated its General Plan to comply with the "Complete Streets" Act of 2008 by January 31, 2015, the deadline for the next round (5<sup>th</sup> Cycle) of Housing Element updates for the Bay Area. The City intends to update the General Plan to comply with the Complete Streets requirements as part of the General Plan update, but the work would not be completed in time. Staff is in the process of exploring alternative ways to comply, lobbying to extend the deadline for cities that are in progress, or exploring alternative work plans to pursue the Complete Streets amendment prior to and discreet from the other General Plan update. Staff will keep the Council apprised of the situation as necessary.

## **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

The proposed work program would require both staff resources dedicated to the project, as well consultant services. The Council has budgeted \$2,000,000 for Fiscal Year 2013-14 for the General Plan Update for consultant assistance and staff time. A total of 3.5 full-time equivalent staff from Community Development and Public Works is allocated to the General Plan Update and the Housing Element. Dependent on the scope of the work program, additional funding may be necessary in future years. Similar to the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan, staff will explore options for a potential fee that could be imposed as a way to reimburse the City for the expenditure related to a specific geographic area.

## **POLICY ISSUES**

The General Plan update process will consider a number of policy issues.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The General Plan update is subject to CEQA and an EIR will be prepared at the appropriate time in the process.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, with this agenda item being listed. In addition, the City sent an email update to subscribers of the General Plan Update project pages. This page will provide up-to-date information about the project, allowing interested parties to stay informed of its progress and allow users to sign up for automatic email bulletins, notifying them when content is updated or meetings are scheduled.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Circulation Map
- B. Proposed M-2 Area Plan Boundary Map
- C. Draft Planning Commission Summary
- D. M-2 Property Owner Summary
- E. M-2 Building Sizes (Gross Square Footage per Property)

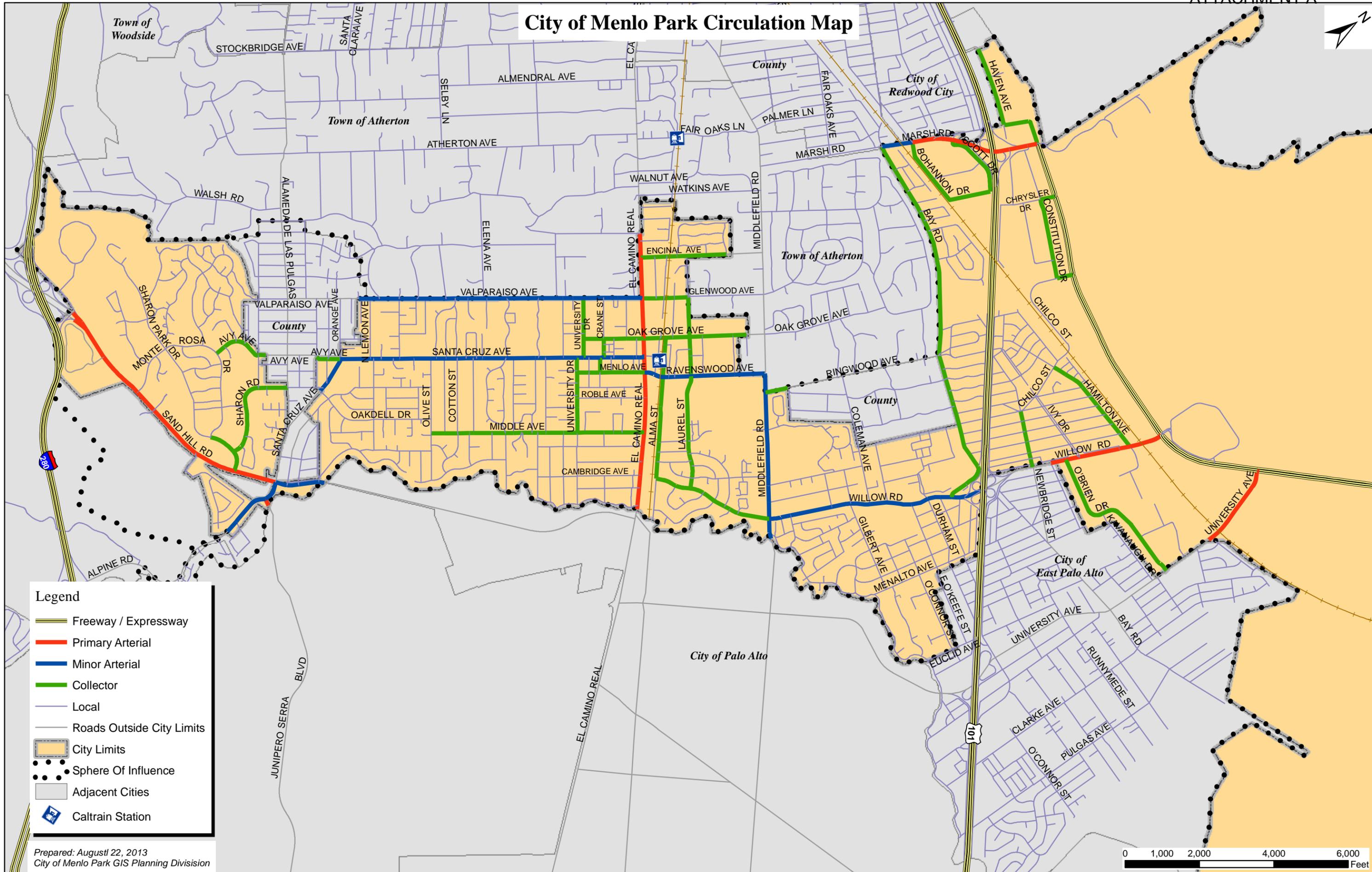
Report Prepared by:

*Justin Murphy*  
*Development Services Manager*

Report Reviewed by:

*Arlinda Heineck*  
*Community Development Director*

# City of Menlo Park Circulation Map



**Legend**

- Freeway / Expressway
- Primary Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Roads Outside City Limits
- City Limits
- Sphere Of Influence
- Adjacent Cities
- Caltrain Station

Prepared: August 22, 2013  
 City of Menlo Park GIS Planning Division



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**DRAFT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY**  
of Agenda Item E1

**Regular Meeting**  
**January 27, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025**

- E1. [General Plan Update/City of Menlo Park](#):** Overview of the Proposed General Plan Update and Discuss and Potentially Provide Comments to the City Council on the Scope of Work.

The Commission listened to the staff presentation, accepted public comment from one speaker, asked questions, and provided comments including the following:

- Include the Lorelei Manor and Suburban Park neighborhoods in the targeted outreach similar to the Belle Haven neighborhood.
- Articulate the City's vision for the use of the Dumbarton Rail Corridor.
- Clarify the term "Complete Streets", clarify whether it is already embodied in the existing General Plan, and clarify whether it is a given for inclusion as part of the Update.
- Examine the regional market trends and economic pressures on the M-2 Area and be clear about whether the City intends to change the zoning to be less restrictive (e.g., requiring fewer conditional use permits).
- Focus on what it is the City is attempting to accomplish through a potential change to the Roadway Classification System and not simply renaming streets.
- Consider the comments of the public speaker related to sustainable policies; connections with recreational opportunities (e.g., Bay Trail) and regional improvement plans (e.g., Salt Pond Restoration, SAFER Bay); and sea level rise.
- Draw a more direct connection between the relationship of impacts and benefits, with an emphasis on real benefits clearly outweighing impacts.
- Investigate a people mover system or other innovative transportation technology.
- Explore the introduction of other uses in the M-2 Area in order to reduce the potential number of new trips.
- Avoid introducing new residential uses in the M-2 Area that would be subject to flooding.
- Create rules that align with categorical exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in order to achieve streamlining.
- Clarify early in the process if the City's goal is to pursue enhancements to the economic development potential of the M-2 area so that subsequent decisions align with that goal.
- Consider community and civic aesthetics in various City decisions related to public spaces and private property.
- Explore self-mitigation of environmental impacts as a concept.
- Seek out opportunities for pilot projects or testing ideas during the General Plan Update process.
- Pursue new ways to reach out and communicate with people, especially those that do not attend traditional meetings.

The Commission also discussed the topic of residential design guidelines. Individual Commissioners expressed varying opinions about whether or not residential design guidelines should be considered as part of this phase of the General Plan Update, but at a minimum the Commission agreed to continue work by the Commission subcommittee as identified at the August 19, 2013 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission discussed the development of residential

design guidelines for use by staff when working with applicants and the Commission in the review of development proposals for single-family homes on substandard lots. After development of guidelines and a period of use, the Commission would consider expanding how the guidelines could be used on a broader scale.

Finally, the Commission communicated the following based on general consensus:

- Recommend that the City Council establish guidelines for considering potential project-specific General Plan Amendments that may come forward during the General Plan Update process.
- Commissioners Kadvany and Riggs would be willing to serve on a consultant selection committee if one were formed similar to the El Camino Real/Downtown planning process with the understanding that Commissioner Riggs' term is up at the end of April 2014 and would potentially serve as an ex officio member.

## Summary of Feedback from Outreach with Major M-2 Property Owners February 2014

- Clarify early in the process whether or not the City is interested in intensification of development above the current General Plan standards as an incentive for certain types of uses and benefits to the City.
- Differentiate review processes based on project types and increase the thresholds for use permit reviews. For example, differentiate between existing buildings and new buildings. Increase the threshold size from 10,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet or 50,000 square feet as the trigger for review.
- Allow greater flexibility for a building to evolve over time and change use, especially for buildings under a certain floor area threshold. (This flexibility would assist with incubator/co-working spaces).
- Narrow the universe of projects that require Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs).
- Use parking as a tool for regulating the intensity of the use of a site (consideration of minimum and maximum requirement, on-street parking restrictions, etc.)
- Provide avenues for flexibility through “planned development” zoning.
- Study the regional pipeline of development between Highway 92 in San Mateo and Highway 85 in Mountain View.
- Continue to pursue a potential transit station near the intersection of Willow Road and the Dumbarton Rail Right-of-Way near Hamilton Avenue and explore alternative uses of the rail corridor for transportation and recreational purposes.
- Explore the possibility of increased building heights under existing floor area ratios (FARs) provided there is adequate separation from single-family residential uses.
- Ensure that the process is structured for success in terms of roles for property owners, business owners, residents, other stakeholders, staff, and consultants.
- Some properties are better suited for certain uses based on location for reasons of visibility and pass-by trips along a high volume roadway, proximity to the freeway interchange or potential transit station, separation from single-family residential, and compatibility with existing land use patterns.
- Opportunities for collaboration and cooperation across various property owners in terms of transportation solutions should be explored.
- Pursue opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian amenities and safety.
- Retail services are important to employees, as well as nearby residents, but the key is financial feasibility.
- High density residential, as part of mixed-use developments in certain locations, may be attractive to meeting demand for housing for the local workforce.
- Recognize the intellectual property generated by Stanford University and the fact that many company executives reside in Menlo Park or immediately surrounding communities.
- Consider ways of granting FAR bonuses in exchange for certain commitments that would benefit the City.
- Study the trip equivalent concept and ways of creating incentives for robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.
- Offices are a complimentary use to other uses such as life sciences in terms of the need for financial, legal, marketing and administrative support functions.
- Explore the concept of Transfer of Development Rights within the M-2 area.

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# M-2 Planning Area Gross Square Footage



# M-2 Planning Area Gross Square Footage

