

# City of Sebastopol



**SEBASTOPOL**  
Local Flavor. Global Vision.

Mayor  
Robert Jacob  
City Council  
Patrick Slayter, Vice  
Mayor  
John Eder  
Sarah Glade Gurney  
Michael Kyes  
  
City Manager/City  
Attorney  
Larry McLaughlin  
City Clerk  
Mary Gourley

Meeting Date: Meeting of March 25, 2014  
To: City Council and Planning  
Commission  
From: Kenyon Webster, Planning Director  
Subject: Joint Meeting to Provide Overview of General Plan Update  
Process  
Recommendation: Receive Presentation  
Funding: Currently Budgeted:  Yes  No  N/A  
Net General Fund Cost:  
If Cost to Other Fund(s),

Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
City Manager/City Attorney 

Introduction: This report addresses the March 25 joint Council/Commission meeting to receive a presentation from the City's consultant, De Novo Planning Group, regarding the General Plan update process.

Background: Every city and county in California is required by state law to prepare and maintain a planning document called a 'general plan.' A general plan is designed to serve as the jurisdiction's "constitution" or "blueprint" for future decisions concerning land use, social issues, circulation, recreation, infrastructure, public services, environment, and resource conservation. The plan, through each element, provides a basis for local decision-making and involves the community in the process of identifying goals and policies to define how the community should respond to needs for physical development over time.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research publishes "General Plan Guidelines," which state that the general plan is a tool for planning over a specific time horizon. The planning period associated with this time horizon may vary depending on the issues - for example, geologic hazards most likely will not change quickly, so goals to address these issues will remain current for longer periods of time. While the City may choose a time horizon that serves its particular needs, most cities develop general plans that look forward 15-20 years in order to plan for future needs. The exception to this rule-of-thumb relates to the Housing Element which, by state mandate, must be updated every five years to address a seven-year planning period.

Sebastopol's General Plan was adopted in 1994 after an extensive community process which included a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), preparation of technical background reports and preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The General Plan had a stated 20-year planning period.

Subsequent to the 1994 General Plan, two mandatory Housing Element updates have been conducted, and the Housing Element is now a freestanding document. The current Housing Element covers the period 2009-2014.

The fundamental policy perspective of the 1994 General Plan appears to still have relevance. On the other hand, there are factual and policy updates needed on nearly every page of the current General Plan. In addition, some issues, like sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions and community health have gained urgency or new perspectives. The local economy is still emerging from a wrenching downturn; and the City's finances, while on the upswing, have been challenged, and long-term economic sustainability is a continuing concern.

A General Plan update offers an opportunity to create a new consensus vision for the future of Sebastopol, and to identify new community issues, priorities and policies.

Sebastopol's General Plan Update: The Sebastopol General Plan Update will address the seven state-mandated elements of land use, circulation, housing, safety, noise, conservation, and open space and will also include optional elements to address community health and wellness, urban design and community character, and economic sustainability. Other elements may be considered for incorporation as the process unfolds.

#### Community Outreach

To engage the public in the General Plan Update process and ensure a final work product that reflects the desires of the community, an extensive community outreach program underlies the entire General Plan Update process. A series of two community-wide Visioning Workshops will be held, followed by 10 Goal and Policy Development Workshops with the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC).

Following completion of the Draft General Plan Goal and Policy sets, a community workshop will be held in order to present the Draft General Plan to the public prior to public review of the Draft General Plan. This workshop will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions, provide additional input on policy issues, and provide feedback on the direction of the Draft General Plan. Project updates and check-in meetings will be held with the Planning Commission and City Council throughout the General Plan Update process.

At the outset of and concurrent with this process, outreach to community organizations and stakeholders to encourage participation in the General Plan Update process will be conducted. De Novo Planning Group will attend up to six community organization (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc.) or agency (school districts, Sonoma County, nearby cities, etc.) meetings to present the General Plan Update process and invite the organization or agency to participate in Sebastopol's General Plan Update. De Novo Planning Group will also meet with and interview key stakeholders, agencies, and organizations one-on-one to ensure that De Novo's perspective on the General Plan and resultant work effort accurately reflects a broad spectrum of the community.

Community surveys and polls will be conducted using two separate methodologies in order to enhance participation and to reach as broad a segment of the community as possible. Surveys will be conducted by phone in order to provide the City with statistically significant scientific polling data for use and consideration during the General Plan Update. Surveys will also be available through the General Plan Update Website.

In addition to holding many workshops and meetings where the public may comment, information on the General Plan Update will be made available on the General Plan Update website and through a series of newsletters. The a General Plan Update website that will provide the City with regular updates regarding the status of the General Plan, serve as a library of General Plan documents, including staff reports, meeting agendas, technical reports, and public review drafts, and allow the public an opportunity to participate in polls and comment on the General Plan Update process.

The work program includes comprehensive public outreach, including a minimum of two Visioning Workshops, 10 Goal and Policy Development Workshops with the GPAC, periodic Planning Commission and City Council meetings, and six meetings with outside agencies/community organizations.

#### General Plan Advisory Committee

The update will include formation of a General Plan Advisory Committee, or GPAC. Nearly 50 applications were received and are currently under review by the City Council. The Council will discuss application review at their April 1, 2014 meeting.

#### Task 1 – Visioning

The first step of the process is to invite community participation and involvement. The Visioning Workshops will provide residents, business people, service providers, decision-makers, and other interested persons with an opportunity to identify their vision, as well as concerns they would like to see addressed, for the General Plan Update. Two Visioning Workshops are planned for late April and early May (6:30 p.m. on April 30 and May 14, at the Center for the Arts). The purpose of these workshops is to:

- Communicate the intent of the General Plan Update to the public;
- Describe the General Plan Update process and key points where the community will have an opportunity to be involved;

- Receive public input on community goals and priorities;
- Develop a Vision Statement that guides the General Plan process;
- Identify community values as relate to the General Plan Update; and
- Identify preferred land uses.

Each Visioning Workshop will address the City-wide General Plan update, and will also address two to three specific issues (e.g., community health, land use, opportunity sites, traffic, housing, recreation, etc.). All members of the public are invited and encouraged to attend one or both of the Visioning Workshops.

#### Task 2 - Existing Conditions Report

The Existing Conditions Report will be an objective, policy-neutral documentation of existing conditions and the regulatory framework for a wide range of topics. This report will serve as a resource for the General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report. The Existing Conditions Report will identify development patterns, natural resources, socioeconomic conditions, and environmental constraints in the City and will identify the regulatory environment for each topic. The report will focus on development patterns, natural resources, economic conditions, environmental constraints, housing resources and demographics. The information on existing conditions will be used to better understand the issues facing the City and lead to the development of a plan that helps the City address each issue appropriately.

The following topics will be addressed in the Existing Conditions Report:

- Land Use and Socioeconomics;
- Transportation;
- Community Services and Facilities;
- Hazards, Safety, and Noise;
- Conservation and Natural Resources; and
- Community Health and Wellness

#### Task 3 - Issues and Opportunities Report

A critical early step in preparing the draft General Plan is identify the vision for the General Plan Update and the community's core values. The Issues and Opportunities report will focus the community's attention on key issues, changes and opportunities that have major policy implications as the City considers how to provide a healthy, vital community over the next 20 years.

The Issues and Opportunities Report that will be used for the life of the General Plan Update to communicate the intent of the update, issues to be addressed by the update, opportunities for growth and increased community vitality, and land use preferences. The report will use information contained in the Background Report along with workshop input, survey responses, City staff observations, and Planning Commission and City Council input.

#### Task 4 – General Plan Update

The General Plan will contain the goals and policies that will guide the City's future plans and development. The General Plan will: provide guide the City's future actions related to community wellness, development, and conservation of resources; establish allowed land uses; and provide a full set of implementation measures that will ensure the policies of the General Plan are carried out.

The General Plan Update will involve an estimated 10 workshops with the GPAC to review the issues and opportunities, articulate the goals of the General Plan, determine the appropriate policy approach to address key issues and opportunities, and develop actions the City can take to achieve the goals of the General Plan. Staff and the consultant will work with the community, Planning Commission, and City Council to develop, evaluate, and select land use and policy approaches for evaluation. There will be traffic, fiscal, environmental, and community vision trade-offs associated with various land use concepts and policy direction.

This task will include regular check-ins with the City Council to provide an update on the project status and receive direction on issues where there is not consensus among the GPAC.

#### Task 5 – Housing Element Update

The Housing Element will be the first element of the General Plan to be prepared. Concurrent with the Visioning Workshops and preparation of the Existing Conditions Report, staff and consultants will be preparing the draft Housing Element. In order to accommodate the state's review process and the legislative schedule for the Housing Element, this element will be completed in advance of the Draft General Plan.

The Housing Element will:

- Evaluate existing housing policies and programs;
- Conduct a needs assessment based on local demographics and housing conditions;
- Develop goals, objectives and policies defining the community's position on various housing issues and setting measurable targets for meeting housing needs;
- Develop an inventory of potential sites where housing may be constructed; and
- Analyze any obstacles or constraints to housing production in the community.

#### Task 6 – Environmental Impact Report

An Environmental Impact Report that meets the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be prepared for the General Plan. The Environmental Impact Report will identify direct and indirect adverse environmental effects that may occur with adoption of the General Plan and will recommend methods of mitigating significant impacts. Alternatives, including land use modifications as well as alternative policies and action items that reduce or avoid significant environmental effects of the project will be analyzed. The Planning Commission and City Council will use the EIR during their consideration of the draft General Plan to understand the potential environmental implications associated with the General Plan.

#### Task 7 – Adoption Hearings

At this point, the update to the General Plan and the EIR will have been circulated for public review and recommended revisions to each document will be prepared based on public input. The Planning Commission will be provided with the opportunity to consider recommending certification of the EIR and adoption of the General Plan, with any recommended changes to the City Council. The City Council will then consider the recommended changes, identify any additional changes, and consider certification of the EIR and adoption of the General Plan.

#### Schedule

It is important that the City set realistic timeframes for completion of the various tasks that will go into the General Plan update. The time allocated to each task must allow for a meaningful consideration of the issues and priorities as well as public review and participation.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research notes that most jurisdictions need at least two years to complete a new general plan. Depending on the complexity of issues and the amount of public debate, some general plans may take longer to prepare or update. The proposed General Plan Update schedule anticipates a two-and-a-half-year process. Much of this time will be spent reaching out to the public and providing opportunities for community input and discussion.

Conclusion: This kick-off meeting is being provided to the Planning Commission and City Council as an introduction to the General Plan Update process. No action is anticipated by the Planning Commission or City Council at this time; however, the Planning Commission, City Council and members of the public may wish to provide input to staff and consultant regarding the process.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council and Planning Commission hear the presentation from De Novo Planning Group regarding the General Plan Update process, provide the consultant with any input regarding the planned approach, and offer an opportunity to members of the public to make comments on the planned process.

#### Attachments:

Flyer announcing meeting  
Workshop meeting information

# GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

## Kickoff March 25

*Joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting starts process*



The City of Sebastopol is embarking on an exciting and challenging process, an update to the General Plan. State law requires the City to adopt a General Plan, and to periodically review and revise it.

The General Plan is the City's guiding policy document for future development, land use decisions, community design, transportation, public services, and resource conservation.

### A Vision for Our Town

The General Plan Update will identify issues, craft a vision for the future and set policy objectives for the next 15-20 years. Topics will include parks; traffic; development standards; economic vitality; noise; housing; health; safety; environment; and community aesthetics.

What: **Kickoff Presentation**

When: **Tuesday, March 25, 2014 at 6 p.m.**

Where: **Sebastopol Center for the Arts, 282 South High Street, Sebastopol**

Why: **Help create a vision for the future of Sebastopol**

For more information, contact the Planning Department at 823-6167

### THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Work on the General Plan is just beginning. As a first step, the consultant team retained to complete the General Plan Update will make a presentation to a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission on March 25, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Sebastopol

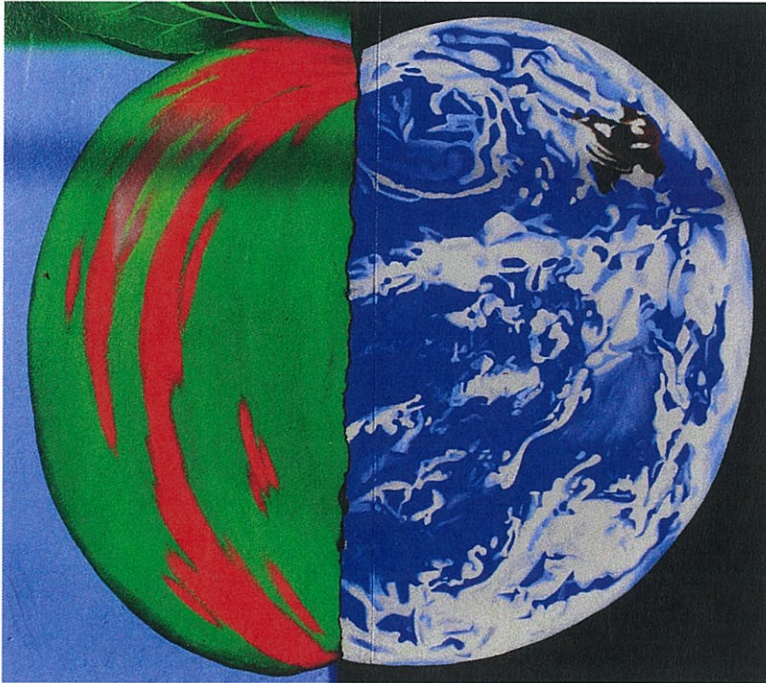


Center for the Arts, 282 South High Street. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of the General Plan Update work program, introduce the consultant team to the Council and Commission, gather initial input regarding key priorities and challenges to address in the General Plan Update, and answer questions.

# GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

## Visioning Workshops

*What are our shared values and vision for the future?*



The Visioning Workshops will provide residents, business people, service providers, decision-makers, and other interested persons with an opportunity to identify their vision, as well as concerns they would like to see addressed, for the General Plan Update.

Two Visioning Workshops are planned: April 30 and May 14.

All members of the public are invited and encouraged to attend one or both of the Visioning Workshops, which will help set the direction of the General Plan.

### A Vision for Our Town

The General Plan Update will identify issues, craft a vision for the future and set policy objectives for the next 15-20 years. Topics will include parks; traffic; development standards; economic vitality; noise; housing; health; safety; environment; and community aesthetics.

What: **Visioning Workshops**

When: **Wednesday, April 30, and Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.**

Where: **Sebastopol Center for the Arts, 282 South High Street, Sebastopol**

Why: **Help create a vision for the future of Sebastopol**

For more information, contact the Planning Department at 823-6167

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### WORKSHOP PURPOSE

The purpose of these workshops is to:

Communicate the intent of the General Plan Update to the public;

Describe the General Plan Update process and key points where the community will have an opportunity to be involved;

Receive public input on community goals and priorities;

Develop a Vision Statement that guides the General Plan process;

Identify community values as relate to the General Plan Update; and

Identify preferred land uses.

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